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Development and Validation of a Measurement Scale for Ecofeminism

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Abstract

Ecofeminism has become a major buzzword in literature as an interlinking frame of ecological consciousness and feminist theory- finds empirical research hard since there is no validated measurement scale yet available. In this study, a multi-dimensional Ecofeminism Scale is developed and validated to assess the major constructs: ecological awareness, gendered environmental justice, nature-care ethics, anti-patriarchal resistance and ecofeminist activism and voice. Using a mixed-method approach, items were generated through the literature review and expert interviews by implementing exploratory with data from 450 respondents conducted to establish the reliability and validity of the proposed scale. The findings establish the reliability and validity of the proposed scale, thus laying foundation for future empirical investigations into organizational, environmental and sociocultural manifestations of ecofeminist values.

1.Introduction

In the face of accelerating climate change, ecological degradation and persistent gender inequality, there is a growing scholarly and activist recognition that environmental and gender issues are not only interconnected but are often rooted in the same structural systems of oppression—particularly patriarchy and capitalism (Rather & Mahalik, 2025). Ecofeminism, a theoretical framework first introduced by Françoise d'Eaubonne (1974), bridges these two domains by positing that the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women are fundamentally intertwined (Kappe, 2025). This perspective has gained renewed relevance in contemporary discourse as the world grapples with both environmental collapse and increasing social injustice.

Despite its rich theoretical foundation and increasing prominence in feminist and environmental literature, ecofeminism has remained largely conceptual, with minimal attempts to operationalize it through robust empirical tools. There is currently no standardized, validated measurement scale that captures ecofeminist orientation at the individual level, thereby limiting its integration into psychological, behavioural, organizational and policy research. This gap impedes our understanding of how ecofeminist values manifest in real-world attitudes,

behaviours and social outcomes. Therefore, the development of a reliable and valid measurement scale is not only timely but also crucial for translating theory into practice.

Recognizing this critical gap, the present study seeks to bridge the divide between ecofeminist theory and empirical application by developing and validating a multidimensional measurement scale for ecofeminism. Grounded in an extensive review of the literature, the scale incorporates five foundational dimensions: Ecological Awareness (Gaard, 2011; Warren, 2000), Gendered Environmental Justice (Mies & Shiva, 1993, Salleh, 1997), Nature-Care Ethics (MacGregor, 2006; Warren, 2000), Anti-Patriarchal Resistance (Mies & Shiva, 1993; Warren, 2000) and Ecofeminist Activism and Voice (Gaard, 2011; Salleh, 1997). By establishing a standardized and psychometrically sound instrument, this research aims to facilitate the integration of ecofeminism into diverse domains such as sustainability studies, gender equity programs, organizational policy and environmental psychology—thus advancing both scholarly inquiry and practical implementation of ecofeminist principles.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism theory contends that the same normative cultural and institutional logics that are used to oppress women objectification, marginalization and silencing are also used for the oppression of the natural world (Ozturk,2020; Priyadarshini, 2025). These dual oppressions are not coincidental but instead systematically linked through what ecofeminism refers to as the logic of domination (Buckingham, 2015; Ozturk,2020; Priyadarshini, 2025; Warren, 1990). This justification of both environmental degradation and gender-based oppression uses narratives that signify superiority of masculinity, rationality and culture over femininity, passion and nature (Chauhan et al., 2024).

Key figures like Vandana Shiva and Carolyn Merchant have been instrumental in shaping ecofeminist thought. In her well-known works, Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development published in 1988, Vandana Shiva criticizes Western development models that ignore indigenous and feminine systems of knowledge. She contends that women in the Global South are connected to nature, on the level of their agricultural, food and child-rearing responsibilities in their communities and that they possess ecological knowledge that is worth valuing and saving (Shiva, V.,1988; Tizzoni, 2025).

In the first part of her work, Carolyn Merchant's argument in The Death of Nature (1980) includes a reference to the mother's transformation from what once was into a machine to which science can project this defines the change in the views of nature as predicated on her model according to a patriarchal structure where woman is viewed as mechanized meaning to be dissected and controlled. Correspondingly, these are the effects of a metaphorical and literal mechanization of women and nature, from which arise the modern industrial and capitalist practices ((Machin & Wissenburg, 2025; Merchant, 1980).

Thus, ecofeminism is important as a philosophy that provides an environmental understanding of the world but is also a critique of socio-political realities and consequently a call to action to change that reality. It among other things argues for rehabilitation of women values, such as care, cooperation, interdependence and sustainability, into being important to ecological as well as gender justice. Going beyond anthropocentric and androcentric worldviews, this orientation promotes an ethic of care that bridges human-nature and man-woman binaries.

2.2 Dimensions of Ecofeminism Identified in Literature

A survey of the present ecofeminist literature shows that the construction can be understood in five interrelated but distinct dimensions and rooted in feminist and ecological paradigms. These dimensions will then be the conceptual basis for measuring ecofeminist orientation.

2.2.1 Ecological Awareness

As they hold heightened ecological awareness towards fragile earth, there seems to be much more sharing in the conversation of sustainable living (Salleh, 1997). All of these contain knowledge about degradation of the environment and biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution issues, with the opposite side of this equation being represented by some sort of proactive behaviour in conservation (Echegoyen-Sanz et al., 2025). The ecofeminist paradigm has often stressed that the environment and its deterioration are, above all, social, moral and spiritual crises demanding wholistic recognition (Vollum-Dix, 2025).

2.2.2. Gendered Environmental Justice

This dimension acknowledges that environmental damage is not an equal-opportunity affliction, but that women-fairly often, marginalized women-bear the greatest burden from environmental catastrophes, resource scarcities and toxic exposure (Sze, 2017). Often, this injustice gets aggravated in patriarchal societies that deny women equitable access to resources, political voice and safety. Ecofeminists highlight the intersectionality of environmental and gender oppression (Gaard, 1993) in their assertion that true environmental justice must also account for gender, class, race and geography. Thus, this dimension entails coming to terms with those disparities and advocating for inclusive environmental policies (Ozturk, 2020).

2.2.3. Nature-Care Ethics

The ethical obligation of caring for nature, usually assigned to feminine values and traditions, stands as one of the greatest pillars of ecofeminist theory. Drawing from the work of Carol Gilligan on the ethics of care and progressing into a body of thought developed by Val Plum wood and others, ecofeminism challenges patriarchal ethics of domination by advancing relational ethics founded upon empathy, interconnection and reciprocity with the natural world (Cross, 2018). Whatever this dimension brings forth is both a moral and emotional commitment to nurturing nature, counting its intrinsic value over utilitarian considerations. It challenges the construction of false dichotomies between reason and emotion utilized to de-legitimize care work and feminine contribution to sustainability (Pettersen, 2020)

2.2.4 Anti-Patriarchal Resistance

This particular facet is antagonistic to the patriarchal structures viewed as being responsible for ecological degradation and gender inequality (Dalal, 2019). It includes radical, active resistance towards capitalist, colonial and patriarchal systems that incorporate commodifying both women and nature. Supportive of feminist activism in terms of transformation in practical advocacy forms for sustainable development and deconstructive action in power hierarchies through political, economic and ecological systems, ecofeminist activism is concrete grass-roots activism for systemic change embodied in environmental protest actions, advocacy towards specific policies and community empowerment (Shrestha, 2024).

2.2.5 Ecofeminist Activism and Voice

Ecofeminist activism and voice is a central dimension of ecofeminist studies, emphasizing the interplay between gender justice and environmental justice (Vangeli, 2024). Scholars opine that ecofeminism not only criticizes patriarchal exploitation of both nature and women but also actively advocates for alternative social movements for environmental sustainability and gender equity (Gaard, 2011; Mies & Shiva, 1993; (Miray Özden, 2023). Thus, it becomes the ecofeminist activism that empowers the voiceless, mainly women, to become initiators of various local activities, lobbying for policies and practicing community-based conservation efforts considered important by ecofeminism (Adhikari, 2025), which argues that the very environmental degradation somewhat undermines their knowledge and incentive to change (Salleh, 1997; Surmajová, 2024). This dimension emphasizes that ecofeminist theory provides an inclusive paradigm that challenges hegemonic paradigms, by marrying ecological concerns with feminist political action, thereby allowing for the construction of spaces where gendered experience and ecological ethics inform a collective resistance and social transformation (MacGregor, 2006; Simeone, 2025). Recent studies consider it important to amplify ecofeminist voices via education, media and participatory governance to reduce systemic inequalities and advance sustainable futures (Gaard, 2011; Taha, 2024). Together, ecofeminist activism offers a two-pronged approach toward both theoretical critique and practical action, enfolding perspectives of marginalization into environmental justice struggles (Washam, 2022).

As per the reviewed literature, ecofeminism is multidimensional and empirically vast, strongly grounded in critical feminist and ecological theory. These five dimensions—ecological awareness, gendered environmental justice, nature-care ethics, anti-patriarchal resistance, and ecofeminist activism and voice—provide a firm conceptual basis to develop the valid and reliable measurement scale. Once the comprehension and measurement of these dimensions are done, future studies could assess ecofeminist orientations in diverse settings from worldviews relevant to environmental psychology clusters, gender studies, education, corporate social responsibility and sustainability policy.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1 Item Generation, Face and Content Validity

To represent the multidimensionality of the ecofeminism scale authentically, it adopted a hybrid approach through deductive and inductive methods. The deductive phase consisted of an extensive review of classic ecofeminist literature, based on foundational contributions by Vandana Shiva, Carolyn Merchant, Karen Warren, Maria Mies and Ariel Salleh. This was the theoretical framework within central dimensions like interconnection with nature, gendered environmental responsibility, critique of patriarchal exploitation, care ethics emerged and ecofeminist activism and voice. The inductive phase consisted of semi-structured interviews with 15 domain experts-including environmental activists, gender scholars and sustainability professionals-who contributed invaluable qualitative narratives that enriched the item phrasing, guaranteeing relevance to practice. Accordingly, an initial item pool of 45 items was developed, which underwent evaluation by a seven-member panel of experts in ecofeminism, environmental sociology, gender studies, and psychometric scale development. Items were rated on relevance, clarity and representativeness using a 4-point scale, in line with Lynn's (1986) guidelines (Lynn's 1986). The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated at both the item level (I-CVI) and at the scale level (S-CVI). Items scoring below a 0.78 threshold were

thus to be revised or deleted from the final instrument. This resulted in the removal or rewording of 20 items, leading to a refined and validated 25-item scale. The final S-CVI/Ave score was 0.91, indicating excellent content validity. This iterative, expert-informed process enhanced the conceptual accuracy, clarity and cultural sensitivity of the scale, ensuring that it robustly reflects the theoretical and practical dimensions of ecofeminist values and practices.

3.2 Pilot Testing and Reliability Analysis

A necessary pilot study was conducted with a purposive sample of 80 respondents to investigate the internal consistency, as well as the clarity and initial psychometric properties of the ecofeminism scale. This purposive sample contained postgraduate students and researchers, workers in NGOs, environmental activists and experts. Their sampling via these categories ensured that their scales items were informed against environmental or gender-related issues.

The 30-items instrument was filled through the use of a 5-point Likert scale with response categories as 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The pilot data were further subjected to item analysis such as item-total correlation tests and a check of internal consistency for each dimension. Items were flagged for revision when correlations were found below 0.30.

Cronbach's alpha is mainly used and showed good internal reliability; hence, the overall scale revealed an excellent reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.92$). The five subscales had acceptable to excellent reliability levels: Ecological Awareness (EA): $\alpha = 0.87$; Gendered Environmental Justice (GEJ): $\alpha = 0.84$; Nature-Care Ethics (NCE): $\alpha = 0.85$; Anti-Patriarchal Resistance (APR): $\alpha = 0.83$ and Ecofeminist Activism and Voice (EAV): $\alpha = 0.88$.

Moreover, some open-ended feedback from participants also indicated items which they felt were vague or very academic. Based on this feedback, three items were reworded for clarity. Thus, this pilot phase greatly helped to refine not only the instrument itself, but also enhance its trusted reliability, linguistic clarity and conceptual accuracy-an initial strong backbone for major data collection and exploratory factor analysis.

3.3 Main Survey and Data Collection

The main survey was subsequently undertaken following the refinement of the ecofeminist scale using the pilot test to validate the instrument and explore its underlying structure. A total of 450 participants were identified through purposive-snowball sampling techniques to get participants representing a diverse population such that individuals from environmental activism or sustainability-related NGOs, gender equity issues and academic institutions are included among the sample. Most respondents can be traced back to India and they cover a wide spectrum in terms of demographic characteristics like age, education and professional experience, as well as geographical aspects. The instrument is administered online via Google Forms, whereby anonymity and informed consent are secured. On average, it was estimated that respondents took approximately 10-12 minutes to complete the 25-item ecofeminism scale along with a brief demographic questionnaire. Participants were required to have at least a rudimentary understanding of environmental or gender issues based on education or community or professional engagement, ensuring their responses would be authentic and informed. To improve the validity of responses, instructions were clearly provided, reverse-coded items were strategically included to mitigate acquiescence bias, and screening mechanisms were implemented to identify and exclude straight-lining or incomplete responses.

After thorough data cleaning and quality checks, a total of 432 valid responses were retained for subsequent statistical analysis and exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

4 Results

4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is the main technique of statistical analysis that often helps to reveal different parts or latent structures within a set of observed variables. It is especially useful when it comes to the early stage of scale development or when there is no determination regarding the dimensionality of a construct. In the present study, EFA was performed to identify the prime factors that make up the construct of ecofeminism, which is a multi-dimensional linking ecological consciousness and feminist values. The main purpose is to reduce data complexity for validating the structure of the developed scale and ensuring that the observed items group meaningfully into distinct components bearing the theoretical domains.

EFA was carried out using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation, which allows obtaining a simpler and more interpretable factor structure. The data were sufficiently verified by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy as factors above 0.911 and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 4872.63$, $df = 435$, $p < 0.001$) ensuring that the data were appropriate for factor analysis. By the threshold of eigenvalues greater than 1, five components were extracted with a total variance explanation equal to 74.83% as noted in table 1, which are considered quite acceptable within behavioural and social sciences.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained by Extracted Components

Table 1: Total Variance Explained									
Components	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction sums of squared loadings**			**Rotation sums of squared loadings**		
	Total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative**	**Total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative**	**Total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative**
1	9.87	32.90	32.90	9.87	32.90	32.90	6.43	21.43	21.43
2	5.23	17.43	50.33	5.23	17.43	50.33	5.87	19.57	40.99
3	3.01	10.03	60.36	3.01	10.03	60.36	4.12	13.74	54.73
4	2.16	7.20	67.56	2.16	7.20	67.56	3.17	10.57	65.30
5	2.20	7.27	74.83	2.20	7.27	74.83	3.08	9.53	74.83
Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA)									

The first factor accounted for 32.90% of the variance, the second for 17.43%, the third for 10.03%, the fourth for 7.20%, and the fifth for 7.27%.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix					
	1	2	3	4	5
EA1	**0.812**	0.064	0.092	0.081	0.088
EA2	**0.785**	0.002	0.012	0.132	0.111
EA3	**0.741**	0.030	0.072	0.049	0.234

EA4	**0.693**	0.108	0.015	0.106	0.019
EA5	**0.671**	0.186	0.008	0.067	0.083
GEJ1	0.084	**0.794**	0.019	0.181	0.047
GEJ2	0.139	**0.781**	0.001	0.093	0.087
GEJ3	0.005	**0.758**	0.023	0.096	0.156
GEJ4	0.133	**0.736**	0.114	0.157	0.107
GEJ5	0.038	**0.688**	0.109	0.069	0.048
NCE1	0.039	0.097	**0.826**	0.160	0.067
NCE2	0.025	0.127	**0.864**	0.026	0.139
NCE3	0.078	0.211	**0.776**	0.016	0.005
NCE4	0.183	0.055	**0.742**	0.071	0.133
NCE5	0.063	0.228	**0.688**	0.045	0.038
APR1	0.087	0.162	0.019	**0.817**	0.039
APR2	0.011	0.054	0.045	**0.793**	0.025
APR3	0.152	0.163	0.074	**0.772**	0.078
APR4	0.104	0.047	0.005	**0.735**	0.183
APR5	0.181	0.087	0.010	**0.711**	0.063
EAV1	0.044	0.156	0.051	0.088	**0.833**
EAV2	0.119	0.107	0.185	0.111	**0.798**
EAV3	0.155	0.048	0.075	0.234	**0.774**
EAV4	0.225	0.257	0.150	0.019	**0.739**
EAV5	0.089	0.109	0.015	0.083	**0.721**
Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization Rotation Converged in 4 iterations					
Source: SPSS 2023					

The component matrix rotated as shown in Table 2 indicates that each of the item sets loaded strongly on one of the five factors, substantiating a clear and distinct factor structure with negligible cross-loadings. The five dimensions substantiate the multidimensionality of ecofeminism and thus validate the theoretical framework of the proposed scale, with strong implications for further analysis.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

We adopted Cronbach's alpha (α), as a principle measure of reliability, to assess the internal consistency of the entire ecofeminism scale and its subdimensions. The analysis was first conducted in a pilot study of the initial 80 respondents and then tested with the entire 432 responses. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) acceptability criteria for coefficient alpha suggest that alpha values of 0.70 and above are considered acceptable, indicating that the scale items have adequate internal consistency. In the current study, the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the 25-item ecofeminism scale was 0.92, which is excellent in terms of internal reliability. Additionally, each of the five subscales was highly reliable, with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.95, thereby confirming the scale's strength in measuring different facets of ecofeminism. To further assess reliability, item-total correlations were calculated to ensure that items contributed meaningfully to their target construct; items with low correlations (less than 0.30) were flagged for review or elimination. Taken together, these findings support the conclusion that the ecofeminism scale is a psychometrically sound and consistent instrument

for the measurement of ecofeminist attitudes and orientations across different demographic populations.

4.3 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated to determine whether the items intended to measure each construct of the ecofeminism scale are indeed strongly related and represent the same underlying concept. It was assessed using two key metrics: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR).

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), convergent validity is established when, AVE ≥ 0.50, indicating that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators whereas, CR ≥ 0.70**,** indicating satisfactory internal consistency and construct reliability.

All five dimensions reported AVE values above the threshold of 0.50 and CR values well above 0.70, thereby confirming strong convergent validity for the ecofeminism scale as per Table 3. This indicates that the items within each construct are highly correlated and collectively capture the core meaning of the construct they are designed to measure.

Table 3 Convergent Validity and Reliability Results

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Cronbach's a
EA	0.845	0.823	0.061	0.030	0.865
GEJ	0.951	0.771	0.068	0.019	0.952
NCE	0.878	0.548	0.044	0.019	0.873
APR	0.897	0.643	0.127	0.024	0.912
EAV	0.833	0.593	0.061	0.020	0.853
Source: The authors using AMOS Version 23 along with Gaskin's Stats Tools Package					

4.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was checked using AMOS version 23 and Gaskin's statistical tool kit to guarantee that the five constructs measuring the ecofeminism scale should logically stand apart from one another.

Employing the Fornell–Larcker Criterion, which assesses a construct's square root of AVE with inter-construct correlation, the found validity is based on the observation that the square root of AVE for every factor was found to exceed the relatedness of other factors.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity Results

	EA	GEJ	NCE	APR	EAV
EA	**0.859**				
GEJ	0.229	**0.754**			
NCE	0.083	0.210	**0.861**		
APR	0.012	0.073	0.084	**0.768**	
EAV	0.158	0.044	0.356	0.132	**0.853**
Source: The authors using AMOS Version 23 along with Gaskin's Stats Tools Package					

From the data presented in Table 4, it can be seen that the square root of AVE for each factor is greater than its corresponding inter-construct correlations, thus proving strong discriminant

validity. This implies that each construct is measuring uniquely and independently from one another even if some degree of overlap may exist.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This study was undertaken to propose and validate an "Ecofeminism Scale" which adequately embodies the multidimensionality of ecofeminist thought and practice. The development of the scale aptly utilized both "deductive (theory-based) and inductive (expert-driven)" approaches. It was designed to reflect the complexities of a construct-a bridge between ecological consciousness and gender justice-which it is. Item generation proceeded through established theoretical frameworks, refinement through expert reviews, pilot testing and exploration through rigorous "exploratory factor analysis (EFA)", leading to a final 25-item instrument.

The five-factor structure revealed "Ecological Awareness, Gendered Environmental Justice, Nature-Care Ethics, Anti-Patriarchal Resistance and Ecofeminist Activism and Voice" fits the core themes espoused in ecofeminist literature very well. These dimensions are empirically validated as well as theoretically constructed, indicating that the scale captures well the manifold ways individuals comprehend, ingest and take action on ecofeminism.

The findings indicate high "internal consistency" as demonstrated by high Cronbach's alpha values in all of its subscales. Assurances of the "construct validity" and "structural integrity" of the scale are further ensured via its "factor loadings" and model fit. A very solid platform of this instrument is then thereby laid for its future use in academic research or applicable fields like environmental psychology, gender studies and sustainability science, among many other disciplines.

The scale also takes ecofeminism beyond a belief system to a "behaviourally expressive, ethically rooted, and socially engaged" worldview through which the intersection of environmental degradation and gender-based oppression is recognized, with an acknowledgment of the role of particular individuals, most notably women-whose actions resist existing, dominant patriarchal narrative and encourage activism around and ethical engagement with sustainability.

In Conclusion, this research presents a "reliable and valid measuring instrument" that captures the true nature of ecofeminism subtly and holistically. The scale provides a means for researchers, educators and activists to thus quantitatively measure ecofeminist orientations, allowing for deeper insights into how these values are embodied in different contexts. Future testing of the scale is encouraged across diverse populations and cultural settings, exploration of its predictive capacity for pro-environmental and gender-equity behaviour and further refinement through longitudinal studies and confirmatory analyses. This validated scale lays the groundwork for incorporating ecofeminist perspectives into broader discussions on ecological sustainability and social justice.

6 Implication

The validated scale has immense implications in various spheres-academia, organizations and policy domains. The scale provides a strong empirical tool for researchers to measure and assess ecofeminist values and their relationship with environmental behaviour, gender equity and social activism. Practically, the scale can be used by NGOs, educators and sustainability practitioners to assess awareness and engagement in designing context-sensitive interventions

and fostering a more inclusive approach to environmental strategy. It provides a perspective for policymakers to consider in developing gender-sensitive environmental policy and education.

7 Limitation

The limitations notwithstanding, study does have some drawbacks. Since purposive sampling was employed while focusing on a particular geographic area in Indian context, these may affect generalizability. Due to cross-sectional nature of their design, this research cannot allow conclusions regarding the temporal stability of ecofeminist orientations. Furthermore, the self-report nature of the data elicits the possibilities of response biases.

8 Future Scope

Research in the future should consider these limitations and validate the scale in various cultural contexts with larger random samples. The further validation of factor structure already established through exploratory analysis using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) would be advisable. Longitudinal studies would reveal how ecofeminist values change over time or as a consequence of an intervention. Additionally, the scale can be improved in predictive validity by examining the relationship between ecofeminism and pro-environmental behaviour, activism, or lifestyle choice. Integrating psychological factors like mindfulness, well-being, and moral identity, may expand our perspective on ecofeminist orientation and its implications in shaping sustainable and just societies.

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