

Institutional Stakeholder Involvement and Performance of Ongoing Construction Projects in Public Technical Institutes in Nakuru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: Project performance in the TVET subsector is of great concern in Kenya as both Vision 2030 and Agenda Four policy directions enumerate the need to enhance the capacity and outputs of TVETs as a catalyst for industrial growth. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of stakeholder involvement on project performance in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Stakeholder Theory. The study employed a descriptive research design since it seeks to establish how one variable affects changes in another variable. The target population for this study was all 195 senior managers in the 25 public technical institutes in Nakuru County Kenya. Statistical formula was used to obtain a sample of 66 respondents. The study used a self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was piloted in TVETs in Nairobi City County amongst similar senior institutional managers. The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed using both descriptive (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the survey were presented in tables. The study established that institutional stakeholder involvement ($r=.660$) was strongly and positively correlated with project performance. The study also established that the R-square of 0.435 implied that institutional stakeholder involvement explained 43.5% of variation in project performance. Therefore, other variables not investigated in this study accounted for 56.5% of variation in project performance. Furthermore, the overall model was found to be statistically significant ($F = 40.794, p=.000$). Similarly, from the linear regressions, institutional stakeholder involvement ($B=0.569, p=.000$) had significant influence on project performance. The study concluded that institutional stakeholder involvement significantly influenced project performance. The study recommended the development and implementation of mechanisms that help diversify stakeholder relationships and their engagement in all project activities.

Key Words: Institutional Stakeholder Involvement, Project Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Project management refers to the application of processes, methods, skills, knowledge and experience to achieve specific project objectives according to the project acceptance criteria within agreed performance parameters (Bansal *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the field of project management has final deliverables that are constrained to a finite timescale and budget. Project management therefore deals with the use of specific knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people (Magassouba *et al.*, 2019). The main objective of project management is to complete a project within the established goals of time, budget, and quality. Therefore, project management plays a crucial role in enhancing the growth of target sectors such as the technical training sector. The Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) subsector plays a significant role in the provision skilled labour needs to the Kenyan economy. Furthermore, Vision 2030 has placed special demands on TVET as the leading engine that the economy must essentially rely upon to produce adequate levels of middle level manpower that will be needed to drive the economy towards the attainment of the vision. However, the TVET policy implementations is poor in Kenya and the system has failed in providing the much-needed skills required for employment, economic and national development. Further, they report that TVETs face numerous challenges including negative attitude towards vocational training, incomplete projects,

under-funding of vocational institutions, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, and poor governance. Furthermore, low project performance is reported to significantly hamper the growth of these institutions.

Project performance is the measure of accomplishment of a project in relation to deliverables, policies, time, culture, resources and budgets. Project performance is the achievement of predetermined project goals. Project performance can thus be seen as the outcomes and behavior that employees take on or bring about that contribute to organizational goals. Project performance is the achievements gained after having exerted effort on predetermined project goals. Similarly, Bansal *et al.*, (2019) argued that project performance varies according to the character, the nationality, the project type, and contract type of the individual viewing project performance. Project performance can thus be linked to the ability level of an organization to implement a project within budget, culture, policies, procedures, time, deliverables and resource constraints. Project performance is determined by institutional factors such as stakeholder's involvement, proper budget allocation, policies, culture, procedures, availability of resources, time, employee packages, leadership, management support, staff and stakeholders training and proper implementation guidelines (Bansal *et al.*, 2019). Institutional factors determine the performance of projects and as noted by Magassouba *et al.*, (2019), the assets, resources, competences as well as capabilities are sources of competitive advantage for firms. Furthermore, they argued that organizational resources are essential in ensuring performance of firms. They argued that institution factors are formal practice, process or culture within an institution that must be abided by to enhance project performance. Institutional factors therefore relate to structures including rules, routines and norms that guide organizational behavior.

In China, Li, Martek and Chen (2022) noted that the international construction market is heavily affected by institutional factors. The findings indicate that institutional factors have a complex impact on contractors. They further assert that institutional factors exist in a multi-level social system. They extensively collected institutional factors predicted to impact contractors' international market selection and selects 10 specific institutional factors from different perspectives. The results show that contractors are affected by institutional factors from different levels and the effect of some factors. They concluded that contractors face numerous institutional factors including project preparation, project schedule, trust, communication, project supervision and technical competency. Specifically, Chinese contractors are negatively affected by institutional distance but are not sensitive to the institutional environment. However, their study was undertaken in a different contextual background and may not relate to the Kenya context. In India, Bansal, Ali and Sharma (2019) sought to identify and prioritize the critical factors affecting project performance in infrastructure projects in India. Their study asserted that infrastructure projects in India are affected by various institutional and external factors. Furthermore, they suggest that contractors must understand and control institutional factors to suit their project goals if project performance is to be enhanced. Their study collected data using a survey questionnaire which targeted local building contractors of different sizes. Their study concluded that cost performance parameters and time/schedule performance parameters affects the performance of project to a large extent as compared to the human related, quality, safety, environmental performance parameters.

Across the African continent, studies have attempted to investigate institutional factors influencing project performance. For example, in Nigeria, Nzekwe, Oladejo and Emoh (2018) noted that there is a high rate of project failure in Anambra State, Nigeria which manifests not only as abandonment of projects, but also as cases of structural collapse, inability to deliver projects on time, cost overshoots and poor client satisfaction. Their study found that ability to handle unexpected crises/situations, availability of the required technology and expertise, the provision of appropriate network to all key actors in project implementation, selection and training of necessary personnel and presence of a detailed and accurate specification of individual action steps and timelines are some of the key factors influencing project success. While the study identified significant institutional factors affecting performance of projects, their study was undertaken in a different contextual setting. In Uganda, Mwelu, Davis, Yongjian, Watundu and Jefferies (2021) opined that the construction industry in Uganda is known for its underperformance, project delays, cost overruns, inferior works and contract variations. Using institutional theory, their study focused on success factors for implementing public road construction projects in Uganda. Their findings reveal that professionalism, monitoring activities, familiarity with regulatory framework, perceived inefficiency of regulatory framework and compliance with these frameworks significantly enhances successful implementation of public road construction projects. However, sanctions on staff and contractors' resistance to non-compliance were found to be insignificant predictors of successful implementation of public road construction projects.

Various studies locally have investigated institutional factors and how they affect project performance locally. For example, Musyoki and Gakuu(2018) sought to examine the factors that influence successful completion of county funded projects in Embu County, Kenya. Their study findings revealed that stakeholder involvement negatively and

significantly influences implementation of infrastructure projects by county governments in Kenya. The study also found that management, organizational resources and governance positively and significantly influences implementation of infrastructure projects by county governments. The study concluded that stakeholders, management, organizational resources and governance significantly influence implementation of infrastructure projects. Similarly, Wamuyu (2020) sought to establish institutional factors affecting project performance of Postal Corporation. The study found that operating resources are effectively distributed for each implementation phase and that skilled employees exist to enhance effective project implementation. The study also found that ethical standards are adhered to by employees and that customer needs are a priority in the delivery of service, that employees are compliant to rules and regulations. The study concluded that organizational culture, procurement procedure, institutional policies and organizational resource had a significant influence on project performance in Postal Corporation, Kenya. While these studies globally, regionally and locally have addressed various institutional factors, none has investigated the influence of institutional stakeholder involvement and performance of ongoing construction projects in public technical institutes in Nakuru County, Kenya.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Project performance in the TVET subsector is of particular concern to the Kenyan economy as Vision 2030 enumerates the need to enhance the capacity and outputs of TVETs as a catalyst for industrial growth (GoK, 2021). Project performance requires creation, implementation and monitoring of a well-planned project plan and the deployment of institutional factors. Incomplete projects and delays in TVET projects is detrimental to the economy and will result in cost and time overruns, disputes and in some cases total project abandonment. Ideally, TVET projects would achieve maximum results in supplying skills, enhanced capacity, adequate scope coverage, human resource development, and industrial technical needs among others if institutional factors were in place (Wamuyu, 2020). However, most TVET projects have achieved minimal results as evidenced by the many stalled projects and discrepancies in key project records which lead to rise in audit queries. The Auditor General Report 2021 noted that 8 TVETs that commissioned in 2014 are yet to be completed. The report further raised audit queries on 16 non-operational TVETs despite being completed and 2 others that either have collapsed or have not started despite financial allocations. In Nakuru County, Elburgon and Njoro TVET have stalled despite allocation of resources. Nakuru Town West, Nakuru Town East and Gilgil Sub-Counties are yet to identify land for construction of a TVET while expansion programs in the county are also behind schedule despite adequate financial allocations. According to the Auditor General Report 2020/2021 on TIVETA, government resources in the subsector were not utilized lawfully and effectively. The report indicates that despite the continuous quality training, 30 institutions nationally were still non-compliant with the set management rules, standards and guidelines. Other shortcomings include only 34% of capacity of TVET providers built and the inability to train all management committees. Numerous studies in literature (Wamuyu, 2020; Musyoki & Gakuu, 2018) have investigated various institutional factors however; none of these studies have investigated institutional stakeholder involvement on ongoing construction projects in TVETs in Nakuru County, Kenya. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of institutional stakeholder involvement on performance of ongoing construction projects in public technical institutes in Nakuru County, Kenya.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on Stakeholder Theory. Stakeholder theory was proposed by Morgan Freeman in 1984. It argues that a stakeholder is any group or individual who affects or is affected by the achievement of firm objectives (Azevedo, Carvalho & Machado, 2011). Firms produce externalities that affect different stakeholders. These externalities often cause stakeholders to increase pressures on firms to reduce negative impacts and increase positive ones. The theory suggests that a firm should pursue strategies that consider the parties affected by decisions while trying to minimize damage or maximize benefits to the representative groups. This calls for firms to think beyond financial performance. In this interplay, obligations go beyond the traditional duties to shareholder and extend to the customers, employees, suppliers and society. The motivation of stakeholders in a business management setting reflects current interest in managing the issue of sustainability in inter-organizational relationships, where the firm is generally considered an unsatisfactory unit of analysis and it is necessary to take a whole system, sector based or industry view (Zhua, Sarkis & Lai, 2013). Relationships according to stakeholder thinking do not occur in a vacuum of dyadic ties, but as a network of influences involving multiple stakeholders. The diversity of the theory and its facility for identifying and prioritizing conflicting requirements has rejuvenated interest in the literature particularly in the context of the

possibilities of collaborative implementation of projects. Similarly, Francesco, Fabio, Marco and Tiberio (2012) perceived the firm as a system of stakeholders considered legal entity which operated for the benefit of the society. They held that the purpose of the firm was to create wealth or value to the equity holders and stakeholders. Public technical institutions in particular have to meet the different needs of stakeholders, particularly when project performance issues are introduced. According to Azevedo, Carvalho and Machado(2011), firms are owned collectively by members of communities and this comes with it the pressure to meet the interest of all stakeholders. Management of institutional stakeholder involvement can thus be explained using this theory as lack of stakeholder involvement may have negative effects on project performance. General criticisms of stakeholder theory are that exclusive use of the approach may restrict thinking on how relationships between firms are affected beyond the variables of power, legitimacy and urgency, where a response may need to include in-depth explanations around the precise nature of the transaction or specific capability requirement.

V. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Studies have also attempted to investigate stakeholder involvement with mixed findings. For example, Musyoka and Gakuu (2018) examined the factors that influence successful completion of county funded projects in Embu County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design and targeted 100 respondents. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. The findings revealed that stakeholders negatively and significantly influences implementation of infrastructure projects by county governments in Kenya, The study also found that management, organizational resources and governance positively and significantly influences implementation of infrastructure projects by county governments. The study concluded that stakeholders, significantly influences implementation of infrastructure projects. However, their study did not focus on TVET projects and neither did it address other institutional factors such as culture and policies. Similarly, Githinji, Ogolla and Kitheka (2020) sought to determine the influence of stakeholder's involvement on project performance at Kenya Ferry Services. The study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 70 respondents. Data collection was done by use of questionnaires. The study findings established that involvement of stakeholders in project identification was significantly and positively related to project performance. Furthermore, organization respect for stakeholders concerns significantly influenced project identification. Further, involvement of stakeholders in project planning was found to significantly and positively relate to project performance. The study also found that involvement of stakeholders in project monitoring was found to significantly and positively related to project performance. Lastly, it was established that involvement of stakeholders in project funding was found to significantly and positively relate to project performance. The study was however a case study and did not address the other institutional factors in the TVET sector. Furthermore, Omondi and Kinoti(2020) sought to investigate on the influence of stakeholders' participation on the performance of road constructions projects in Kilifi County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design and targeted 150 respondents using questionnaire. The study established that stakeholder participation at project identification, project planning, project implementation and project monitoring significantly influenced the performance of road construction projects. The study concluded that the road construction projects to a significant extent embraced stakeholder participation in assessing, analyzing and selecting the viable, tenable and beneficial road projects to most of the citizens in the region. The study concluded that that to a moderate extent the stakeholders were involved in planning of the road construction projects to enhance efficiency, cooperation and effectiveness in project implementation. The study however did not address other institutional factors and did not focus on the TVET sector.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research since the study seeks to establish how one variable affects changes in another variable. The target population was all 195 administrators, financial officers, accounting officers, and heads of departments in all 25 public training institutes in Nakuru County, Kenya. Using Nassiuma's formula for sample calculation, a sample of 66 respondents was obtained and then stratified and simple random sampling was used in targeting the said staff in each of the institutes. This study used questionnaires in collecting data from the target group. The questionnaire was used to collect data because it is straight forward and less time consuming for both the researcher and the respondents and it enables reaching a representative number of respondents with ease (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire consisted of close-ended items that aimed at obtaining data from the respondents. Pilot testing was done on 10 individuals (5% of population) who are in similar positions in Nairobi Technical and Railway Training Institute in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Before commencing data collection, the researcher sought a research permit from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) as legally required to all researchers conducting studies in Kenya. Upon receipt of the research permit, the researcher sought permission from the County Government of Nakuru and relevant education departments after outlining to the relevant authorities the objectives of the current

research. The researcher then administered the questionnaires to the individual population members within the public technical institutes. The collected data was then analyzed quantitatively by first coding and then analyzing them using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Regression and Correlation). Before correlation and regression analysis, the data was tested ascertain it meets the various assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). Specifically, tests for linearity, normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were carried out.

VII. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher issued 66 questionnaires, of which 54 questionnaires were correctly filled and were thus used for analysis representing a response rate of 81.8%. Creswell (2014) indicated that getting a high response rate from a small random sample is an important element in proving the significance of the responses. Therefore, the response rate of 81.8% was considered sufficient to enable further analysis.

7.1 Institutional Stakeholder Involvement and Project Performance

The findings on institutional stakeholder involvement and project performance are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Institutional Stakeholder Involvement and Project Performance

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	StdDev
Our institution has clear and well articulated plans on engaging all project stakeholders	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	5 (9.3%)	27 (50%)	21 (38.9%)	4.26	0.705
We involve all project stakeholders in the planning and designing the entire project life	0 (0%)	2 (3.7%)	8 (14.8%)	31 (57.4%)	13 (24.1%)	4.02	0.739
We also have an adequate framework with our suppliers in meeting project needs	0 (0%)	8 (14.8%)	16 (29.6%)	19 (35.2%)	11 (20.4%)	3.61	0.979
Input from supplier relationships and challenges are usually incorporated in our project plans	0 (0%)	4 (7.4%)	12 (22.2%)	21 (38.9%)	17 (31.5%)	3.94	0.920
Our institution involves all project stakeholders in monitoring the entire project life cycle	0 (0%)	7 (13%)	17 (31.5%)	17 (31.5%)	13 (24.1%)	3.67	0.991
We also involve our stakeholders in the evaluation of all project activities	1 (1.9%)	8 (14.8%)	11 (20.4%)	19 (35.2%)	15 (27.8%)	3.72	1.089
Involving all stakeholders has enabled us meet our project goals efficiently	0 (0%)	2 (3.7%)	11 (20.4%)	15 (27.8%)	26 (48.1%)	4.20	0.898

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents (88.9%) agreed that their institution had clear and well articulated plans on engaging all project stakeholders while only 1.9% disagreed. Similarly, 81.5% agreed that they involved all project stakeholders in the planning and designing the entire project life while only 3.7% disagreed. Further, 55.6% agreed that they had an adequate framework with their suppliers in meeting project needs while only 14.8% disagreed. Similarly, 70.4% agreed that the input from supplier relationships and challenges were usually incorporated in their project plans while only 7.4% disagreed. Further, 55.6% agreed that their institution involved all project stakeholders in monitoring the entire project life cycle while 13% disagreed. Similarly, 63% agreed that they involved their stakeholders in the evaluation of all project activities while only 16.7% disagreed. Finally, 75.9% of the respondents agreed that involving all stakeholders had enabled them meet their project goals efficiently while only 3.7% disagreed. Further, with a grand mean of 3.92, it was deduced that institutional stakeholder involvement positively influenced project performance. This is further supported by findings by Githinji, Ogolla and Kitheka (2020) who found that involvement of stakeholders in project identification, respect for stakeholders concerns, involvement of stakeholders in project planning, involvement of stakeholders in project monitoring and involvement of stakeholders in project funding significantly and positively influenced project performance. Similar findings were reported by Omondi and Kinoti(2020) who established that stakeholder participation at project identification, project planning, project implementation and project monitoring significantly influenced the performance of road construction projects.

7.2 Project Performance

The findings on the measurement of project performance are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Measurement of Project Performance

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	StdDev
Our institution has ensured timely completion of all planned projects	1 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	6 (11.1%)	29 (53.7%)	18 (33.3%)	4.17	0.771
We have in the past executed projects at reduced costs as planned	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	8 (14.8%)	34 (63%)	10 (18.5%)	3.94	0.763
We always ensure efficiency in our project budgeting process	0 (0%)	4 (7.4%)	13 (24.1%)	25 (46.3%)	12 (22.2%)	3.83	0.863
Our project outputs have always met desired quality standards	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.4%)	14 (25.9%)	23 (42.6%)	12 (22.2%)	3.76	0.950
We often ensure prudent resource use in all our project activities	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.6%)	14 (25.9%)	19 (35.2%)	17 (31.5%)	3.89	0.984
Our projects have always been appraised and found to satisfy the end users	1 (1.9%)	5 (9.3%)	12 (22.2%)	22 (40.7%)	14 (25.9%)	3.80	0.998
Our staff perform project activities beyond set out performance targets	1 (1.9%)	8 (14.8%)	13 (24.1%)	14 (25.9%)	18 (33.3%)	3.74	1.136

From the findings, 87% agreed that their institution had ensured timely completion of all planned projects while only 1.9% disagreed. Similarly, 81.5% agreed that they had in the past executed projects at reduced costs as planned while only 3.8% disagreed. Furthermore, 68.5% agreed that they ensured efficiency in their project budgeting process while only 9.4% disagreed. Similarly, 64.8% agreed that their project outputs had always met desired quality standards while only 9.3% disagreed. Further, 66.7% agreed that they often ensured prudent resource use in all their project activities while only 7.5% disagreed. Similarly, 66.6% agreed that their projects had always been appraised and found to satisfy the end users while only 11.2% disagreed. Finally, 59.2% agreed that their staff performed project activities beyond set out performance targets while 16.7% disagreed. Further, with a grand mean of 3.88, the study deduced that the institutional factors influenced project performance. The findings are in agreement to those of Bansal *et al.*, (2019) who opined that institutional factors such as stakeholder’s involvement, proper budget allocation, policies, culture, procedures, availability of resources, time, employee packages, leadership, management support, staff and stakeholders training and proper implementation guidelines influenced project performance.

7.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis results on institutional stakeholder involvement and project performance are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Institutional Stakeholder Involvement and Project Performance

	Project Performance	
Institutional Stakeholder Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	54

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the findings, it was established that there was a strong positive correlation between institutional stakeholder involvement and project performance [$r=0.660^{**}$, $p=.000$] implying that higher levels of project performance can be associated with how technical training institutes actively involve stakeholders in their ongoing projects. The findings are in agreement with those of Magassouba *et al.*, (2019) who found a strong positive correlation between stakeholder involvement and project performance and who argued that stakeholder involvement in project implementation is necessary to transform the planned programs and objectives of a project into realistic well-structured tasks and activities to achieve the project goals.

7.4 Regression Analysis

The study undertook a linear regression analysis on institutional stakeholder involvement and project performance and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression Analysis on Institutional Stakeholder Involvement and Project Performance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.660 ^a	.435	.424	.36104		
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.224	1	5.224	40.074	.000 ^b
Residual	6.778	52	.130		
Total	12.002	53			
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.647	.355		4.634	.000
Institutional Stakeholder Involvement	.569	.090	.660	6.330	.000

From the findings, it was established that the R-square of 0.435 implied that institutional stakeholder involvement explained 43.5% of variation in project performance. Therefore, other variables not investigated in this study accounted for 56.5% of variation in project performance. Furthermore, from the findings in Table 4, the overall model was found to be statistically significant (F = 40.074, p=.000<.05). The study developed the following model:

$$Project\ Performance = 1.647 + 0.569Institutional\ Stakeholder\ Involvement$$

The study further tested the null hypothesis stated: **H₀**: Institutional stakeholder involvement has no significant influence on performance of ongoing construction projects in public technical institutes in Nakuru County, Kenya. From Table 4, institutional stakeholder involvement [t = 6.330, P=.000<.05], and thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the study concluded that institutional stakeholder involvement significantly influences project performance.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that TVETs had clear and well articulated plans on engaging all project stakeholders. The study also concluded that TVETs involved all project stakeholders in the planning and designing the entire project life. Further, the study concluded that TVETs had an adequate framework with their suppliers in meeting project needs implying that they had established working and sustainable supplier relationships. Similarly, the study concluded that the input from supplier relationships and challenges were usually incorporated in their project plans. Further, the study concluded that TVETs involved all project stakeholders in monitoring the entire project life cycle. Similarly, the study concluded that TVETs involved their stakeholders in the evaluation of all project activities and thus stakeholders were involved in the identification, analysis and problem solving whenever projects met operational challenges. The study also concluded that involving all stakeholders had enabled TVETs meet their project goals efficiently. The study further concluded that most TVETs agreed on the positive influence of stakeholder involvement on project performance. The study further concluded that there exists a strong positive correlation between institutional stakeholder involvement and project performance and that institutional stakeholder involvement was a significant predictor of project performance. The study recommends development and implementation of mechanisms that help diversify stakeholder relationships and their engagement in all project activities. The study suggests that future researchers should investigate other institutional factors that influence project performance that have not been addressed by the present study including governance, incentives and project initiation mechanisms.

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