# Factors Contributing to High School Drop Out Rates among Female Teenagers Aged 13-19 Years in Logiri Sub-County, Arua District. A Cross-sectional Study.

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#### Abstract



#### **Background:**

The purpose of the study was to determine individual, socio-economic, and school-based factors towards school dropout rates among female teenagers aged (13-19 years) in Logiri Sub-county, Arua District.

#### Methodology:

The study employed a cross-sectional study design for both qualitative and quantitative data targeting a sample of 50 teenage girls aged 13-19 years using simple random sampling as a sampling tool and semi-structured questionnaires as data collection tools. Data were analyzed manually and presented in tables and figures using micro soft excel. **Results**:

The study results individually showed that; (98%) of respondents heard about going to schools, (56%) of respondents had no interest in studies, (78%) of respondents stopped with studies in p5-p6, (46%) of respondents valued education as somehow useful, (88%) of respondents were not aware of the impact of not studying, (40%) of respondents perceived education somehow relevant and (42%) of respondents suffered from serious illnesses. **Conclusion:** 

# Therefore, the researcher concluded that girls lost interest in studies, had a low perception of the value of education, illnesses, absenteeism, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy, reduced perception of the value of education, high dropout rates of colleagues, long distances, poor performances in some subjects, inadequate counseling and guidance and attitude of teachers were the major factors contributing to high school female teenage dropout rates.

#### **Recommendation:**

The researcher recommended that the ministry of education should establish more schools in sub-counties to reduce distance, carry out nationwide sensitization of the community members on the importance of sending girls to school, providing requirements, and giving necessary counseling both at home and school.

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### 1 Background of study

Around the world, 129 million girls are out of school, including 32 million primary school-aged, 30 million lower secondary school-aged, and 67 million upper secondary school age. The countries affected by conflict, girls are more than twice more likely to be out of school than girls living in non-affected countries (UNICEF, 2021).

According to a World Health Organization report (2021), the overall status dropout rate decreased from 8.3% in 2010 to 5.1% in 2019, during this year the status dropout rate declined for 16 to 24 years-

old overall (16.7 to 7.7%), American Indian natives from (15.4 to 9.6%%), Blacks (10.3 to 5.6%), White (5.3 to 4.1%), Asian (2.8 to 1.8%) and two or more races (16.7 to 7. 7%). American Indian Alaska native (from 15.4 to 9.6%), Black (from 10.3 to 5.6%), White (from5.3 from 4.1%), Asian (from 2.8 to 1.8).

More than 49 million girls are out of primary and secondary school in Saharan Africa, with31 a million of them out of secondary education, undermining their rights and limiting their opportunities. In addition, 40 % of girls marry before age 18, and African countries account for 15 to 20 countries with the highest rate of child marriage globally (Marco & Hella, 2017).

In Nigeria, the official junior secondary education age goes from 12 to 14 years, in 2018 dropout rates in middle school were slightly high in females. In the second class of the lower secondary school, some 48% of females were out of school. The dropout rate in public and lower secondary schools in Nigeria as of 2018, by class and gender. Firstclass 33%, second class 48.2%, and Third class 49.5% in females (Simona *et al*, 2021).

In Kenya, global citizen estimates that more than 152,000 teenage girls in Kenya became pregnant between March and May 2020 due to economic hardships in countries nationwide lockdown. This represents a staggering 40% increase in Kenya's monthly average. Roughly 13,000 young girls drop out of school each year to have children (Majd *et al*, 2021).

In Uganda, 25% of girls are pregnant according to Uganda demographic and health survey 2016. Pregnancy accounted for 34% of dropouts. In 2016, a total of 8116 girls country wide dropped out of school due to pregnancy of these 6229 were upper primary pupils while 2353 were secondary students (UBOS & ICF, 2017). Specific objectives were to; assess the individual factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers aged (13-19) years, assess socio-economic factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers aged (13-19years and school-based factors contributing to high school dropout among female teenagers aged (13-19) years.

#### 2 Methodology

#### Study design

A cross-sectional study design was employed with quantitative approaches where data was gath-

ered at only one point at a time. The design was considered appropriate for the study because it enabled data to be collected on individual characteristics at the time of the study alongside information about the outcome and association between individual characteristics and the outcome of interest.

#### Study area

The study was conducted in Logiri sub-county which is one of the eight Sub-Counties of Arua district. The village was bordered by central II, the Town council, Jepaku in the East, North, West, and South respectively. Its 25 kilometers away from Arua town having an average population of 500,000 people.

#### **Study population**

The study population refers to a large group of people possessing one or more characteristics in common on which the research study focuses. Therefore, this consisted of female teenagers aged 13-19 years. The study population was chosen because female teenagers were the most affected by the problems of school dropout in Logiri Sub County, Arua district.

#### Sample size determination:

The sample size of the respondents to take part in the study was determined by the statistical formulae by Kish & Leslie (1965)

Where n = minimum sample size

**z** =is the z-value at @=0.05 corresponding to 1.96 approximately 2

Confidence level (i.e.1.96) **p** =proportion of teenage girls who dropped out of school

By convention this proportion p=0.5 if there is no literature found in the study area

D=the proposed precision of the study=0.1

Therefore, 22x0.5(1-0.5)/0.12

n=100.

Therefore, the target sample size of respondents would be 100 respondents but due to time constraints, 50 respondents were considered.

#### **Study variables**

#### **Dependent variable**

The dependent variable was a school dropout **Independent variables** 

Individual, socio-economic, and school-based factors contributing to high school dropout rates among teenage girls aged 13-19 years in Logiri subcounty, Arua district were the independent variables.

Selection criteria Inclusion criteria The inclusion criteria were composed of school dropout teenage girls aged 18 -19 years in Logiri Sub County who consent voluntarily during the time of data collection and caretakers/ parents of school dropout teenage girls aged 13-17 who consent on behalf of their daughters.

#### **Exclusion criteria**

School dropout teenage girls who were present during the time of the study but not willing to participate in the study were excluded from the study.

#### Sampling technique

Simple random sampling was used to select the sample from the source population. The technique was preferred because it ensures freedom from human bias and each number of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included.

#### Data collection method

Data collection refers to a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering information to answer emerging research questions. Therefore, semi-structured questionnaires consisting of both closed and open-ended questions written in English language and translated into the local language(Lugbara) were used to collect data. The researcher considered questionnaires as the most convenient way of collecting data from respondents because it was easy for the researcher to administer and obtain data within a short time from a large number of respondents.

#### **Piloting study**

Before the commencement of the proper study, 10 respondents in Pajulu Sub County were interviewed to determine the feasibility of the data collection as regards the various study variables in the questionnaire. The pilot study aimed to test the usability of the questionnaire and to identify any problems that might arise in the course of the study. The piloted questionnaires were not included in the original study because it was done outside the study area and data collection period.

#### Data collection procedure

An introduction letter was obtained from the Kampala School of Health Sciences and delivered to the LCIII chairperson of Logiri Sub County, seeking permission to carry out the study. When permission was granted, two research assistants with good knowledge of the local language that is Lugbara were trained on research methodology and study objectives before data collection. The researcher was guided by the research assistant's chairperson of the village in data collection using questionnaires. The respondents were grouped into 4 clusters at the village level of which 4 clusters were selected randomly by balloting. Finally, samples were obtained using a simple random sampling method from each of the 4 clusters using a balloting method too because it reduces random errors, is less expensive, and can estimate the characteristics of both the selected population and the population as a whole hence representative of the entire population. All those who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were interviewed for about 30 -35 minutes from a quiet and private place, preferably at their home place/workplace. The procedure was repeated each day until the sample size of 50 respondents was obtained.

#### **Quality control**

An instrument is reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeatedly used to measure concepts from the same respondents even by other researchers. In this study, a scientific research method was applied to design the data collection tool as well as the selection of the samples. Using critically assessed instruments, a scientific sampling technique was followed to minimize information bias.

The standard operating procedures were observed in course of data collection, this involved wearing face masks at all times, maintenance of social distance in interaction with correspondents, continuous hand sanitization, and attending to one correspondent at a time.

### 3 Data analysis and presentation

Data processing included the following steps: sorting, categorization, coding, entry, cleaning, and validation. Data were appropriately recorded and edited to ensure accuracy and consistency. Coded data will be entered into SPSS for analysis.

Information extracted from the questionnaires was transferred to SPSS version 20 for analysis. For descriptive statistics, categorical data were analyzed and results were presented by the use of percentages, proportions, and frequencies. Numerical continuous data were analyzed and results were presented in form of tables & figures by the use of means with their standard deviations while for analytical statistics, data regularities were identified and compared with different ideas and assumptions initially done by other researchers at a general level.

#### **Ethical considerations**

An introductory letter was sought from the administration of Kampala School of Health Sciences and presented to Local Chairperson III to seek permission to carry out the study. Once permission was granted, consent from the respondents was obtained after an adequate explanation of the objectives of the study, and participation was voluntary. The information to be gathered was kept confidential; questionnaires were kept secured for the privacy of information collected from any third party.

#### 4 Results:

#### **5** Demographic Data

From the table above, half of the respondents (50%) were aged 15-16 years whereas least (6%) of respondents were aged 19-20 years.

In regards to education levels attained, majority of the respondents (80%) had primary level education whereas minority (6%) did not reach institution.

From the table above, most of the respondents (58%) were pupils whereas least (12%) of respondents were students.

Basing on study findings, majority of the respondents (80%) whereas minority (20%) of respondents were married.

### 6 Individual factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers aged 13-19 years

From the figure 1 above, almost all respondents (98%) had ever heard about going to school whereas the least (2%) of respondents had never heard about going to school in their life.

From the chart 1 above, majority of the respondents (56%) never had in studies whereas the minority (44%) had interest in studies.

From the table above, findings showed that majority of respondents (78%) had stopped studies in P5-P6 whereas the minority (6%) had only stopped studying in P1-P2.

From the table 3 above, most of the respondents (46%) valued education as somehow relevant in

their future life whereas the least (24%) valued education as useful in their future life.

From the figure above, majority of the respondents (88%) were aware of the impact of not studying whereas the minority (12%) were not aware of the impact of not studying.

From the table above, most of the respondents (40%) had perceived studies as somehow relevant in their life whereas the least (10%) had perceived studies as irrelevant in their life.

From the figure above, majority of the respondents (60%) had suffered from any illness that affected their studies whereas the minority (40%) of respondents had never suffered from illness.

### 7 Socio-economic factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers

From the table above, more than half of the respondents (58%) had ever done farming before dropping out of school whereas the least (12%) had ever looked after siblings before dropping out of school.

From the table above, majority of respondents (76%) carried out the activities during some days of the week whereas the minority of respondents (6%) carried out the activities in the afternoon.

From table above, most of the respondents (70%) had parents whose major source income was from farming whereas the least (4%) of respondents had parents whose major source of income was salary.

From the figure above, almost all the respondents (86%) agreed that teenage pregnancy and early marriages caused some girls to drop out of school whereas the least (14%) disagreed that teenage pregnancy and early marriage caused some girls to drop out of school.

the figure above, most of the respondents (56%), community members had average perception towards girl's education whereas the least (4%) of respondents had a poor perception towards girl's education.

From the figure above, majority of the respondents (94%) had traditional norms that supported studies for both genders as equal whereas the minority (6%) of respondents had traditional norms that didn't support studies for both genders.

Variable	Frequency(f)	Percentages(%)
Age		-
13-14	13	26
15-16	25	50
17-18	9	18
19-20	3	6
Total	50	100
Educatior	nal level	
Primary	40	80
Secondary	· 7	14
Institution	3	6
Total	50	100
Occupatio	on	
Pupil	29	58
Student	6	12
Dropout	15	30
Total	50	100
Marital st	atus	
Married	10	20
Single	40	80
Total	50	100



**Figure 1.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they had ever heard about going to school in their life.



#### **Chart 1.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they had interest in studies.

Respons	e Frequency (f	Percentage (%)
P1-p2	3	6
P3-p4	8	16
P5-p6	39	78
Total	50	100

**Table 3.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to how they valued education in their future life (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Useful	12	24
Not useful	15	30
Some how	23	46
Total	50	100
(Primary data,	2022)	

**Table 4.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to how they perceived studies in their life (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Relevant	15	30
Irrelevant	5	10
Not boring at all	10	20
Somehow relevant	20	40
Total	50	100



**Chart 2.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they were aware of impact of not studying (N=50)







**Chart 4.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they thought teenage pregnancy and early marriages caused some girls to drop out of school (N=50)





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**Table 5.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to activities they carried out before dropping out of school (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Going to market	15	30
Farming	29	58
Looking after sibling	6	12
Total	50	100
(Primary data, 2022)		

Table 6. Shows the distribution of respondents depending on time spent for above activities (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Morning	5	10
Afternoon	3	6
Weekend	4	8
Some days	38	76
Total	50	100
(Primary data,	2022)	

Table 7. Shows the distribution of respondents according to their parent's major source of income (N=50)

Source of income	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Farming	35	70
Salary	2	4
Small business	10	20
No	3	6
Total	50	100
(Primary data, 2022)		

**Table 8.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to the levels of education their parents intended to provide for their girls (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Primary	15	30
Secondary	30	60
Institution	5	10
Total	50	100
(Primary data,	2022)	

From the table above, most of the respondents (60%) had parents who intended to provide education to girls up to secondary whereas the least (10%) of respondents had parents who intended to provide education to girls up to institution.

### 8 Among female 4.4 school based factors contributing to high school dropout rates teenagers

Figure 8: Shows the distribution of respondents according to whether they had fellow students who drop out of school



**Chart 5.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to how their traditional norms supported studies for both genders

From the figure above, majority of the respondents (80%) had fellow students who drop out of school whereas the minority (20%) never had fellow students who drop out of school.

From the table above, most of the respondents (36%) the distance from home to school was more than 1 km whereas the least (30%) the distance from home to school was 100-500 m.

From the figure above, majority of the respondents (60%) performed averagely at school whereas minority of respondents (4%) performed poorly.

From the table above, majority of the respondents (78%) performed poorly in mathematics whereas the minority (2%) performed poorly in biology.

From the figure above, more than half of the respondents (52%) reported that they never had enough counselling and guidance at school whereas least (48%) they had enough guidance and counselling.

From the figure above, most of the respondents (52%) stated that the female gender was mostly involved in guidance and counselling whereas the least number (48%) of respondents stated that the male gender was mostly involved in guidance and counselling.

From the table above, majority of the respondents (50%) noted that their teachers had unapproachable attitudes at school whereas the minority of respondents (2%) had teachers who were tough at school.

# 9 Discussions conclusions and Recommendations:10 Discussions:

Individual factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers aged between 13-19 years

The study showed that most of the respondents (56%) had no interest in studies. This reveals that they had higher chances of dropping out of school. This is corresponding with the study variable of Jean *et al.*, (2020), where results showed that (27%) of respondents dropped out of school as a result of loss of interest.

The study showed that the majority of the respondents (78%) stopped with studies in P5-P6. This could be due to some reasons the study is yet to reveal. The results of the study were in line with the findings of Jean *et al.*, (2020), where results showed that 28.3% of girls dropped out of primary five.



Chart 6. Shows the distribution of respondents according to how they performed at school (N=50)



**Chart 7.** Shows the distribution of respondents according whether they had enough counseling and guidance at school (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
100-500m	15	30
600-1km	17	34
More than 1km	18	36
Total	50	100

 Table 10. Shows distribution of respondents according to the subjects they performed poorly (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Chemistry	2	4
Biology	1	2
Physics	3	6
Mathematics	39	78
Others	5	10
Total	50	100



**Chart 8.** Shows the distribution of respondents according to the gender that was mostly involved in guidance and counselling (N=50)

**Table 11.** Shows distribution of respondents according to how they assessed attitude of their former teachers at school (N=50)

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Tough	1	2
Unapproachable	25	50
Lovely	22	44
Harsh	2	4
Total	50	100

The study showed that most of the respondents (46%) had valued education as somehow useful in future life. But due to certain circumstances, they dropped out even though they valued it to some extent. The results of the study differ from the findings of Nakatibeb & Randon (2016), where results showed that 7.4% of girls were not aware of the future benefits of studies.

The study showed that most of the respondents (42%) had suffered from any illness. Therefore, such illness could not favor them to continue with their studies. The results of the study were in line with Atieno *et al.*, (2020), where results showed that 47% of respondents in urban,7% of respondents in rural dropped out due to illness.

Socio-economic factors contributing to high school dropout among female teenagers aged between 13-19 years.

The study showed that more than half of respondents (58%) had ever gone to a farm before they drop out of school. This implies that farming took most of their time for their studies. The results of the study were in line with the findings of Tinkhoing (2017), where results showed that 32% of girls participated in farming.

The study showed that the majority of respondents (76%) had carried out their activities on some days of the week. This was due to a lack of parental guidance on attending classes as being more beneficial than farming. The results of the study were in disagreement with Abu-Saeed *et al.*, (2018), where results showed that (63.3%) of girls were engaged in activities during school hours.

The results showed that most of the respondents (70%) had parents whose major source of income was from farming, this implies that the parents had no other sources of generating income and therefore were most likely not to be able to maintain certain costs to take care of their children. The results of the study were consistent with Mulongo *et al.*, (2019), where results showed that 26% of respondents in 2015,22% in 2016,20% in 2017,32% in 2018 had inadequate school fees.

The results showed that the majority of respondents (86%) had thought that teenage pregnancy and early marriage caused girls to drop out. This can occur due to inadequate parental guidance with limited guidance and counseling at school. The results of the study were inconsistent with Atunga *et al.,* (2018), where results showed that 30% of respondents in rural had an early marriage.

The results showed that the majority of the respondents (60%) had parents who intended to provide education to girls up to secondary and therefore, due to low levels of economic status were most likely to fail to afford school fees costs and hence making their children drop out of school. The findings of the study were consistent with Tomba & Tinkhoiling (2017), where results showed that 74% of respondents said their education career should be determined by parents.

School-based factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers aged 13-19 years

The results showed that the majority of respondents (92%) had fellow students who dropped out of school. This could be a result of girls copying the characters of their fellow friends and then later dropping out of school. The results of the study were in line with Akoijan *et al.*, (2021), where results showed that 65.4% of respondents left school.

The results showed that for most of the respondents (36%) the distance from home to school at more than 1km. Hence they became tired of moving daily for more long distances to school resulting in absenteeism. The results of the study were in line with Mutai *et al.*, (2019), where results showed that 30% of respondents had a long distance to school.

The results showed that the majority of respondents (60%) had performed averagely well at school. Despite average performance in some subjects girls never had an interest in school as earlier noted and dropped out. The results of the study were inconsistent with Goldwe *et al.*, (2016), where results showed that 85% of respondents dropped out of school due to poor performance.

In addition, the majority of respondents (78%) had performed poorly in mathematics, this can be due to poor attitudes towards subject teachers, which made girls lose interest in studies, hence dropping out of school. The results of the study were not in line with Bitok *et al.*, (2017), where results showed that 76.0% of respondents disagreed to learn mathematics, 31.8% said it is difficult, and 48.8% said they cannot handle it.

The study further showed that the majority of respondents (52%) never had enough guidance and counseling at school. This implies that teachers were so reluctant to provide counseling to students. The findings of the study were not in line with Bukenya (2015), where results showed that 53.3% of respondents and 53.7% of respondents agreed there was guidance and counseling.

The study showed that the majority of respondents (50%) had assessed their teachers as unapproachable. This was due to teachers becoming unconcerned on girls' matters and addressing them promptly this lowered their attitude towards learning hence dropping out of school. The results of the study were inconsistent with Lockett *et al.*, (2020), where results showed that 20% of respondents could punish, and 86.5% of respondents had unreasonable harassment respectively.

#### **11 Conclusions**

Based on the study findings following conclusions were made:

The study discovered that; most girls did not finish their studies as (56%) lost interest in studies on the way, the inability of girls to continue with studies (78%) stopped in p5-p6, low perception of the value of education (46%) had valued education as somehow useful in future life and illness as (47%) had suffered from serious illnesses were the major individual factors contributing to high school dropout among female teenagers. The study discovered that; most girls were absenteeism from school (58%) engaged in farming on some days, had an inadequate source of income to sustain girls well-being as (70%) of parents' major source of income was from farming, reduced the number of girls at school as (86%) of girls were engaged in early marriage and pregnancy practices and reduced perception of the value of education by parents as ( 60%) intended to provide education to girls only up to secondary were the major socio-economic factors contributing to high school dropout rates among female teenagers.

The study discovered that; high dropout rates of colleagues (92%) dropped out of school, long distances (36%) noted distance from home to school was more than 1km, poor performance in some subjects as (78%) of respondents were performing poorly in mathematics, inadequate counseling and guidance from teachers as agreed by (52%) and attitude of teachers as (50%) had unapproachable teachers were the major school-based factors contributing to high school female teenage dropout rates.

Therefore, the overall researcher concluded that girls lost interest in studies, had a low perception of the value of education, illnesses, absenteeism, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy, reduced perception of the value of education, had high dropout rates of colleagues, long distances, poor performances in some subjects, inadequate counseling and guidance and attitude of teachers were the major factors contributing to high school female teenage dropout rates.

# 12 Limitations of the study and their possible solutions

The tight school programs may interfere with the exercise and this was solved by budgeting the little available time and using it effectively.

The researcher faced difficulties in obtaining information from respondents. This was solved by making sure that the respondents are fully psychoeducated about the relevance of the study and assuring them that the information obtained was kept confidential.

The coronavirus pandemic in Uganda imposed an impact on the completion of the data collection process in time because the researcher met a few respondents per day to maintain the standard operating procedures.

#### **Recommendations:**

The ministry of health should carry out nationwide health education on different illnesses, provide schools with health workers and provide schools with necessary essential medicines.

The ministry of education should plan for the establishment of more schools in different subcounties to reduce on challenges of long distances, carry out supervisory activities of schools, and provide adequate teachers and learning materials.

The government and non-governmental organizations should look for strategies of funding girl child education promotion services, build schools and offer support to girls who are in need since most of the girls came from families with low economic status.

The local leaders should ensure that all parents send their girls to school, report challenges faced by girls to higher authorities, encourage parents to participate in small money-saving groups, and encourage the community to support girls' education.

The heads of schools should ensure adequate classrooms, and learning materials, set rules and regulations, monitor girls' performance with the provision of necessary guidance and counseling by female teachers involved and teachers to be lovely and help girls to learn.

Parents/caretakers should send girls to school, and provide home-based education with the full support of ladies by providing school fees, study materials, and visiting ladies at school.

#### Definitions of key terms

**Dropout:** A pupil or student who has withdrawn from school prematurely.

**Education:** Is the process of facilitating learning and acquisition of knowledge, Skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits that may bring positive changes to one's life and behavior.

**Public School**: A school that receives financial support from the government tuition is paid for education but relatively Lower compared to other types of schools.

**Pull-factors:** Refers to factors in the environment outside the school that Leads to students' dropping out of school.

**Pupil:** A child who is in primary school to receive an education.

**Push-factor:** Refers to Factors in the school environment that lead to students' dropping out of school.

**Retention:** Ability of pupils to remain and progress in school until they complete their education cycle.

**School-based factors:** The conditions inherent to the school that either limit or enhance the involvement of pupils in primary school education.

**Student:** A person primarily enrolled in a school or other educational institution and who is under learning with goals of acquiring knowledge, developing professions and achieving employment in the desired field.

**Teenager:** Refers to any human being between the age of 13-19 years.

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