

Prevalence of Father–Daughter Incestuous Relationship as Perceived by Literate Adults in Nigeria

Shittu John Idowu

Department of Special Education and Counselling, Faculty of Specialized and Professional Education, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to ascertain how common father-daughter incestuous relationships are among literate individuals in Nigeria. The study used the descriptive survey approach. All adults in Nigeria who were literate made up the target population. The study's sample was chosen by the application of a multistage sampling technique. Data were gathered using a study tool called the "prevalence of father-daughter incestuous questionnaire (PFIQ)". Counselling psychologists with expertise in the field established the instrument's content validity. Using a test-retest approach, the instrument's reliability coefficient was determined, yielding a coefficient of 0.75. The results showed that there is a significant prevalence of incestuous relationships between fathers and daughters (24.9%). Regarding the frequency of father-daughter incestuous relationships, there were notable variations among the participants according to gender [$t(1198) = -5.13; p, 0.05$] and home type [$t(1198) = 2.23; p < 0.05$]. The results have implications for counselling practice and education, including the requirement that counsellors have training in managing father-daughter incestuous relationships. The sexuality and family life education programmes should cover techniques for managing father-daughter incestuous relationships. It is consequently advised that, in order to lessen the incidence of father-daughter incestuous relationships, religious organisations educate their followers about the risks involved. To raise public awareness of the need to combat this social threat in our society, the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) ought to host conferences, workshops, and seminars on father-daughter incestuous relationships.*

Keywords: Incestuous relationship, father daughter incest, prevalence and sexuality

INTRODUCTION

Similar to other regions globally, Nigeria also experiences instances of maltreatment towards female teenagers and adolescents. An area of particular concern is the increasing prevalence of incestuous father-daughter relationships. According to Shittu (2019), A rising incidence of father-daughter incestuous relationships, according to Shittu, is one manifestation of the general tide of social menace that is presently sweeping the nation. According to research, 46%

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of abused children are relatives of the perpetrators (Wolf & William, 2004). In addition, 29% of all forced rapes occurred when the victim was less than 11 years old (Awe, 1999). Premature age is a determining factor for the majority of American rape victims (61%). Fasal or stepfather rape accounts for eleven percent (11%) of rape victims, while other relatives victimise sixteen percent (16%) (Jane Sharon, 1999). According to the findings of Kampe and Kampe (1984), father-daughter incest gives rise to social tensions, rivalries, and role strain within the family unit. Sexual abuse and violence, including father-daughter incestuous relationships, are severe problems that transcend racial, economic, social, and regional boundaries, according to Finkelhor (2005). In recent years, exploitation-based father-daughter sexual practices involving children and adolescents in Nigeria have become a greater source of concern. There are differing perspectives on the rise in father-daughter incest cases in Nigeria. Some attribute it to a declining regard for moral principles, whereas others attribute it to a lack of reverence for God (Awe, 1999). The matter concerning father-daughter incest has evolved into a significant concern (Taiwo, 2007). Presently, even the news media are reporting on numerous instances of father-daughter incest throughout the country (Ehagha, 2009; Okafor, 2008). For example, the print media frequently features distressing headings, such as "incest" or "adolescent issues" (Taiwo, 2007). Taiwo (2008) documented an instance of incest that transpired in Ibadan, where he observed a father named Olaolu and his 16-year-old daughter engaged in an adulterous relationship that culminated in the birth of a son named Samuel. The Agodi prison has detained the 36-year-old paternal grandfather on suspicion of three counts of assault. On March 21, 2013, Francis (2013) documented an incident of father-daughter incest in the National Mirror. The incident involved the arrest of Sylvester Ehijere by police in Lagos on suspicion of engaging in an illicit relationship with his two daughters, who were seven and thirteen years old, respectively. The issue of father-daughter incest transcends Nigeria and Africa as a whole, encompassing the entire globe. For example, police in Australia documented an incident of an incestuous relationship in which Elizabeth Frizil was sedated, handcuffed, and incarcerated for 24 years after being lured into the basement of the building where they resided in 1994 by her father. Seven offspring were born to the daughter (Osedebamen, 2008). There were also reports of an illicit relationship between a father and his daughter in Italy. Sebedebamen (2008) further documented that his sibling subjected the same daughter to sexual assault when she sought sanctuary in his residence. The incident occurred in the Italian city of Turin. Officers have apprehended the father and son in connection with the rape of their daughter or sister. Laura, the sister/daughter, claimed that her brother had raped each of his four small daughters. Incest between fathers and daughters comprises 75% of all documented sexual crimes. In light of the victims' plight, the Togolese government has enacted legislation legalising abortion in instances of rape and incest (Steven, 2007). Because of the aforementioned trend, morality has laxened. Adebusoye (1991) found that parents are more susceptible to the influence of external forces, such as the mass media and peer groups, when it comes to engaging in antisocial behaviour. It is accurate to say that Western civilization has

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK gradually removed restrictions on sexual expression in traditional African societies, which has resulted in a current climate of sexual liberation and openness. It appears that the erosion of traditional African values and social-cultural beliefs regarding the sanctity of sexuality has had a significant impact on fathers' attitudes and has opened the door for illicit relationships with their daughters.

An exposition of the dilemma there is a substantial body of evidence indicating that instances of sexual abuse against female children in Nigeria, particularly in incestuous father-daughter relationships, have increased. These abusers frequently exploit their victims into unintended pregnancies and force them to withdraw from school (Awe, 1999; Eweniyi, 2000; Momoh 2006; Aduku, Ofele & Gwatana, 2008; Ako, Igbo & Amali, 2009; Shittu 11; Shittu 2019). The prevalence of father-daughter incest, as documented in several Nigerian newspapers (Garry, 1992; Awe, 1999; Taiwo, 2007; Adebayo, 2008; Okafor, 2008; Osedebamen, 2008; Eghagha, 2009; Eromosele, 2010; Shittu, 2011; 2017 & 2019), is no longer a novel concept to the general public. Permitting the current pattern to persist could potentially result in a scenario where the targeted individuals, predominantly adolescents and young adults, are incapable of making substantial contributions to the progress of the nation. As a result, they will develop to the point of psychiatric illness due to their extreme emotional distress (Henshaw, 1998). Notwithstanding the significant academic attrition and unintended pregnancies associated with father-daughter incestuous relationships, there is a dearth of research examining the prevalence of such relationships in Nigeria. Therefore, current data regarding the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria is non-existent. Due to the critical nature of family structures in promoting the well-being and progress of an entire nation, this research endeavour will investigate the prevalence of father-daughter incest among literate adults in Nigeria in an effort to fill a void in the literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Incest is an illegal and deliberate engagement in sexual act among individuals who are not legally qualified to marry each other on account of consanguinity, kinship or adoptive relationship (sexual offences and related matter amendment Act 32 of 2007). Incest refers to any sexual activity between closely related person (often within the immediate family) that is illegal or is socially prohibited or socially a taboo (Shittu, 2011). Crause (2010) & Kendall (2014) defined incest as sexual abuse that occurs within the family system, involving children as victims and adults as perpetrators.

Categories of incest are majorly three going by Creatsas (1997), which include the following; i. Blood relatives (consanguinal incest) ii. Relatives by adoption or marriage (affinal incest) and iii. Quasi-relatives (i.e a foster parents).

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Sexual relations between the most closely related blood relatives, that is within the unclear family (between parents and child and between siblings), are the most forbidden cases because they have the most serious potential for harm and destruction (Gilman, 1998) The taboo applies less strictly to individuals who are affinally related. The societal taboo is even weaker when individuals are unrelated but occupy family roles and perform family functions (quasi-relatives), as in the case of a foster partner who takes on the roles of husband and father. However, sexual contact between quasi-relative is considered incest even though it is not so defined legally, since this contact has incestuous connotations and serious psychological repercussions for the child (Creathsas 1997).

Types of incest, this study specifically focuses on father-daughter incest. A brief discussion of other types of incest is necessary to create more understanding of incest. Father-daughter incest is the most frequently reported and acknowledged form of intra-family sex (Shittu, 2011; Sadock & Sadock, 2011). Other types of incestuous relationships that have been known to practitioners and researchers include father-son incest, Mother-son incest, mother daughter incest, brother-sister incest, incest with extended family members such as uncles, aunts and grandparents, and multiple incest (Ramli, 2021).

Father-Daughter incest-Father-daughter incest does not usually involve violence or severe force, it is a deliberate planned event. Father-daughter incest have been established as the most common incest perpetrators. Literature and findings shows that there a many factors contributed to the father-daughter incest. Some of these factors include poverty (Gupta & Garg, 2020), lack of deep affection between mother of the daughter and her mother, as well as lack of deep and cordinal relationship between the mother of the daughter and his husband (Perpetrator). (Shittu, 2019) drug or alcohol use among others is also factors in father-daughter incest. Most act of incest perpetrated by fathers involves coercion without physical force. De Young (1982) described incestuous father as someone who pays special attention to his daughter, while making increasingly intimate sexual advances as time passes, and 'devious behaviour' incest in which father molest their daughters while they are asleep. They also bribe their daughters by the use of 'courting behaviour' to engage them in incestuous acts. Such as talking about sex, with their daughters, leaving pornographic materials at the disposal of their daughters, exhibiting themselves to their daughters and spying on daughters while they were undressing.

Mother-son incest was suggested to be extremely rare (Sadock and Sadock 2023). The South African National Council for child and family Welfare (1998) suggested that mother son incest is very rare but Robertson (1989) contended that although this type of incest is seldomly reported, hence the frequency of occurrence should not be underated. Friedman (1988) attributed the occurrence of mother-son incest to the potential sexual misbehavior of fathers, while discounting or ignoring that of mothers.

According to Justice and Justice (1979), the absence of father from home usually cause the mother to turn to her son to seek substitute who will meet her need for companionship and affection. Peradventure, the relationship between mother and son may become so intimate and highly seductive. This could be described as a role reversal with the 'missing' father. Brownson

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (1999) stated that mother-son incest seems to be the result of extreme pathology, characterized by the absence of early closeness between mother and son.

Brownson (1999) listed the following as conditions that are common with mother-son incest.

- (a) a loss of father through absence or extreme sexual weakness, at an early age in life;
- (b) over seduction by the mother;
- (c) loss of other sexual outlets to the adult son; and
- (d) loss of control over one or more family members by father.

Some may think that mother-son incest is not injurious to the son, Johnson and Johnson (1976) opined that this form of incest is injurious and results in creating serious problems in sexual adjustment for the son in adult life

Brother-sister incest, American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry (1999) suggested an increase in both intrafamilial and extrafamilial sexual abuse by juveniles. Worling (1995) suggested that sibling incest may be less harmful than other types of incest. Rudd and Herzger (1999) compared 14 adults victims of father-daughter incest and discovered numerous similar consequences, including depression, drug or alcohol problems, suicidal feelings, sexual promiscuity, flashbacks and nightmares.

Other types of incestuous relationships as identified by researchers include incest by other family members, multiple incest. Multiple incest are the one where the perpetrator are more than one on victim and incestuous relationship are either simultaneously or consecutively (Gupta & Garg, 2020; Ramli, 2021 & Celbis, Altin, Ayaz; Bork & Karatoprak (2019).

Prior to the involvement of perpetrators in father-daughter incestuous relationships, four steps and procedure were discovered by researcher including (a) engagement (b) sexual interaction phase; (c) secrecy and (d) disclosure. Some of the victim are being instructed and intimidated by their perpetrators not to divulge the incidence to anybody. They would use series of strategies to curb the from revealing the incestuous acts, such as threatening to harm their mothers, limiting their children's ability to attend schools among others (Gagabi, & Smit, 2019).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Question

What is the perception of literate adults in Nigeria on the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of gender

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2. There is no significant difference in the perception of literate adults in Nigeria on the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of location (rural urban)
3. There is no significant difference in perception of literate adults in Nigeria on the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of home type

Purpose of the study

The finding of this study would hopefully provide useful information on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship, in order to devise strategies for handling the problem to reduce or if possible eradicate it.

Research design

This study makes use of a descriptive survey methodology as its research design. The researchers utilised the descriptive survey method due to its capacity to solicit opinions from representative samples of the population via questionnaires, which allowed for the formation of conclusions, inferences, and generalisations regarding contemporary phenomena. The study employed this research design in accordance with the recommendation of Saddock and Sadock (2003) that a descriptive survey method yielded reliable results when it came to determining the attitudes of individuals towards father-daughter incestuous relationships.

Sample and sampling technique

The study's target population comprised all literate individuals residing in Nigeria who possessed national certificates in education or higher as their minimum academic achievement. According to a 2006 estimate by the National Population Commission, there are 4,087,423 literate adults in Nigeria. Due to the impracticality of gathering data from the entire population, a multistage sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 1350 for the study. Multistage sampling procedure was used. These stages include simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and the final selection of adult respondents from non-ministerial departments and ministries in each of the six states that participated in the study. The nominated states are as follows: Kaduna (North-central), Oyo (South-west), Bayelsa (South-south), Yobe (North-west), and Borno (North-east). A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a total of 45 respondents from each non-ministerial department, in addition to the 135 respondents selected from ministries and 90 respondents selected from the non-ministerial departments in each state. The aggregate number of responses was 1350; however, a subset of 1200 respondents from each of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones returned questionnaires that were entirely accurate and complete.

Instrumentation

The researcher employed a self-designed questionnaire entitled the "Prevalence of Father-Daughter Incestuous Questionnaire (PFIQ)" to gather data. Visual and auditory observation, according to Akinboye (1998), can be converted into instruments that are then used to observe

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the situation under investigation. The formulation of the (PFIQ) involved the incorporation of data obtained from pertinent scholarly sources. The instrument consisted of two sections, denoted as A and B. Section A of the instrument requested personal information from the respondents. The researcher-designed questionnaire comprises Section B. Section B comprises ten inquiries that aim to gather data regarding the prevalence of adulterous father-daughter relationships in Nigeria. Experts in the field of guidance and counselling rendered a verdict of validity regarding the adopted instrument.

Psychometric property of the instrument

Validity of the instrument

Experts in counsellor education determined the content validity of the instrument titled prevalence of father-daughter incestuous questionnaire (PFIQ). These experts affirmed that the instrument is valid enough to conduct the study and adjudge it valid for use.

Reliability of the instrument

Stranger (2004) defines the reliability of a measuring instrument as the degree to which it remains devoid of random error while quantifying the target variable over an extended period of time. Re-administering the instrument to the identical sample in order to ascertain the coefficient using the test-retest method. The correlation coefficient between the two sets of scores derived from the instrument was 0.72, which the researcher deemed sufficient to warrant the instrument's reliability for the study.

Data collection

The researcher personally administered 225 questionnaire forms in the North East (Borno) geopolitical zone. In contrast, five (5) research assistants, two of whom hold doctoral degrees and the others master's degrees, were responsible for the administration in the remaining five (5) geopolitical zones: North West (Yobe), North Central (Kaduna), South West (Ibadan), South East (Anambra), and South South (Bayelsa). The researchers distributed 225 questionnaire forms in each of the aforementioned states, for a grand total of 1,350. However, only 1,200 participants returned questionnaires that were accurately completed. Instrument administration occurred in a conducive environment devoid of any pressure, interference, or discomfort.

Method of Analysis

By employing the t-test and simple percentage to analyse the data gathered for this investigation, all research hypotheses were validated at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Perception on Prevalence of Father-daughter Incestuous Relationship

Variable	Frequency N = 1200	Percentage %
Rate of Prevalence		
High	285	24.9
Low	915	75.1
Total	1200	100

Table 1 shows that the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship is high in Nigeria as expressed by literate adults in Nigeria. This was revealed as indicated in the table one, 285 (24.6%) of the respondents were of high prevalence rate, 915 (75.1%) of the respondent were of low prevalence rate.

Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in perception of literature adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of gender.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and T-value of Literate Adults in Nigeria on the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of gender.

Gender	No	Mean	SD	Df	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value
Male	750	23.99	6.49	1.198	-5.15	1.96
Female	450	25.86	5.88			

Significant, $p < 0.05$

Due to the omission of the negative sign, Table 2 demonstrates that the computed t-value of -5.13 exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 only. Therefore, at $(t=1.198 \text{ df}) = -5.13, p < 0.05$, the first hypothesis, which stated that "there is no significant difference in the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships based on gender among literate adults in Nigeria," is rejected. This indicates that the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships differs substantially by gender.

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Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perception of the literate adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of location (Rural and Urban)

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of literate Adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of location

Location	No	Mean	SD	df	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value
Rural	300	24.48	7.17	1.198	-61	1.96
Urban	900	24.76	6.02			

As shown in Table 3, the t-value of -61 obtained is smaller than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the results support the second hypothesis, which posits that "location does not significantly influence the perception of literate adults in Nigeria regarding the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships." This indicates that the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria does not vary significantly by location.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the perception of literate adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of family type.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Literate Adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of family type

Family Type	No	Mean	SD	df	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value
Intact Home	650	24.92	6.77	1.198	2.23	1.96
Non Intact Home	350	24.13	5.07			

Significant $p < 0.05$

The calculated t-value of 2.23 exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96, as shown in Table 4. This results in the support of the null hypothesis, which posits that "location does not significantly affect the perception of literate adults in Nigeria regarding the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships." This indicates that the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria does not vary significantly by location.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the perception of literate adults in Nigeria on prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationship on the basis of family type.*

Table 4: Mean Standard Deviation and t-value of Literate Adults in Nigeria on prevalence of Father-Daughter Incestuous Relationship on the Basis of Family type.

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Family type	No	Mean	SD	Df	Cal.t-value	Critical t-value
Intact Home	650	24.92	6.77	1.198	2.23	1.96
Non Intact Home	350	24.13	5.07			

Significant, P<0.05

The calculated t-value of 2.23 exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96, as shown in Table 4. Therefore, $t(1198df)=2.23$, $p<0.05$, rejects the null hypothesis that "literate adults in Nigeria perceive the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships differently in terms of family type." This indicates that the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria differs significantly by family structure.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the data indicated that father-daughter incestuous relationships are prevalent, accounting for 24.9% of the total. The discovery aligns with the findings of Russell (1983), which indicate a considerable prevalence of illicit father-daughter relationships. This is unsurprising, given that Herman (1981) found that the likelihood of father-daughter incest being prevalent increases in the absence of an intimate relationship between the father and mother. The finding that father-daughter incest is more prevalent in families characterised by discord also corroborated the results of Parker and Parker's (1985) investigation. The findings further corroborate Briggs's (2006) assertion that father-daughter incest was prevalent, as the majority of incestuous acts committed by fathers involve non-physical coercion. The findings consistent with the initial hypothesis indicate that there was a statistically significant distinction in the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria according to gender. The discovery aligns with the results reported by Parker and Parker (1985), who identified a statistically significant gender disparity in father-daughter incestuous relationships. Additionally, Abraham (1994) documented a noteworthy disparity that was contingent upon gender. This result is not unexpected, as previous research has identified inadequate family communication, spouses refusing to engage in sexual activity with their husbands, and daughters assuming household responsibilities and caring for younger siblings while their mothers are ill, alcoholic, or mentally unstable as contributing factors to the observed significant difference in this finding. The findings of the second hypothesis indicated that there was no statistically significant variation in the perception of literate adults in Nigeria regarding the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships according to location. This result is consistent with the findings of Bully and Moore (1994) and Currin (2004), who concluded that there was no significant difference in location-based perceptions of literate adults regarding the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships. One plausible hypothesis for the observed outcome is that, regardless of geographical location, literate adults exhibited a more favourable disposition towards psychological assistance for their children and maintained a more optimistic stance towards mental health.

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The findings from the third hypothesis suggested that there was a statistically significant distinction in the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships among literate adults in Nigeria, depending on the type of household. The results align with the conclusions drawn by Parker and Parker (1985) and Shittu (2011), which suggest that the occurrence of father-daughter incest is comparatively lower in intact families as opposed to non-intact families. Herman (1981) corroborated this result by documenting a noteworthy disparity in the prevalence of illicit father-daughter relationships based on the type of household. The outcome appears plausible, as it aligns with the findings of Garry (1991), who stated that parents inherently care and affection for their children. However, strained familial relationships can develop into incestuous ones, and parents, regardless of gender, have much to be concerned about when such relationships arise.

Implication for Counsellor Training and Counselling Practice

The escalating prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships in Nigeria, along with the associated health, social, and psychological risks, have far-reaching consequences for the education and practice of counsellors. Counsellors ought to confront the actuality of the situation when attempting to eradicate the menace of father-daughter incest. To achieve behaviour change, it is necessary to address psychological and socio-cultural elements. For instance, providing victims with coping mechanisms and engaging in group counselling in a supportive environment could effectively alter the perpetrators' attitudes. Likewise, the inclusion of incest within the counsellor education curriculum, more specifically within the sexuality and family life education programme, is imperative. Assisting counsellors in the organisation of enlightenment programmes through the coordination of conferences, seminars, workshops, group discussions via radio or television, and advertising is essential.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following measures are recommended;

Reorienting the thought processes of Nigerians away from the fallacies that perpetuate the practice could potentially lead to a reduction in the prevalence of father-daughter incest. In order for children to develop their own values, increase their self-esteem, gain insight regarding their relationships with members of both parents, and comprehend their obligations and responsibilities, counsellors should design programmes that afford children the opportunity to question, investigate, and evaluate the sexual attitudes of their parents.

CONCLUSION

The subsequent main conclusions may be deduced from the results of this investigation and the subsequent discourse. High rates of father-daughter incestuous relationships are prevalent. While location did not exhibit a statistically significant difference in the prevalence of father-daughter incestuous relationships, gender and family type did demonstrate a significant difference in the prevalence of such relationships.

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