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MOTIVATION IN SPORT AND OLYMPIC VALUE PERCEPTIONS OF ELITE BOXING AND MUAYTHAI

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the motivation in sport and olympic values of elite boxing and muaythai athletes. The study group of the research consisted of 187 elite athletes made up of 106 muaythai and 81 boxers who were selected using the simple random method from elite muaythai and boxing athletes. In addition to demographic information such as gender, age, educational status, sports branch, being a national athlete or not status, the Sport Motivation Scale and the Olympic Value Scale were applied to the participants. In the analysis of the data, One-Way ANOVA and the Tukey HSD test were applied for comparisons of more than two groups with normal distribution, the Mann Whitney U test was applied for paired comparisons that do not follow a normal distribution, and the Kruskal Wallis H test was applied for comparisons of more than two groups. According to the results of the research, motivation in sport and olympic value perceptions differ statistically significantly according to gender, education, and being a national athlete. 'Amotivation' scores of the female athletes were higher than the scores of the male athletes. According to educational status, the mean scores of the athletes who graduated from secondary school in the 'Appreciation of diversity' sub-dimension were higher than those of the athletes who graduated from high school. Regarding being a national athlete, the mean scores of the non-national athletes in the 'amotivation' sub-dimension were higher than the mean scores of the national athletes. As a result, elite boxing and muaythai athletes' perceptions of motivation in sport and their olympic values differed according to demographic factors.

Keywords: Boxing, motivation, muaythai, olympics

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, sports are one of the easiest ways to develop individuals physically, emotionally and socially, to popularize group work, to ensure mutual solidarity and to gain membership in society. Individuals should choose activities that will not only contribute positively to their health but also increase their level of satisfaction (Uzun et al., 2017; Uzun et al., 2022). Motivation is an important concept that concerns many people, but it is also a valuable part of a positive effect (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). It is a dynamic process guided by internal and external influences to initiate and maintain an individual's behaviour and to achieve a specific goal. It is also one of the most important factors that is necessary for athletes to achieve success. In this context, motivation in sport is the behaviour of making the necessary effort to be cognitively strong and successful (Bowman et al., 2020; Maslen, et al., 2020).

There are some differences between the intrinsic and extrinsic sources that affect motivation. While intrinsic motivation is driven by athletes' intrinsic desires, passions, and personal values, extrinsic motivation is a situation in which athletes are driven by extrinsic rewards, incentives, and punishment. These differences can affect the success of athletes. At the same time, the motivation sources of athletes participating in different sports can also be different from each other. The importance of motivation in increasing the performance in the desired direction in sports is an existing fact. Athletes are motivated and take action as their needs are met (Martens & Webber 2002). The motivational structure of athletes is different from each other. For this reason, it is not possible for only one motive to be the basic drive to gain an advantage in sport competitions (Beşiktaş ve Terekli, 2023). Regular exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle and provides many health benefits. Physical activity can be done for a variety of purposes, such as improving health, maintaining physical fitness, or achieving specific goals. Physical activity has many beneficial effects, including increased endurance, strength, and flexibility, increased bone and muscle strength, improved social relationships, and increased self-confidence. Physical activity can trigger a cascade of hormonal responses, and these responses impact muscle growth, energy production, stress management, and overall health. Regular physical activity is associated with improvements in mental health and cognitive function, as well as reducing the risk of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers (Yılmaz & Cerit, 2023). In sport today, especially in developed countries, it is seen that some of the thousands of young athletes with equal working opportunities and talent can achieve a high level of performance in their respective sport. In other words, although they have equal conditions, their achievements are different. There are more reasons for this difference. However, the motivation of athletes is the most important one.

Competitions are constantly organised for athletes to display their performance. The most comprehensive organisation in this sense is the Olympic Games, the most prestigious sporting event held every four years. The Olympic Games provide a platform that emphasises universal values such as peace, brotherhood, justice, and tolerance (i.e., olympic values). These values emphasise that sport is a unifying and inspiring force for humanity and play an important role in increasing the motivation of athletes during competition and training. However, the perspective of athletes performing sports that cannot participate in the Olympic Games on the olympic values

may differ. In this respect, it is an important issue to determine how olympic values have an effect on athletes who perform and athletes who do not olympic sports. In this context, the aim of this study was to examine the motivation in sport and the olympic value perceptions of elite boxing and muaythai athletes.

METHOD

Research Model

Quantitative research is a type of research that objectifies facts and events and presents them in an observable, measurable, and numerically-expressible way. The research in which observations and measurements can be repeated and made objectively is called quantitative research. In the quantitative research method, numerical results are obtained from the sample that represents the universe regarding the subject under investigation. In this research method, the direction of the research population's opinion on the research topic is questioned. In other words, it is not an intensive analysis on the subject, but rather more superficial. Additionally, numerical data are determined. Since quantitative research involves numerical representation, it is important to determine the sample that will represent the research population accurately and to ask the right questions to this sample. A superior aspect of quantitative research methods is that they are objective. In the applications of these methods, documents can be analysed by a group of researchers. The aim of quantitative research is to objectively measure the social behaviours of individuals through observation, experiments, and tests and to explain them with numerical data (Suğur et al., 2009). In line with this information, this research also belongs to a quantitative research type.

Research Group

The study group of the research consisted of 187 elite athletes made up of 106 muaythai and 81 boxers who were selected using the simple random method from elite muaythai and boxing athletes.

Data Collection Tools

Firstly, a form consisting of questions related to demographic characteristics and the Sport Motivation Scale-6 (SMS-6), which was originally developed by Mallett et al. (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Demir (2022), were used to determine the motivation levels of elite athletes in sport. The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert type and consisted of 24 items in total. The alpha coefficients calculated for the six sub-dimensions of the measurement tool, which were amotivation, identified regulation, external regulation, integrated regulation, introjected regulation, and intrinsic motivation factors, were 0.862 for ‘amotivation’, 0.795 for ‘identified regulation’, 0.811 for ‘external regulation’, 0.797 for ‘integrated regulation’, 0.795 for ‘introjected regulation’, and 0.796 for ‘intrinsic motivation’.

In the study, the ‘Olympic Value Scale’, developed by Koenigstorfer and Preuss (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Aktaş and Ötkan (2022), was used to determine the Olympic value perceptions of elite athletes.

The ‘Olympic Value Scale’ used a 7-point Likert-type scale and consisted of 12 items with three dimensions (Appreciation of diversity, Friendly relations with others, and Achievement in competition). The reliability

coefficient of the 'Friendly relations with others' sub-dimension was 0.91, the reliability coefficient of the 'Achievement in competition' sub-dimension was 0.89, and the reliability coefficient of the 'Appreciation of diversity' sub-dimension was 0.82.

Data Collection

For the measurement tools used in the study, the necessary permission was obtained via e-mail from the researchers who conducted the validity and reliability studies of the scales. The questions in the questionnaire were prepared using 'Google Forms' to reach the participants more easily. An introduction to the questionnaire and the online form link were sent to the e-mail addresses of the athletes. The survey remained open to access for three weeks and the data set was prepared for statistical analysis at the end of the data entry. The two measurement tools, which each took approximately 10 minutes to complete, were distributed to the participants on a voluntary basis and the necessary instructions were provided.

To conduct the research, the Ethics Committee of Avrasya University was consulted. In accordance with the decision of the Ethics Committee Presidency dated 04/07/2024 and numbered 2024/189, the research was approved by the Directive of the Ethics Committee of our University and it was reported that there was no ethical drawback.

Analysing the Data

Before making comparisons between variables, normality analysis was performed. Since the skewness and kurtosis values were between -2 and +2, it was assumed that the variables were normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2010). Therefore, One-Way ANOVA and the Tukey HSD test were applied for comparisons of more than two groups showing a normal distribution, the Mann Whitney U test was applied for paired comparisons not showing a normal distribution and the Kruskal Wallis H test was applied for comparisons of more than two groups not showing a normal distribution. The research findings were expressed as percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation, and $p<0.05$ was considered to be a significant result. All statistical calculations were performed using the SPSS 22.0 V. statistical package program.

FINDINGS

In this part of the study, mean, standard deviation and statistical data of attitudes towards motivation in sport and Olympic value perceptions are presented.

Table 1. Participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to gender

Scales	Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	Sd	Median	IQR	P
Sport Motivation	Amotivation	Female	70	8.91	4.07	8.00	4.00	**.019**
		Male	117	7.70	3.99	7.00	5.00	
	Identified regulation	Female	70	14.91	4.57	16.00	4.50	.787
		Male	117	14.77	5.12	16.00	4.00	
	External regulation	Female	70	12.95	4.66	14.00	7.25	.951
		Male	117	12.91	4.89	13.00	8.00	
	Integrated regulation	Female	70	15.58	4.77	17.00	4.00	.940
		Male	117	15.17	5.42	17.00	5.00	
	Introjected regulation	Female	70	15.57	4.74	17.00	4.00	.985

		Male	117	15.24	5.35	17.00	5.50	
	Intrinsic motivation	Female	70	14.45	4.47	15.00	5.00	.319
		Male	117	14.64	5.12	16.00	5.00	
Olympic Value	Appreciation of diversity	Female	70	19.91	5.18	19.00	8.00	.506
		Male	117	20.14	5.54	20.00	7.00	
	Friendly relations with others	Female	70	22.14	5.66	23.50	9.25	.783
		Male	117	22.11	6.13	24.00	9.00	
	Achievement in competition	Female	70	24.10	5.51	26.00	5.00	.371
		Male	117	24.59	5.37	27.00	5.00	

In Table 1, a significant difference was found only in the “amotivation” sub-dimension between the participants' motivation in sport and their olympic value scores according to gender (p<0.05). The female participants had higher amotivation scores than the male participants. No significant difference was found in the other sub-dimensions (p>0.05).

Table 2. Participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to educational status

Scales	**Sub-dimensions**	**Educational status**	**n**	**x̄**	**Sd**	**Median**	**IQR**	**P**
Sport Motivation	Amotivation	Primary school	4	6.75	2.50	6.50	4.75	.720
		Secondary school	15	7.00	2.77	7.00	5.00	
		High school	112	8.19	3.94	8.00	5.00	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	8.50	4.60	7.50	6.00	
	Identified regulation	Primary school	4	17.75	2.62	18.50	4.75	.117
		Secondary school	15	14.80	3.25	16.00	5.00	
		High school	112	14.44	4.87	16.00	5.00	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	1539	5.42	17.00	6.00	
	External regulation	Primary school	4	16.25	2.36	17.00	4.25	.557
		Secondary school	15	12.93	3.69	13.00	5.00	
		High school	112	12.83	4.71	13.00	8.00	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	12.89	5.33	14.00	9.50	
	Integrated regulation	Primary school	4	16.25	1.89	15.50	3.25	.346
		Secondary school	15	16.20	3.94	18.00	6.00	
		High school	112	14.98	5.27	16.50	5.00	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	15.73	5.47	17.00	5.00	
	Introjected regulation	Primary school	4	17.75	3.30	19.00	5.75	.266
		Secondary school	15	16.33	3.30	16.00	4.00	
		High school	112	14.98	5.11	17.00	4.75	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	15.71	5.61	19.00	6.00	
	Intrinsic motivation	Primary school	4	16.00	1.63	16.00	3.00	.800
		Secondary school	15	15.73	3.19	16.00	4.00	
		High school	112	14.28	4.92	16.00	5.75	
		Bachelor’s or higher degree	56	14.73	5.29	16.00	6.75	

Olympic Value	Appreciation of diversity	Primary school	4	18.50	3.10	18.50	6.00	**.027** Secondary school and high school
		Secondary school	15	23.13	4.62	25.00	8.00	
		High school	112	19.39	5.17	19.00	7.00	
		Bachelor's or higher degree	56	20.67	5.87	22.00	8.75	
	Friendly relations with others	Primary school	4	20.25	9.39	22.00	17.25	.679
		Secondary school	15	22.93	6.59	26.00	8.00	
		High school	112	21.89	5.76	22.00	9.00	
		Bachelor's or higher degree	56	22.50	6.00	24.00	10.0	
	Achievement in competition	Primary school	4	20.25	9.39	22.00	17.25	.296
		Secondary school	15	25.93	3.10	27.00	4.00	
		High school	112	24.01	5.62	27.00	6.00	
		Bachelor's or higher degree	56	25.08	5.05	28.00	3.00	

In Table 2, a significant difference was found only in the 'appreciation of diversity' sub-dimension between the participants' motivation in sport and their olympic value scores according to educational status (p<0.05). The mean scores of secondary school graduates were higher than the means scores of high school graduates. No significant difference was found in the other sub-dimensions (p>0.05).

Table 3. Participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to sports branch

Scales	Sub-dimensions	Sports branch	n	x̄	Sd	Median	IQR	P
Sport Motivation	Amotivation	Boxing	81	8.37	4.19	8.00	5.00	.562
		Muaythai	106	8.00	3.95	7.00	5.00	
	Identified regulation	Boxing	81	14.76	5.46	16.00	5.50	.444
		Muaythai	106	14.87	4.47	16.00	4.00	
	External regulation	Boxing	81	12.85	5.19	14.00	9.00	.914
		Muaythai	106	12.99	4.49	13.00	7.00	
	Integrated regulation	Boxing	81	15.00	5.67	17.00	6.00	.937
		Muaythai	106	15.58	4.78	17.00	4.00	
	Introjected regulation	Boxing	81	14.82	5.73	17.00	7.00	.624
		Muaythai	106	15.78	4.58	17.00	4.00	
	Intrinsic motivation	Boxing	81	14.16	5.42	16.00	6.50	.740
		Muaythai	106	14.88	4.41	16.00	5.00	
Olympic Value	Appreciation of diversity	Boxing	81	20.33	5.81	21.00	9.00	.429
		Muaythai	106	19.84	5.07	20.00	7.00	
	Friendly relations with others	Boxing	81	22.02	6.04	23.00	10.50	.985
		Muaythai	106	22.19	5.90	24.00	9.25	
	Achievement in competition	Boxing	81	24.72	5.41	27.00	4.50	.203
		Muaythai	106	24.16	5.43	26.50	6.00	

In Table 3, no significant difference was found between the participants' motivation in sport and their olympic value scores according to sports branch (p> 0.05).

Table 4. Participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to age

Scales	Sub-dimensions	Age	n	x̄	Sd	Median	IQR	P
Sport Motivation	Amotivation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	7.85	3.96	7.00	6.00	.154
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	8.59	4.16	8.00	4.50	
	Identified regulation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	14.70	4.55	16.00	5.00	.211
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	15.00	5.41	16.00	6.00	
	External regulation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	13.04	4.67	13.00	8.00	.764
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	12.76	4.99	14.00	8.00	
	Integrated regulation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	15.33	4.85	17.00	5.00	.327
		(18-40 ages) Adults	777	15.32	5.65	17.00	5.50	
	Introjected regulation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	15.34	4.73	17.00	4.25	.279
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	15.40	5.67	18.00	6.00	
	Intrinsic motivation	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	14.61	4.51	16.00	5.00	.529
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	14.50	5.38	16.00	6.50	
Olympic Value	Appreciation of diversity	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	19.72	5.25	19.50	8.00	.177
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	20.53	5.59	22.00	8.00	
	Friendly relations with others	(16 18 ages) Youth	110	21.88	6.19	24.00	11.00	.659
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	22.46	5.60	24.00	9.00	
	Achievement in competition	(16-18 ages) Youth	110	23.93	5.82	27.00	5.00	.094
		(18-40 ages) Adults	77	25.09	4.72	28.00	5.00	

In Table 4, no significant difference was found between the participants' motivation in sport and their olympic value scores according to age (p> 0.05).

Table 5. Participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to being a national athlete or not status

Scales	Sub-dimensions	National Athlet	n	x̄	Sd	Median	IQR	P
Sport Motivation	Amotivation	Yes	54	6.98	3.23	6.50	4.00	**.010**
		No	133	8.63	4.26	8.00	5.50	
	Identified regulation	Yes	54	14.05	6.02	17.00	11.25	.891
		No	133	15.14	4.37	16.00	4.00	
	External regulation	Yes	54	12.38	5.48	14.00	9.50	.491
		No	133	13.15	4.49	13.00	8.00	
	Integrated regulation	Yes	54	14.25	6.13	16.50	12.00	.404
		No	133	15.76	4.69	17.00	4.00	
	Introjected regulation	Yes	54	14.31	6.31	17.00	12.25	.676
		No	133	15.79	4.51	17.00	4.00	
	Intrinsic motivation	Yes	54	13.66	5.99	16.00	11.00	.692
		No	133	14.93	4.32	16.00	5.00	
Olympic Value	Appreciation of diversity	Yes	54	20.37	5.78	21.00	8.25	.423
		No	133	19.93	5.25	20.00	8.00	
	Friendly relations with others	Yes	54	22.94	6.18	25.50	10.00	.085
		No	133	21.78	5.84	22.00	9.00	
	Achievement in competition	Yes	54	25.25	4.85	28.00	4.00	.087
		No	133	24.06	5.61	27.00	5.00	

In Table 5, a significant difference was found only in the 'amotivation' sub-dimension between the participants' motivation in sport and olympic value scores according to being a national athlete or not (p<0.05). The mean scores of the 'amotivation' sub-dimension of the non-national athletes were higher than the scores for the national athletes. No significant difference was found in the other sub-dimensions (p>0.05).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, the variation of elite boxing and muaythai athletes' perceptions of their motivation in sport and olympic values according to various demographic factors (gender, education level, age, sports branch, and being a national athlete) was examined. Accordingly, the findings of this research were compared with the findings of the studies in the literature.

According to the research findings, when the motivation and olympic value perceptions of the athletes participating in the research were analysed in terms of gender, a significant difference was found only in the 'amotivation' sub-dimension. Accordingly, the amotivation scores of the female participants were higher than the scores of the male participants. In the literature, it is stated that social and cultural barriers faced by women in the field of sport may affect their motivation. Female athletes may encounter less support and opportunities compared to male athletes, which may decrease their motivation (Fink, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Female athletes may lose their motivation for sport because they face more social and cultural barriers. In addition, gender roles may affect women's participation and motivation in sport. Women may have less time for sports due to family and social responsibilities, which may lead to a lack of motivation (Krane, 2001). Female athletes may experience more physiological and psychological stress than male athletes and may feel the need to constantly prove their performance, which may also lead to a lack of motivation. Especially in high-performance sports, factors such as hormonal changes, injury risk, and performance pressure may negatively affect the motivation of female athletes (Buchholz et al.,2008). Sport culture and environment can also affect the motivation of female athletes. In a male-dominated sport culture, female athletes may feel excluded or inadequate, which may also lead to a lack of motivation (Ferkins et al., 2009).

There is a strong relationship between education level and social and cultural perceptions. It is stated that individuals with a lower education level may have higher scores in appreciating social differences and diversity (Banks, 2006). When the motivation in sport and olympic values of the athletes participating in the study were analysed in terms of their educational status, a significant difference was found only in the 'appreciation of diversity' sub-dimension of the Olympic Value Scale. The mean scores of secondary school graduates were higher than those of high school graduates. Secondary school graduates may have experienced social differences more through sport and these experiences may have increased their capacity to appreciate these differences (Jarvie et al., 2013). Athletes with a low level of education may be more motivated to participate in society and to build social support networks through sport. Sport may be an important source of social support and belonging for these athletes. These athletes may appreciate the power of sport for social integration and social cohesion more (Coalter, 2007). As the level of education increases, an individual's critical thinking abilities may increase, but this

may also lead to the questioning of some values. High school graduates may question some values due to their critical thinking abilities and this may affect their appreciation of diversity scores.

Motivation in sport is often associated with athletes' personal goals, self-regulation skills, and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These theories suggest that athletes may have similar sources of motivation regardless of the sport branch. This may be due to the fact that athletes have common motivational goals such as success, recognition, and personal development. In the study, no significant difference was found when the participants' perceptions of motivation in sport and their olympic values were analysed according to the sports branch variable. Although different sport branches have different physical and psychological requirements, the motivational profiles of athletes may be similar. This means that athletes can develop similar motivational structures based on their individual goals, team dynamics, and personal development (Roberts & Treasure 2012). On the other hand, olympic values are considered to be universal values and can be perceived similarly among athletes regardless of the sport in which they participate (Georgiadis, 2010). These values are based on the athletes' adoption of common values such as friendship, excellence, and respect. Research shows that athletes perceive olympic values similarly and that these values are common among athletes regardless of the sport branch (Chatziefstathiou, 2005).

Sport motivation may vary depending on age, but some studies have shown that athletes may have a similar intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for sport regardless of age (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and both young and adult athletes may have similar motivational profiles (Vallerand & Losier, 1999). The motivational sources of athletes may be similar regardless of age, and young and adult athletes may have similar motivational factors in terms of the duration and experience of doing sport (Roberts & Treasure 2012). In this study, no significant difference was found in motivation in sport nor olympic value perceptions in the comparison made according to the age variable. Olympic values are also universal values and these values do not change drastically depending on age. The basic principles of olympic values can be perceived similarly by athletes of all age groups (Georgiadis, 2010). The fact that athletes develop similar motivational structures regardless of their age may also be due to similar sport experiences.

When the motivation and olympic value perceptions of the athletes participating in the study were analysed according to the national athlete variable, a significant difference was found only in the ‘amotivation’ sub-dimension. The mean scores of the ‘amotivation’ sub-dimension of the non-national athlete participants were higher than the mean scores of the national athlete participants. National athletes generally have higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). National athletes may have more of these sources of motivation and since they tend to realise themselves more and reach higher goals, these goals increase their motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Roberts & Treasure, 2012). Again, since national athletes are generally more advantageous in terms of factors such as psychological resilience, self-confidence, and social support, these factors may reduce their demotivation (Gould et al., 2002). Olympic values are universal values that are widely accepted among athletes (Binder, 2012; Koenigstorfer & Preuss, 2018). These values can be adopted similarly regardless of the athletes' branches or other demographic characteristics. The similarity of olympic value

perceptions may also be due to the fact that they receive similar ethical and value training in training and competition processes.

The study revealed that athletes' perceptions of motivation and olympic values may differ according to demographic factors and emphasised the importance of motivational strategies and training programmes for athletes. In this context, the implementation of the recommendations will contribute to the spread of olympic values to wider masses by increasing the motivation of athletes.

SUGGESTIONS

-Special support programmes and motivational training should be organised to increase the motivation of female athletes. Awareness campaigns and athlete mentoring programmes should be encouraged to overcome social and cultural barriers.

-Training and awareness programmes for athletes should be increased to minimise differences based on educational levels. Activities should be organised to increase the social participation of secondary school graduate athletes.

-Special motivational programmes and training should be organised for different age groups to increase the motivation and olympic value perceptions of all age groups in sports.

-Training programmes and motivational support for different sport branches should be offered. It should be aimed to increase the performance of athletes by developing branch-specific motivational strategies.

-Special training programmes and psychological support services should be provided to maintain and increase the motivation of national athletes. Reward and incentive systems should be established to encourage the success of national athletes and to increase their motivation.

-Training and awareness programmes should be organised for athletes to disseminate and adopt olympic values. National and international cooperation should be established to promote olympic values among athletes.

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