

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION ERRORS IN FACEBOOK POST OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Available Online: March 2025
Revised: January 2025
Accepted: January 2025
Received: February 2025

Volume III Issue 1 (2025)
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15030518
E-ISSN: 2984-7184
P-ISSN: 2984-7176
<https://getinternational.org/research/>

Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive content analysis of punctuation and capitalization errors in Facebook posts made by Junior High School students aged 13 to 17 at Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. Data was collected from various types of posts, including personal updates, shared articles, and public comments. Employing quantitative methods, particularly Pearson Chi-Square tests, the analysis assessed the frequency of these errors and examined potential correlations between error types and student demographics. The findings revealed that punctuation errors, particularly involving commas and periods, were the most prevalent, followed by capitalization mistakes related to proper nouns and the beginning of sentences. Notably, no significant correlations were found between the frequency of errors and demographic factors such as age, sex, grade level, or duration of Facebook usage. Based on these results, the study recommends that educators implement targeted grammar lessons and increase writing exercises to address these common errors. Furthermore, it suggests that future research explore additional variables influencing grammar usage, the impact of social media on writing practices, and the broader implications of these findings. This research highlights the linguistic challenges faced by junior high school students in a social media context and provides practical recommendations for enhancing students' writing skills.

Key words: *Punctuation, Capitalization, Grammar Errors, Facebook, Writing Skills*

Recommended Citation:

Bautista, K. L. V., Ellao, V. C. C., Bobadilla, R. D., Usog, P. V. D., Villavicencio, F. A. D., Rival, J. M., & Mangarin, J. A. (2025). A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION ERRORS IN FACEBOOK POST OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. GUILD OF EDUCATORS IN TESOL INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL, 3(1), 36–47. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15030518>

INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been central to human interaction, allowing individuals to share experiences, express needs, and form meaningful connections. It helped to build human relationships by facilitating mutual understanding and collaboration. Sellnow et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of communication in resolving conflicts, fostering collaboration, and building warm and trusting relationships. One of the most significant changes in communication was the increased use of digital platforms, particularly social media, which became an integral part of everyday life for millions of people worldwide. Facebook, with its billions of users, served as the primary mode of communication, particularly among young people. It allowed users to post text, images, and videos, share updates, and receive feedback through comments, reactions, or messages. These posts, once shared, became visible to other users, creating a broad platform for communication and engagement (Kao & Craigie, 2014).

Alhusban (2016) noted that modern technological tools reshaped how people wrote, impacting writing skills. With the rise of social media platforms like Facebook, users, especially students, increasingly relied on informal writing styles. This shift raised concerns about the decline in formal writing skills, including proper punctuation and capitalization. The potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding was heightened when punctuation and capitalization errors were prevalent. Such mistakes altered the meaning of a sentence or caused confusion for the reader. Ali et al. (2020) underscored this issue by highlighting a significant gap in the research on social media communication. While much attention had been given to grammar and spelling errors, there had been a lack of focused studies on punctuation and capitalization errors within social media contexts. Ali et al. (2020) argued that these errors, although often overlooked, played a critical role in effective communication. As social media became increasingly integral to daily life, understanding and addressing these errors was essential for improving written communication skills, particularly among students.

Moreover, Ginting (2018) classified common punctuation and capitalization errors found in social media posts, including incorrect use of exclamation points, brackets, capital letters, commas, quotation marks, periods, apostrophes, hyphens, and colons. These errors often stemmed from the informal nature of social media, where users prioritized speed and convenience over grammatical accuracy. Younus and Albalavi (2015) further highlighted the frequency of these errors among students, pointing out common mistakes such as failing to capitalize the first word of a sentence, improper use of colons and semicolons, missing exclamation points, incorrect spacing between words, and forgetting to add question marks or commas after introductory phrases. Such errors suggested that students were not paying sufficient attention to the rules of punctuation and capitalization when writing on social media platforms.

The current study aimed to analyze the common capitalization and punctuation errors in junior high school (JHS) students' Facebook posts in Immaculate Conception College of Balayan Inc. Examining their posts, the research sought to identify recurring themes and provide insights that could inform educational strategies for improving writing skills. Specifically, this study focused on how students used punctuation and capitalization in their online communication and the types of errors they commonly made. Analyzing these errors, the study aimed to raise awareness about the importance of proper punctuation and capitalization, particularly in the context of social media, where informal writing styles were prevalent.

Objectives

This study aims to analyze and evaluate students' punctuation and capitalization errors within the Facebook post. Specifically, to answer the following questions:

1. Demographic profile of the respondents in according to:
 - a) Age
 - b) Grade Level
 - c) Sex
 - d) Length of exposure in using Facebook
2. What are the most frequently occurring punctuation and capitalization errors in the sample of Facebook post/s?
3. Are there any relationships in punctuation and capitalization errors based on the demographics of the respondents such as age, grade level, sex, and length of exposure in using Facebook?
4. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers develop a Facebook page to share awareness about the proper use of Punctuation and Capitalization.

METHODS

Methodology

The researchers used content analysis, which could also be employed in quantitative research, where researchers quantified aspects of content (such as frequency of occurrence of specific words or themes) for the statistical analysis they conducted. The researchers utilized frequency and percentage to determine the frequently occurring punctuation and capitalization errors in the sample of Facebook posts. In this case, content analysis served as a method for systematically analyzing and organizing the data before applying quantitative techniques such as correlational analysis. This was done to determine if there were significant relationships between punctuation and capitalization errors and the demographic profile of the respondents, such as age, grade level, sex, and length of exposure to Facebook.

Population and Sampling

In conducting a content analysis focusing on punctuation and capitalization in Facebook posts by junior high school students at ICCBI, purposive sampling was a suitable approach. The researchers used purposive sampling, which refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which respondents are selected based on criteria provided by the researchers. The respondents of the study were JHS students who posted publicly. Afterward, based on their Facebook activity, a subset of students who frequently engaged in Facebook and exhibited consistent errors in punctuation and capitalization was purposively selected.

Data Collection

The researchers obtained a letter of consent from ICCBI, informing the school administrators about the research study and requesting permission to include students as respondents. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select Facebook posts that were publicly accessible to the researchers. Additionally, the researchers assured students of their anonymity to protect their privacy and safety. All data collected were handled confidentially and used solely for research purposes.

The researchers used the criteria they provided to gather the data needed for the study. By using specific criteria, the researchers established a standard by which the posts could be judged. The researchers decoded the posts they

gathered and categorized each post that failed to use the correct capitalization and punctuation. For this study, the researchers collected posts on Facebook that contributed to the examination of improper punctuation and capitalization usage.

Data Analysis

To interpret the data effectively, the researchers employed the following statistical treatments. In SOP 1, the researchers used frequency and percentage analysis. Through the clearly presented findings, the demographic profile of the respondents was determined. Therefore, in SOP 2, the researchers applied thematic analysis to interpret the prominent themes observed in the Facebook posts of the JHS students. This process included familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. Furthermore, the researchers utilized the Pearson Chi-Square test in SOP 3 to determine whether there were significant relationships or no significant relationships among the age, sex, grade level, and length of exposure of the JHS students.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to ethical principles such as respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice throughout the study, ensuring the protection of respondents' rights. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, detailing the study's aims, procedures, and their right to withdraw without repercussions. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, with data securely handled and accessible only to authorized individuals, in compliance with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act). To minimize potential risks, stringent confidentiality protocols were implemented, and the benefits of participation, including contributions to academic research and insights into punctuation and capitalization errors, were communicated to respondents. Additionally, sources were acknowledged as per Republic Act No. 8293, respecting and crediting participants' contributions, thus upholding the highest standards of integrity, respect, and transparency in research conduct.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age & Number of Committed Errors

THEMES	AGE			
	13	14	15	16
Undercapitalization	2	1	3	1
Misplaced Capitalization	0	0	4	0
Overcapitalization	1	0	0	1
Missing Punctuation	3	3	3	0
Misplaced Punctuation	0	0	2	0
Incorrect Punctuation	0	0	1	0
Excessive Punctuation	4	0	2	2
TOTAL	7	4	12	4

The data in Table 1 show that punctuation and capitalization errors in junior high school students' Facebook posts vary by age. The demographic profile of respondents provides valuable insights into the frequency and types of errors observed. Among the 20 students who made errors in their posts, the distribution by age group reveals distinct patterns. In particular, age 15 has the highest number of students identified with errors, totaling ten. These errors mainly consisted of misplaced capitalization (4 errors) and undercapitalization (3 errors). On the other hand, 5 students at age

13 had errors primarily in missing punctuation (3 errors) and excessive punctuation (4 errors), whereas 3 students at age 14 mostly made errors in missing punctuation (3 errors). Age 16 had two students making errors, with one in undercapitalization (1 error) and the other in excessive punctuation (2 errors). Lastly, one student aged 15 had incorrect punctuation in her post.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex & Number of Committed Errors

THEMES	SEX	
	MALE	FEMALE
Undercapitalization	4	3
Misplaced Capitalization	2	2
Overcapitalization	2	0
Missing Capitalization	7	2
Misplaced Capitalization	1	1
Incorrect Capitalization	0	1
Excessive Capitalization	6	2
TOTAL	22	11

In Table 2, the demographic profile of respondents is further detailed by sex, providing insights into error patterns among males and females. Of the 20 students who made mistakes in their posts, 13 were male and 7 were female. Males made errors in several categories, including undercapitalization (4 errors), misplaced capitalization (2 errors), overcapitalization (2 errors), missing punctuation (7 errors), misplaced punctuation (1 error), and excessive punctuation (6 errors). In contrast, females made errors in undercapitalization (3 errors), misplaced capitalization (2 errors), missing punctuation (2 errors), misplaced punctuation (1 error), excessive punctuation (2 errors), and incorrect punctuation (1 error), but they did not make any errors in overcapitalization.

Table 3

Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Grade Level & Number of Committed Errors

THEMES	GRADE LEVEL			
	G7	G8	G9	G10
Undercapitalization	0	1	5	1
Misplaced Capitalization	0	0	4	0
Overcapitalization	1	0	0	1
Missing Capitalization	3	3	3	0
Misplaced Capitalization	0	0	2	0
Incorrect Capitalization	0	0	1	0
Excessive Capitalization	4	0	2	2
TOTAL	7	4	12	4

Table 3 provides a breakdown of errors by grade level, highlighting distinct patterns among different grades. Of the total 20 students who committed errors, Grade 7 had 5 students, Grade 8 had 3 students, Grade 9 had 10 students, and Grade 10 had 2 students. Grade 9 had the highest number of students with errors (10), displaying issues such as undercapitalization (5), misplaced capitalization (4), missing punctuation (3), misplaced punctuation (2), excessive punctuation (2), and incorrect punctuation (1). Grades 7 and 8 had fewer errors, primarily in missing punctuation and excessive punctuation, while Grade 10 exhibited errors in overcapitalization and excessive punctuation.

Table 4
Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Length of Exposure & Number of Committed Errors

THEMES	LENGTH OF EXPOSURE		
	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8 hours
Undercapitalization	2	5	0
Misplaced Capitalization	1	3	0
Overcapitalization	0	1	1
Missing Capitalization	2	7	0
Misplaced Capitalization	0	2	0
Incorrect Capitalization	1	0	0
Excessive Capitalization	3	5	0
TOTAL	8	23	1

Table 4 of the research reveals how different levels of daily social media exposure correlate with punctuation and capitalization errors among the 20 students. Those spending 4-5 hours daily exhibited moderate errors, including undercapitalization, misplaced capitalization, missing punctuation, incorrect punctuation, and excessive punctuation. In contrast, the 6-7 hours group showed more frequent errors in undercapitalization, misplaced capitalization, missing punctuation, and excessive punctuation, indicating a stronger association between longer social media use and increased errors. The 8-hour group, comprising the fewest students, had minimal errors, primarily in overcapitalization.

Table 5
Types of capitalization errors that are prevalent in the Facebook Post/s of JHS

Capitalization Errors			
1.	Undercapitalization	Failure to capitalize proper nouns or first letter of the word in the beginning of a sentence.	7
2.	Misplaced Capitalization	Incorrectly capitalizing words that should be lowercased.	4
3.	Overcapitalization	Excessive capitalization of letters for emphasis	2

The data from junior high school students at ICCBI indicate issues with undercapitalization, misplaced capitalization, and overcapitalization. Undercapitalization involves failing to capitalize the first letter of sentences and proper nouns, while misplaced capitalization entails unnecessarily capitalizing words that should remain lowercase. Overcapitalization is evident in the excessive use of uppercase letters for emphasis. According to Masoud et al. (2021), the highest capitalization errors fall under random capitalization, followed by undercapitalization at the beginning of sentences, capitalization after phrases and clauses, and finally, the uncapitalization of abbreviations. These errors underscore the

significant need for improved understanding and adherence to proper capitalization and punctuation rules in writing, highlighting the importance of emphasizing these fundamental aspects of grammar in educational settings.

Table 6

Types of punctuation errors that are prevalent in the Facebook Post/s of JHS

Punctuation Errors			
1.	Missing Punctuation	Failure to put punctuation marks as needed in the sentence.	9
2.	Excessive Punctuation	A sentence is cluttered with inappropriate punctuation marks	8
3.	Misplaced Punctuation	Inability to put punctuation marks accordingly to create a meaningful and correct sentence.	2
4.	Incorrect Punctuation	Failing to use correct punctuation in a sentence.	1

The data clearly reveals various punctuation errors among students, including misplaced, missing, and excessive punctuation. Misplaced punctuation disrupts sentence flow and clarity, as seen in unnecessary commas and omitted punctuation after key words. Missing punctuation results in incomplete and confusing sentences, highlighted by the lack of commas, apostrophes, and sentence-ending punctuation. Excessive punctuation, such as the overuse of exclamation marks and unnecessary periods, clutters sentence and diminishes their intended impact. These patterns underscore the critical need for enhanced education and practice in proper punctuation use to ensure clear, coherent, and effective writing. According to Patac et al. (2022), students made the most errors in the category of missing punctuation, followed by errors with commas, periods, exclamation marks, and question marks. This indicates that students do not have a thorough understanding of how to use different punctuation marks effectively.

Table 7

Significant Relationship between Age and Punctuation and Capitalization Errors

Age	Pearson Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Description	Decision on Ho
12-13	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
14-15	12.000 ^a	10	0.285	Not Significant	Accept
16	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
17	6.000 ^a	5	0.306	Not Significant	Accept

Legend: Reject Ho if p-value < 0.05. Accept, if otherwise.

Table 7 presents the results of the Pearson Chi-Square tests administered to junior high school students' Facebook posts at ICCBI. The findings indicate no significant relationships between punctuation and capitalization errors across different age groups, as the p-value is higher than 0.05, indicating "Not Significant." Consequently, this leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (Ho) for each group. Therefore, age does not significantly affect punctuation and capitalization errors among JHS students at ICCBI.

Table 8

Significant Relationship between Age and Punctuation and Capitalization Errors

Grade Level	Pearson Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Description	Decision on Ho
7	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
8	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
9	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
10	6.000 ^a	5	0.306	Not Significant	Accept

Legend: Reject Ho if p-value < 0.05. Accept, if otherwise.

The results of the Pearson Chi-Square test, conducted to determine significant relationships in punctuation and capitalization errors across different grade levels, indicate that all p-values are greater than 0.05, suggesting the results are "Not Significant." As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted for all grade levels. This indicates that grade levels do not significantly influence the errors in proper punctuation and capitalization in Facebook posts.

Table 9

Significant Relationship between Sex and Punctuation and Capitalization Errors

Sex	Pearson Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Description	Decision on Ho
Male	12.000 ^a	10	0.285	Not Significant	Accept
Female	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept

Legend: Reject Ho if p-value < 0.05. Accept, if otherwise.

Table 9 presents the results of the Pearson Chi-Square tests conducted to determine significant relationships in punctuation and capitalization errors across different sex groups. In both cases, the p-values are greater than 0.05, indicating that the results are "Not Significant." Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted for both groups. This suggests that sex does not significantly affect the proper usage of punctuation and capitalization in Facebook posts.

Table 10

Significant Relationship between Length of hours using Facebook and Punctuation and Capitalization Errors

Hours	Pearson Chi-Square	Df	p-value	Description	Decision on Ho
4-5hrs	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
6-7hrs	18.000 ^a	15	0.263	Not Significant	Accept
8hrs	6.000 ^a	5	0.306	Not Significant	Accept

Legend: Reject Ho if p-value < 0.05. Accept, if otherwise.

The Pearson Chi-Square tests analyzed different usage durations (hours) to determine significant relationships in punctuation and capitalization errors. The results show that the p-values exceed 0.05, indicating that the findings are "Not Significant." Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted for all durations of usage. In other words, there are no statistically significant differences in punctuation and capitalization errors in Facebook posts based on the varying hours of usage among the students.

Suggested ways to have awareness in using the punctuation and capitalization

The researchers created a Facebook page to raise awareness about the proper use of punctuation and capitalization. This platform aims to reduce the errors committed by students and serve as a valuable resource for effective writing practices. Sharing informative content, examples, and tips, the page seeks to educate users on the importance of punctuation and capitalization in enhancing communication and clarity in their posts.

The Facebook page called Capstivating Pausetivity to help Junior High School (JHS) students improve their writing skills, particularly in punctuation and capitalization. Many students struggle with these basic writing rules, leading to unclear or incorrect sentences. This page serves as an online learning platform where students can gain a better understanding of proper punctuation use and capitalization rules.

Capstivating Pausetivity shares informative posts and examples. The page provides clear explanations, common mistakes to avoid, and simple tips that students can apply in their writing. By raising awareness of the importance of punctuation and capitalization, the researchers goal is to reduce common writing errors and enhance students' communication skills.

Through this platform, students can develop better writing habits, which will not only help in their academic performance but also in their daily conversations, whether online or in school. The page encourages everyone to be more mindful of how they write, making their messages clearer and more effective.

CONCLUSIONS

The data show that the majority of respondents committing the greatest errors are 15 years old, comprising half of the sample and primarily consisting of Grade 9 students. Additionally, the findings indicate that respondents who spent 6-7 hours on Facebook, along with male students, made the most mistakes.

The data show that there are three types of capitalization errors observed. The first is undercapitalization, which occurred seven times; this refers to the failure to capitalize proper nouns or the first letter of a word at the beginning of a sentence. The second type is misplaced capitalization, with four occurrences, where words that should be in lowercase are incorrectly capitalized. Lastly, overcapitalization, seen twice in the data, involves the excessive use of uppercase letters for emphasis.

Regarding punctuation errors, four types were identified. The most prevalent was missing punctuation, which occurred nine times; this indicates that respondents failed to include necessary punctuation marks in their sentences. The second highest frequency was excessive punctuation, occurring eight times, where sentences were cluttered with inappropriate punctuation marks. Additionally, misplaced punctuation was noted twice, highlighting the need for correct punctuation placement to create meaningful and grammatically correct sentences. Lastly, incorrect punctuation, characterized by the use of improper punctuation marks, occurred once in the data gathered. Therefore, it is evident that junior high school students neglect proper punctuation and capitalization when posting on their Facebook timelines. According to Johan et al. (2020), capitalization and punctuation are important aspects that students must consider to convey their messages effectively. Using capitalization and punctuation correctly is essential for effective communication.

The study revealed no significant relationships between age, sex, grade level, and length of exposure to Facebook usage among Junior High School students at Immaculate Conception College Balayan Inc. regarding errors

in their posts. Data analysis indicated that these demographic factors do not influence the improper use of punctuation and capitalization. This suggests that errors in Facebook postings are not determined by these specific characteristics. Furthermore, whether a student is older or younger, male or female, in a higher or lower grade, or has been using Facebook for a long or short time does not affect the mistakes they make in their posts. This implies that punctuation and capitalization errors are consistent across different groups of students, regardless of these demographic factors.

The researchers developed a Facebook page to raise awareness about the proper use of punctuation and capitalization. This platform aims to reduce the errors committed by students and serve as a valuable resource for effective writing practices. Sharing informative content, examples, and tips, the page seeks to educate users on the importance of punctuation and capitalization in enhancing communication and clarity in their posts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend that future studies should investigate additional variables that may influence the errors made by Junior High School (JHS) students in their Facebook postings. This could include examining factors such as students' language proficiency, prior writing experience, and their social environment. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to explore how social media can serve as a tool for improving students' abilities to use correct punctuation and capitalization. Understanding the role of social media in educational context could provide insights into improving writing skills.

Additionally, future researchers should consider studying the backgrounds of students, as this information could yield a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting their online communication. Exploring the demographic, cultural, and educational backgrounds of students may reveal patterns that contribute to the types of errors observed.

Moreover, it is important to expand the scope of research to include other social media platforms that may exhibit similar issues with language usage. Given the different range of social media available today, there is a potential for identifying both unique challenges and commonalities across different platforms. This exploration can lead to understanding more of how various social media environments impact students' communication skills.

As the researchers are future educators, it is imperative for them to enhance their ideas and resources. Engaging in a comprehensive examination of these topics, they can develop affective strategies to support students in improving their online communication and writing skills, ultimately fostering better academic outcomes in the digital age.

In addition, the following recommendations were given:

- 1. Conduct Grammar Clinics.** Schedule weekly or bi-weekly grammar clinics during lunch or after school. These sessions can be informal, allowing students to bring their Facebook posts for review and receive immediate feedback on punctuation and capitalization errors.
- 2. Create a Writing Buddy System.** Pair students to act as writing buddies. They can review each other's posts before publishing them on social media. This peer support can help them catch mistakes and reinforce learning.
- 3. Utilize Classroom Time.** Dedicate a portion of existing language or literature classes to discuss common punctuation and capitalization errors. Use real examples from students' posts (with permission) to make the lesson relevant and relatable.

- 4. Design Simple Posters or Handouts.** Create clear and concise posters or handouts with punctuation and capitalization rules. Display them in classrooms and around the school to serve as constant reminders for students.
- 5. Incorporate Technology.** Leverage free online tools or apps that provide grammar checking. Introduce students to resources like Grammarly or Hemingway Editor, which they can use to check their posts for errors before publishing.
- 6. Host a Social Media Writing Challenge.** Organize a friendly competition where students create posts using proper punctuation and capitalization. Share these posts on the school's official social media page, giving recognition to participants.
- 7. Provide Feedback through School Platforms.** Use school platforms (like Google Classroom) to give students regular feedback on their writing. Encourage them to submit sample posts for constructive criticism, focusing on grammar and style.
- 8. Implement a Suggestion Box.** Create a suggestion box where students can anonymously submit questions or topics they struggle with regarding punctuation and capitalization. Use these to guide future lessons or workshops.
- 9. Encourage Parental Involvement.** Send home a simple guide for parents on how to help their children with writing skills, emphasizing the importance of punctuation and capitalization in effective communication.
- 10. Promote a Culture of Continuous Learning.** Foster an environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities. Encourage students to discuss their errors openly and to view feedback as a valuable part of their learning process.

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