

## Original Research

# and Secondary School Goals Attainment: An Empirical Investigation of Public Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State

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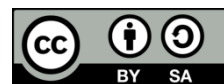
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### ABSTRACT

Effective management of educational resources is critical for ensuring that secondary schools achieve their goals, as it provides students and teachers with access to relevant, up-to-date, and well-organized learning materials. In light of this, the study investigated the management of educational resources for effective secondary school goals attainment in public secondary schools within Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. Specifically, the study focused on the management of digital resources and material resources. Two null hypotheses guided the research. A review of relevant literature was conducted, both conceptually and empirically, to provide a foundation for understanding the sub-variables of the study. The research adopted a correlational survey design, targeting a population of 70 principals and vice-principals across all 18 public secondary schools in the municipality, employing a census sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, the Management of Educational Resources and Secondary School Goals Attainment Questionnaire (MERSSGAQ), designed on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Calabar. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed significant positive relationships between the management of both digital and material resources and the attainment of secondary school goals. The study concluded that effective management of educational resources is pivotal for school success. It is recommended that government and educational authorities provide regular training for principals, teachers, and support staff on resource management, including digital literacy and maintenance practices, to optimize the use of available resources and enhance the overall performance of secondary schools.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, education remains a tool for all-round economic development human, national transformation and development. It is education that develop the learners cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities thus helping them to thrive and contribute positively to their families, communities and nation at large (Isong et al., 2025; Willie et al., 2025). In Nigeria, the education system is organized into three main levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary respectively (Essien et al., 2025; Obona, 2025; National Policy on Education, 2004). Secondary education occupies a central place in national development, functioning as hubs for the advancement, and the training of skilled manpower essential for economic growth and societal progress (Anyalebechi et al., 2025). Secondary schools are designed to among others equip learners with knowledge, skills, competences, and quality learning experiences that empower them to develop independent thinking, appreciate the value of labour, and show respect for others (Obona, 2025). Furthermore, the attainment of these broad and specific goals was expected to transform the Nigerian society towards cohesion and global competitiveness (Ada et al., 2019).

In this context, school goals attainment refers to the degree to which secondary schools successfully achieve their stated educational objectives and fulfill expected outcomes. Obona et al. (2025) describe goal attainment as the measure of how effectively secondary schools meet these predetermined objectives, which include academic performance, student development, and the realization of the school's mission and vision. According to Etor et al. (2018), secondary school goals fall into three major areas: providing access to higher education, fostering knowledge acquisition, and enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. Ultimately, goal attainment focuses on ensuring that the quality of educational outputs aligns with established standards.

Reaching these secondary school goals offers benefits that extend beyond students' immediate achievements. It promotes productivity, reduces learning-related stress, and equips learners with diverse skills needed to navigate an ever-changing world. However, when these essential goals are not achieved, it raises concerns about how secondary school leavers can meaningfully contribute to national development while remaining self-reliant and independent. Unsurprisingly, the effective attainment of secondary school goals continues to attract significant attention from stakeholders. Yet parents and guardians increasingly express dissatisfaction with students' poor attitudes, behavioral issues, and declining academic performance.

The challenge of achieving these goals remains significant in Nigeria, particularly with regard to the quality of graduates produced. Many secondary school leavers still lack vital vocational, technical, and entrepreneurial skills (Etor 2018; Iyiegbuniwe et al., 2025; Nyong 2013, as cited in Obona, 2025). Nyong (2013) further emphasized the gap, revealing that these learners often fall short of the competency levels expected at their stage. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria—and specifically in Cross River State—can partly be linked to weaknesses within the secondary education system, which fails to provide tertiary institutions with well-prepared entrants, and partly to the tertiary system's inability to develop the inadequate inputs it receives (Odigwe et al., 2018). Ofem and Inah (2021) stress the pivotal role of school administrators in planning and implementing instructional programs that support both student success and societal development.

A similar pattern of concern is evident in secondary schools across Cross River State. Arop et al. (2018) reported that many teachers fail to meet instructional expectations, while Obona et al. (2023) observed negative work habits among teachers, such as lateness, absenteeism, and poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students. Ekaette et al. (2019b) further noted that a significant number of secondary school graduates are unable to gain admission into tertiary institutions. Consequently, many of these youths become involved in drug abuse, cultism, and other forms of gangsterism (Alumona & Amusan, 2019). Widespread concerns also persist regarding poor learning outcomes and declining student performance in external examinations such as the West African Examination Council's Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) (Amuche et al., 2014). The situation is no different in public secondary schools within Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. Many young people complete secondary education without acquiring any vocational skill for livelihood, while others drop out due to an inability to cope with academic demands. As a result, a number of these school leavers resort to street life, pickpocketing, prostitution, criminal activities, and other survival-based behaviours. These circumstances ultimately turn many youths into financial and social burdens on their families, rather than contributing positively to community and national development.

The effective achievement of school goals within the education system depends on several factors, including how well the available resources are managed (Okon & Sule, 2006; Usman, 2016). Nwankwo (2014) supports this view by noting that an institution's level of productivity and goal attainment is largely determined by the adequacy, planning, and utilization of its resources. These resources serve as the essential inputs on which schools rely for survival, growth, and continuous improvement, and are often described as the lifeblood of every organization. As Obona (2025) observes, the overall success of institutions—education inclusive—is strongly tied to the efficient management of their resources. In the educational context, resource management refers to the prudent use of financial capital, materials, human resources, information, and time to ensure the

effective delivery of teaching and learning and the attainment of educational objectives. Babalola and Ayeni, as well as Nwafor et al., cited in Obi and Ogbuagu (2020), describe resource management as the deliberate organization and deployment of resources within the education sector to produce competent and high-quality graduates.

According to Enaohwo, cited in Asodike and Jaja (2014), educational resources can be categorized into physical and non-physical components. Isong et al. (2025) further argue that sound management of the education system enhances equitable resource distribution, strengthens infrastructure, ensures adequate funding, and promotes a conducive learning environment. Such effective management is vital for equipping secondary school students with entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for higher education, entry into the labour market, and meaningful participation in national development. This study specifically examined the management of digital resources and material resources in secondary schools.

Digital resources management refers to the systematic planning, organization, and utilization of technology-based information tools to improve teaching, learning, and administrative efficiency in schools. Effective management ensures that digital tools are accessible, relevant, and able to support students' learning needs. Adeniran (2013) emphasizes that digital resources enhance learners' academic achievement by providing up-to-date and appropriate information content that strengthens learning outcomes. In secondary schools, digital resources such as electronic books, online journals, databases, websites, electronic images, and multimedia files serve as critical inputs for curriculum delivery and goal attainment (Ternenge & Kashimana, 2019). These resources also promote learner autonomy, active participation, and collaboration—key indicators of effective learning environments.

A growing body of empirical evidence underscores the positive influence of digital resources on students' academic outcomes. Burk et al. (2013), in a study involving 919 undergraduate chemistry students, found a significant positive association between the use of digital learning tools and performance in midterm, final examinations, and overall course grades. Learning platforms such as WileyPlus and WebCT were particularly impactful, as they encouraged consistent engagement with course content and peer interaction. Within the Nigerian context, Olabode (2016) examined the influence of digital resources on the academic performance of final-year undergraduates at Federal University Oye-Ekiti. The study revealed that the effective use of digital resources contributed meaningfully to improved academic performance.

Similarly, Okorie et al. (2018), in a descriptive survey involving 385 HND students, reported that students frequently used digital resources—especially electronic books—for academic tasks such as assignments and seminar presentations. The study showed that these resources substantially enhanced students' academic performance. Other studies further support these findings. For instance, Kipkosgei (2020) reported a significant positive relationship between the use of e-books, e-journals, and online past examination papers and the academic performance of Information Technology undergraduates at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. In a related investigation, Ogunbodede and Oribhabor (2022) found a strong positive correlation between digital resource utilization and undergraduate students' academic performance at the University of Africa, Bayelsa State. Their findings imply that increased access to and utilization of digital resources leads to improved academic achievement.

Material resources constitute the physical facilities and equipment necessary for effective instructional delivery, including classrooms, buildings, libraries, laboratories, teaching aids, and furniture. The adequacy, maintenance, and proper utilization of these facilities are fundamental to achieving school goals. According to Obi and Ogbuagu (2020), material resources management involves systematically organizing, maintaining, and using physical facilities in alignment with the educational objectives of the school. In secondary schools, well-managed material resources promote effective teaching, support student engagement, and create a conducive environment for learning—key elements for achieving institutional goals.

Several empirical studies affirm the significance of material resources for institutional performance. Amusa et al. (2013), in a survey of 153 academic librarians in South-West Nigeria, established a significant relationship between work environment conditions and job performance. The findings suggest that adequate and well-maintained physical facilities enhance workers' effectiveness. Nwachukwu et al. (2019) examined the influence of work environment on employee commitment across three tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Their results showed that physical working conditions significantly influenced employees' performance and level of organizational commitment. In Kenya, Wagithunu et al. (2019) investigated the effect of physical resource management on teacher trainees' academic performance in public Teacher Training Colleges. Using mixed methods, the study revealed that proper management of physical resources positively affected trainees' academic outcomes. This emphasizes the relevance of material resource management to educational effectiveness. Similarly, Nkedishu (2020) explored the relationship between physical school surroundings and teachers' job satisfaction in Delta State. The study found significant associations between school physical environments—such as classrooms and workspaces—and teachers' job gratification. This implies that well-

maintained material resources enhance staff motivation, which in turn contributes to the attainment of school objectives.

Across the reviewed literature, both digital and material resources management emerge as essential components of effective educational administration. Properly managed digital resources enhance instructional quality, promote learner engagement, and improve academic performance. Likewise, adequate and well-maintained material resources create conducive learning environments and support teachers' productivity. Therefore, for public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality and similar settings, strengthening both digital and material resources management is vital for achieving secondary school goals. The review was very helpful to the researcher. It provided some insight into existing knowledge in literature as well as to identify research gaps. However, the researcher observed that there are several gaps resulting from variables, location, scope, and/or methodology which the present study will fill. Additionally, majority of the reviewed studies were conducted outside Cross River State. Other studies were foreign based. Furthermore, most of the studies reviewed adopted quasi-experimental, ex post facto, and descriptive survey design, which differ from the correlational research designs employed in the present study. Therefore, the researcher deemed it necessary to investigate management of educational resources and secondary school goals attainment in Calabar municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria, since no such study was conducted on the topic and the variables used in this study. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill a gap in literature.

### **1.1. Statement of the problem**

Secondary schools are considered effective when they successfully achieve the objectives for which they were established. These objectives are reflected in students' academic performance in core subjects, standardized test outcomes, graduation rates, participation in co-curricular activities, and overall readiness for tertiary education or the labour market. However, despite these expected outcomes, the effectiveness of secondary schools in the study area has become a growing concern. Evidence from schools in the locality points to persistent challenges such as declining academic performance, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, and rising dropout rates. Many of these issues are further compounded by insufficient instructional facilities, poor learning environments, and limited motivation for both teachers and students. Such conditions threaten the quality of education delivered and hinder the attainment of secondary school goals.

Although the state government has implemented several reforms—such as curriculum review, enforcement of a unified academic calendar, regular payment of teachers' salaries, renovation of school buildings, and provision of some instructional facilities—expected improvements in school outcomes have remained minimal. This raises critical questions about whether the persistent challenges stem from ineffective management of educational resources. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate whether a relationship exists between the management of educational resources and the attainment of secondary school goals in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State.

### **1.2. Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate educational resources management and secondary school goals attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State. However, the study specifically examined the relationship between:

1. Digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment.
2. Material resources management and secondary school goals attainment.

### **1.3. Statement of hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment.
2. Material resources management does not significantly relate to secondary school goals attainment.

## **2. METHOD**

The study adopted correlational research design to investigate management of educational resources and secondary school goals attainment in Calabar municipality of Cross River State. The population was 70 administrators in 18 public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. This number is made up of 18 principals and 52 vice principals. These numbers formed the study population. Census method was used in this study. A census is a study of every unit, everyone or everything when the size of the population is small. Therefore, census sampling was adopted in selecting the entire population of public secondary school and the administrators in the area for the study. However, purposive sampling technique

was used to select a total of 54 teachers (3 teachers from each of the schools) to obtain quality and reliable data on management of educational resources and secondary school goals attainment.

The choice of three teachers per school was guided by the need to ensure manageable data collection while maintaining representation across schools. Specifically, teachers were selected based on key criteria such as years of teaching experience, subject specialization, and involvement in school administrative or resource management activities, to ensure that respondents possessed adequate knowledge relevant to the study variables. This approach ensured that diverse perspectives were captured within each school, while minimizing redundancy and enhancing the quality of responses. Furthermore, selecting equal numbers of teachers from each school helped to maintain balance and comparability across schools, thereby reducing the risk of over-representation or under-representation of any particular school in the analysis.

The instrument used for data collection was a 18-item questionnaire designed by the researcher on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), titled "Management of Educational Resources and Secondary School Goals Attainment Questionnaire (MERSSGAQ)." A questionnaire letter that explained the need for the study preceded the main questionnaire. The instrument was divided into three sections – Section A, B and C. Section A was designed to gather information on respondents' demographic data such as sex, age, marital and educational status of respondents. Section B was designed to elicit information on respondents based on the following sub variables: digital resources management, and material resources management. Section C measures secondary school goals attainment. Before administering the questionnaires, the items were submitted for vetting to research experts in Educational Management, and in Measurement and Evaluation, faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, University of Calabar. All irrelevant items were either dropped or modified by the experts to suit the study.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was trial-tested on 50 teachers from public secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area, which is outside the study area. After the instrument was administered and retrieved from the respondents, they were coded and the data subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach alpha reliability scale. The reliability coefficient index was .81. This indicated that the instrument was consistent in measuring what it was expected to measure.

The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The researcher recruited five research assistants who were adequately trained and guided on the procedures for administering the instrument to ensure uniformity and accuracy. Permission was obtained from the respective school authorities before the administration of the questionnaire. In addition, the respondents were provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before participation. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured that they could withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

Furthermore, the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were guaranteed. No personal identifiers such as names or contact details were required on the questionnaire. All information provided was treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for the research purposes. More so, the data collected were securely handled and stored to prevent unauthorized access. The task was accomplished in 4 working days. Next, the researcher sorted out the collected questionnaire to ensure that all the items have been well responded to by the respondents. It was discovered that all the questionnaire copies were correctly filled and retrieved. The questionnaire was then organized in the order of the variables they were designed to measure. Positively worded items were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4point, Agree (A) = 3points, Disagree (D) = 2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1point. But for all the negatively worded items, the pattern was reversed. The scores of respondents on the respective sub-scales were summed and transferred to appropriate statistical packages for analysis.

The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between management of educational resources and secondary school goals attainment. While this method effectively establishes the strength and direction of relationships, it does not account for the influence of potential confounding variables such as teachers' experience, school size, and leadership structure. To minimize this limitation, efforts were made during data collection to ensure relative homogeneity across the sampled schools, particularly in terms of administrative structure and operational framework within public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. Nonetheless, the absence of statistical control for confounding variables is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, and future studies are encouraged to employ more advanced techniques such as multiple regression analysis.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment in Calabar municipality, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are digital

resources management and secondary school goals attainment. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis, and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients between digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for secondary school goals attainment ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is less than  $p(.05)$ , hypothesis one is rejected in terms of secondary school goals attainment. The result of the analysis implied that there was a statistically significant relationship between digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State.

Table 1: Summary of the correlation between the management of digital resources and the attainment of secondary school goals in public secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State.

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
Digital resources management	19.12	3.57		
School goals attainment	20.49	3.07	.53*	.000

\*Significant at  $p < .05$   $df=68$

### 3.2. Hypothesis two

Material resources management does not significantly relate to secondary school goals attainment in Calabar municipality, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are material resources management and secondary school goals attainment. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis, and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between material resources management and secondary school goals attainment. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for secondary school goals attainment ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is less than  $p(.05)$ , hypothesis two is rejected in terms of secondary school goals attainment. The result of the analysis implied that there was a statistically significant relationship between material resources management and secondary school goals attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State.

Table 2: Summary of correlation between management of **material** resources and secondary school goals attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar municipality, Cross River State.

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
Material resources management	18.63	4.46		
School goals attainment	20.49	3.07	.65*	.000

\*Significant at  $p < .05$   $df=68$

## 4. DISCUSSION

The finding of hypothesis one revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between digital resources management and secondary school goals attainment in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. This finding suggests that schools that effectively organize, update, and utilize digital tools—such as e-libraries, digital lesson materials, computer-assisted instruction, and electronic record systems—are often associated with more efficient teaching and learning environments. Effective management of these resources appears to be linked with improved instructional delivery, increased students' access to relevant learning materials, and more streamlined administrative processes. These factors may, in turn, be associated with better academic performance and overall goal attainment.

The implication of this result is that sustained investment in digital resources, alongside proper maintenance and capacity-building for staff, may be associated with improved school effectiveness. Consequently, digital resource management can be considered an important area of focus for educational planners and administrators seeking to enhance school outcomes. However, while the findings revealed a significant relationship between the variables, this relationship should be interpreted with caution. The observed association may be influenced by other underlying factors not accounted for in this study, such as leadership style, teachers' motivation, school climate, and availability of external support. These confounding variables may interact with resource management practices in shaping school outcomes, thereby limiting the extent to which the findings can be generalized. Therefore, although the findings are consistent with existing literature, they should be interpreted as indicative of an association rather than conclusive evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between digital resource management and school goals attainment. Future studies should incorporate these additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with secondary school goals attainment.

This finding aligns with the result of Burk et al. (2013), who reported that students' engagement with various digital learning materials positively correlated with their academic achievement. Similarly, it

supports the findings of Okorie et al. (2018), whose study at Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri showed that HND students consistently used digital resources for academic tasks such as assignments and seminar preparation, leading to improved performance. The result is also consistent with Kipkosgei (2020), who found a significant positive relationship between the use of digital resources—such as e-books, e-journals, and online past questions—and the academic achievement of undergraduate information technology students at JKUAT. These studies reinforce the present finding by demonstrating that effective use and management of digital resources contribute meaningfully to improved learning outcomes, implying that digital resources management can significantly enhance the attainment of secondary education goals.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between material resources management and secondary school goals attainment in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. This suggests that schools with better provision, organization, and utilization of essential material resources—such as classrooms, textbooks, laboratories, furniture, and instructional materials—tend to report higher levels of goal attainment. While this pattern aligns with expectations, the result should be interpreted cautiously, as a correlational finding alone is not sufficient to conclude that material resource management is inherently effective or determinative of school outcomes.

The finding indicates that adequate and well-managed material resources are associated with conditions that may support teaching and learning processes. For instance, improved availability and organization of resources may coincide with better instructional practices and more conducive learning environments. However, these associations do not establish that resource management, in itself, leads to improved academic outcomes. Importantly, alternative explanations may account for the observed relationship. Factors such as government funding policies and strategies, students' socioeconomic backgrounds, teacher quality, and school leadership, could influence both the management of material resources and the level of school goals attainment as well. The implication of this result is that, while material resource management appears to be an important correlate of school effectiveness, it should not be considered in isolation. There is need for a more comprehensive perspective that incorporates broader contextual and institutional variables. Future studies could adopt more robust designs, including the integration of additional variables to better understand the complex interplay of factors associated with secondary school goals attainment.

This finding is consistent with the report of Amusa et al. (2013), whose study on work environment and job performance among librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria revealed a significant correlation between the quality of physical resources and employees' productivity. Likewise, it aligns with the findings of Wagithunu et al. (2019), who established that effective physical resource management positively influences the academic performance of trainees in public Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya. These related studies support the present result by demonstrating that well-managed material resources create conducive conditions for teaching, learning, and overall institutional effectiveness. This implies that efficient management of material resources is essential for enhancing the attainment of secondary education goals.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that effective management of both digital and material resources plays a crucial role in enhancing the attainment of secondary school goals in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. Schools that prioritize the proper organization, utilization, and maintenance of these resources create more conducive environments for teaching, learning, and overall administrative efficiency, which in turn positively influences students' academic outcomes and institutional performance. This shows that improving resource management remains a vital pathway for achieving quality secondary education and sustaining long-term school effectiveness.

The study recommended that:

1. School administrators should prioritize continuous investment in both digital and material resources to ensure that teaching and learning materials remain adequate, functional, and aligned with modern educational demands.
2. The government should support education authorities to provide regular training for principals, teachers, and support staff on effective resource management practices, including digital literacy and maintenance culture, to enhance optimal utilization of available resources.
3. Stakeholders should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to routinely assess the condition, usage, and management of school resources, ensuring accountability and promoting consistent improvement in school goal attainment.

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## DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors

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## ETHICAL STATEMENT

Not applicable.

## AI USE STATEMENT

The authors declare that the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool [ChatGPT] was used exclusively for language editing and/or grammatical improvement. The use of AI did not influence the scientific content, study design, data analysis, data interpretation, results, or conclusions of the manuscript. Full responsibility for the content remains with the authors.

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