

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Academic Research among Business Educators in Public Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The dynamism and expediency of academic research in the 21st century informed the decisions of the researcher to examine equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. Three purposes, three research questions, and three hypotheses guided the study. The researcher adopted mixed methods. Research design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection. The population of the study comprised 40 business educators teaching in four public tertiary institutions offering business education programme in Ogun State. Census sampling technique was used to select the entire 40 business educators since the population was manageable. Two instruments were used to gather data for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, while an interview guide with seven open-ended questions was used to collect qualitative data. The research instruments were validated by three experts in Business Education and Research Methods from the Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. The two instruments yielded reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.77 respectively. The instruments were administered personally to the respondent and there was hundred percent retrieval rate. Demographic data were analysed using percentages research questions were answered using frequency table, mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. Findings of the study revealed that the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research by business educators include discovery of suitable pedagogical method for teaching and learning Business Education courses, advancing the frontiers of knowledge in Business Education among others. Findings also revealed that inaccurate data and underfunding are some of the challenges to equity, diversity, and inclusivity in research among business education in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The study also discovered that industry- institution collaboration is a veritable strategy for promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research by business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. Finally, the study recommended that business educators in Ogun State should engage in academic research by collaborating on inter-institution basis and with stakeholders in relevant industries.

Keyword: Academic Research, Collaboration, Diversity, Equity, inclusivity, and Business Educators

Word Count: 337

1.1 Introduction

Tertiary institutions all over the world have three core mandates, namely; teaching, research and community service. One of the most prominent mandate of tertiary institutions is academic research. According to Adediran (2017), academic research is a logical and systematic process of finding solutions to educational problems. It involves the identification of a problem needing solution, gathering or reviewing literature of such or related problem, determining the design or proposed pattern to come about the solution, collection of data, organization of data, analysis of data, interpretation of data, and conclusion in order to proffer solutions to envisaged problems. Academic research can also be seen as a research conducted by scholars all over the tertiary institutions as part of the academic requirement to grow professionally. Academic research serves as a fundamental guide to scholars in the quest for professional advancement.

According to Clifford (2020), research refers to the process of identifying and defining problems, formulation of hypotheses, collection, organizing and evaluation of data and reaching conclusions. It is the backbone of knowledge creation and dissemination across various disciplines. The main purpose of academic research is to expand knowledge, solving problems, informing policy and practice as so on. Research can be basic, qualitative, quantitative, applied or mixed methods. Equity, diversity and inclusivity are part of the emerging trends in research. Equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes. It acknowledges that individuals may start from different positions due to historical and systematic factors. Equity aims to provide individuals with the resources and support they need to achieve equal outcomes, rather than simply treating everyone the same (Merrian, 2018; Nworgu, 2015).

Equity in research involves providing all academia with the resources and support needed to succeed, regardless of their background, by addressing disparities in research by creating conducive and supportive work environment (Boghdady, 2025). The desire to provide comprehensive and sustainable educational is not an easy goal to achieve. The word “Equity” is from equality, Equity can be seen as a way of recognizing the existence of “identity-based advantages and barriers” as well as “working to correct and address this imbalance”. Diversity can be defined as “increasing the presence of people of diverse identities” in the editorial process and inclusion as “creating an environment where all those with diverse identities are welcomed and valued”. Diversity also refers to the presence of variety within the organizational workforce in characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, culture, class

status, and religion to mention but few. Diversity in academic research can be seen as one of the important instrument of cordial relationship in higher institutions of learning (Gregor & Aspen, 2021).

According to Thomas (2019), diversity is much more than a value, but an intentional commitment to embrace differences in its characteristics. According to Francisco (2023), illustrate the notion of inclusivity in contrast to exclusion, segregation, and integration. Inclusivity should be much more than just respect for difference and diversity; rather, it should be a critical disposition allowing to question and disrupt dominant narratives that promote exclusion and discrimination based on gender, race, culture, language to mention, but few. The three variables are often used to increase the production and qualities of research as a result of collaborative efforts put in place by the researchers. Without mincing words, the constructs of equity, diversity and inclusivity are very essential in the operations of business educators. Business educators are professionally trained teachers of business subjects who are competent in delivery of the contents of business education curriculum at different levels of education. A business educator in the opinion of Agboola (2015) is an individual who has undergone professional training in a business related course and has, in addition undergone training in pedagogy of that course.

Bogndady (2025) asserted that benefits of equity, diversity and inclusivity include; enhancement of scientific excellence, alignment with human rights principles, ensuring equitable benefits for global populations, and maximizing the richness of diverse perspectives in academic pursuits. In addition, EDI principles ensure that researchers from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from research. Despite recent efforts to improve equity, diversity and inclusivity, systemic barriers such as bias in funding, discrimination in publication and sentiment in representation still persist. The National Library of medicine (2023) observed that inaccurate data and underfunding are some of the challenges of equity, diversity and inclusivity in educational practices. Similarly, Rajes & Sujathamalini (2024), explained that, developing and inclusive environment where every community member is respected and valued, operational flexibility ensuring a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students, engaging local communities, and utilising technological tools like virtual desktop environment are some of the strategies for boosting equity, diversity and inclusivity. Francisco & Bossu (2023), also opined that equity, diversity, and inclusion are key areas in the current development of educational systems internationally. However, little is known about the general

perspective of what has been addressed about EDI in educational contexts to date. Result indicate that practitioners should involve all stakeholders, including institutions, faculty members, and students, in EDI development to enhance open educational practices as well as in the concretion of open educational resources which need to consider culture, language, and location, among others. This review of literature contributes an evidence base to support the future development and adoption of equity, diversity, and inclusion in educational contexts by organizing relevant literature into coherent themes that can inform future research. Again, Catlin & Robert (2024), observed, diversity, equity, and inclusion are relevant in societal disclosure and have implications for educators in natural sciences disciplines. A synthesis of diversity, equity, and inclusion research in these disciplines indicate that while conversations and interventions surrounding issues of EDI are occurring, inequities across various scales of education system still exist.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that equity, diversity and inclusivity are essential for advancing knowledge and addressing global challenges. However, there is paucity of literature and research concerning equity, diversity and inclusivity of academic research in Business Education thus creating a gap which this study sought to fill. It is therefore, imperative to examine equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Collaboration is very essential in the successful conduct of academic research. However, the researcher observed a paucity of quality researches in the field of Business Education due to limitations and impediments occasioned by lack of functional collaboration among business educators. Without equity, diversity and inclusivity, academic research activities in Business Education will be impeded. Academic research is the livewire of any academic programme. Without result-oriented researches, problems in Business Education will continue to linger and escalate. For the effective achievement of the lofty objectives of the Business Education programme, it becomes imperative that business educators, irrespective of their options should prioritize equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.
2. Identify the challenges of embracing equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.
3. Find out the strategies for promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges of embracing equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies of promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among Business Educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria?

1.5 Hypotheses

Ho1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Ho2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators concerning the challenges of embracing equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among business educators

Ho3. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal and state owned tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in academic research among business educators

1.6 Methodology

The researcher adopted mixed methods research design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection. The core component was the quantitative, while the supplementary component was the qualitative. According to Merriam (2018), the integration of quantitative and qualitative techniques offers a more thorough analysis and comprehensive representation of the study problem. The population of the study comprised 40 business educators teaching in four public tertiary institutions offering Business Teacher Education programme in Ogun State. Census sampling technique was used to select the entire 40 business educators since the population was manageable. The census method is a method of statistical enumeration whereby all members of the population are studied. Two instruments were used to gather data for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, while an interview guide with seven open-ended questions was used to collect qualitative data. The research instruments were validated by three experts in Business Education and Research methods from the Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. A pilot study was conducted at the Kwara State College of Education (Technical) Lafaji, to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The split-half reliability method was adopted, while results from the pilot study were analysed using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The two instruments yielded reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.77 respectively. With the help of research assistant the questionnaire items were uploaded to a google form, and a link was generated and distributed electronically to the respondents. Interviews with the heads of department, and head of units, were conducted via zoom and whatsapp audio calls. Demographic data were analysed using percentages, research questions were answered using frequency table, mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic approach and content-analysis.

Results:

Research Question One: What are the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

S/N	Benefits	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Discovery of suitable pedagogical methods	3.48	0.72	Agree
2	Advancing the frontiers of knowledge in Business Education	3.24	0.85	Agree
3	Enhancement of academic excellence among business educators	3.22	0.88	Agree
4	Ensuring equitable benefits for different specialisations in Business Education programme	2.78	0.63	Agree
5	Equal opportunities for all business educators to contribute to research activities	3.25	0.74	Agree
6	Equal opportunities for all business educators to benefit from research activities	3.16	0.66	Agree
7	Improvement in the practice of Business Education	3.10	0.71	Agree
8	Maximising the richness of diverse perspectives among business educators	3.17	0.81	Agree
9	Enhancement of effective collaboration among business educators from different option	3.96	0.57	Agree
10	Provision of viable and pragmatic solutions to problem in Business Education practice	3.71	0.60	Agree

N= 40, Decision rule = 2.50 weighted Mean/ SD= 3.31/0.72

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Results in Table 1 revealed that respondents agreed that all the items are benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. This is based on the weighted mean (3.31), which is greater than the criterion mean (2.50). The weighted standard deviation of 0.71 implies that the responses are homogeneous.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

S/N	Challenges	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Bias in research funding	3.29	0.88	Agree
2.	Discrimination in publication	3.34	0.82	Agree
3.	Sentiment in representation	2.96	0.72	Agree
4.	Inaccurate data	2.87	0.79	Agree
5.	Underfunding	3.14	0.81	Agree
6.	Gender discrimination	3.32	0.73	Agree
7.	Superiority complex	3.12	0.65	Agree
8.	Poor mentoring practices	3.28	0.70	Agree
9.	Lopsidedness in the recruitment of lecturers	3.15	0.67	Agree
10.	Politicisation of education	3.18	0.80	Agree

N=40, Decision rule=2.50 weighted mean/SD =3.17/0.76

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Result in table 2 indicated that respondents agreed that all the items are challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business education in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. This is predicated on the weighted mean of 3.17, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The weighted standard deviation of 0.76 reveal the homogeneity of the responses.

Research Question Three: What are the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 3: mean and standard deviation of responses on strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

S/N	Benefits	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Industry Institution collaboration	3.10	0.71	Agree
2	Operational flexibility ensuring a more equitable and supporting learning environment	3.21	0.64	Agree
3	Engagement of local communities	2.89	0.67	Agree
4	Utilisation of technological tools like virtual desktop environment	3.12	0.75	Agree
5	Application of human right principles	3.11	0.81	Agree
6	Ensuring equitable benefits for all business educators irrespective of their options	2.89	0.68	Agree
7	Enhancing team teaching and co-teaching among business educators	2.94	0.59	Agree
8	Promotion of collaborative research among business educators	2.97	0.60	Agree
9	Encouraging mentor-mentee relationship among business educators	3.15	0.74	Agree
10	Promotion of unity in diversity among various options in Business Education	3.20	0.80	Agree

N= 40, Decision rule=2.50, weighted Mean/SD = 3.06/0.70

Source: Field Survey(2025)

Result in Table 3 showed that all respondents agreed that all the items are strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The decision was based in the weighted mean of 3.06, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The weighted standard deviation of 0.70 signified that the responses centred around the mean.

Test of hypotheses

Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of independent sample t-test in mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators

Gender	N	mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	14	3.08	0.39				
					38	1.743	0.76
Female	26	3.18	0.48				Accept

Source: FieldSurvey,2025.

Table 4 presents the results of an independent sample t-test on the mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. The independent sample t-test results show no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of the two group with $t(38)=1.743$ and a p-value of 0.76. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses (H_0), which states that there is significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria is retained. The results show that there is significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators. The mean difference in mean responses between the two groups is 0.10 (3.18 -3.08), indicating a small difference, but it is not statistically significant.

Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators concerning the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Table 5: Summary of independent sample t-test on mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators concerning the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Experience	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Remark
10 years and above	22	3.75	0.64	38	4.201	0.105	Accept
Less than 10years	18	3.50	0.61				

Source: FieldSurvey,2025

Table 5 presents the results of independent sample t-test on mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators concerning the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. The mean difference in responses between the groups is 0.25(3.75-3.50), indicating a moderate difference that is not statistically significant. The relatively low standard deviations for both groups imply that the responses were homogeneous. With $t(38)=4.201$ and p-value of 0.105 that is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses, which states that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators concerning the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria, is hereby accepted.

Hypotheses Three: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal and state tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Table 3: Summary of independent sample t-test on mean responses of business educators in federal and state tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Ownership	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Remark
Federal	23	3.48	0.65	38	1.78	0.110	Accept
State	17	3.39	0.58				

Source: Field Survey,2025

Table 6 present the results of the independent sample t-test on the mean responses of business educators in federal and state owned tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.09(3.48-3.39), indicating a small difference that is not significantly significant. The relatively low standard deviations for both groups indicate that the responses within each group are consistent with $t(38)=-1.78$ and p-value of 0.110, which is greater than 0.05 significance level, the null hypotheses which states that, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal and state owned tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators is therefore upheld.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

A semi-structured interview guide was used to obtain the opinions of heads of department and heads of units on equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators in Ogun State, Nigeria. The interview was triggered by the need to gain a deeper understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. The qualitative data were content analysed within the thematic framework, and the findings, and the findings were presented to reflect how each interview question was answered.

Interview Question One: What is your opinion concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators?

Benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators

Out of 10 HOD'S/HOU'S, 7 (70%) of them responded that of equity, diversity, and inclusivity are essential ingredients for indepth academic research, as the scope of research in enlarged. Furthermore, 2(20%) of the HOD'S/HOU'S asserted that equity, diversity, and inclusivity help to boost the generalisability of academic research. Findings, while 1(10%) opined that equity, diversity, and inclusivity help to eliminate inherent imbalances in the conduct of academic research among business educators. The interviewees unanimously responded that equity, diversity, and inclusivity are very beneficial to the conduct of academic research among business educators.

Interview Question Two: How do you perceive the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators?

1.7 Challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators

80% (8 HOD's /HOU's) opined that corruption, vested interest, greed, mediocrity and recruitment of incompetent business educators are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. 20% (2HOD's/HOU's) further explained that inaccurate data, get-rich-quick syndrome, and poor grasp of research methods, are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. All the interviewees asserted that selfish and petty interest always impede the application of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

Interview Question Three: In your opinion, what are the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators?

Strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

6 interviewees (60%) said that adequate funding, provision of accurate data, and functional collaboration on intra-institutions and inert-institution bases are some of the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators, while 4 interviewees (40%) explained that objectivity, meritocracy, and institutional support are some of the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators, All the interviewees affirmed that a viable framework needs to be established so that business educators, irrespective of specialization, gender, or official status in the tertiary institutions will have equal opportunities to be co-opted and engaged to participate in academic research.

1.8 Discussion of Findings

This study was conducted to examine equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators in public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings of the study were discussed in line with the research objectives, research questions, and research hypotheses. The findings from the first research question and Table 1 revealed that enhancement of academic excellence, advancing the frontiers of business educators, and ensuring equitable benefits for business educators, are some of the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. The results of test of hypothesis are indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business educators concerning the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. These findings supported the position of Bogudady (2025) that benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity include, enhancement of scientific excellence, alignment with human right principles, and maximizing the richness of diverse perspectives in academic pursuits. The findings were also supported by the findings from the qualitative data obtained through interviews conducted on the 10 heads of department or unit, when it was revealed that, enlargement of research scope, and increased generalisability are some of the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators.

The responses from the second research question showed that, systematic bias, underfunding, discrimination, and sentiments are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. The research test of hypothesis two revealed no significant difference in the mean responses of highly experienced and less experienced business educators regarding the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. These findings are in consonance with the observations of the National Library of Medicine (2025) that inaccurate data, and underfunding are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity educational practices. The findings were also buttressed by the findings from the qualitative data obtained through interviewers conducted on 10 heads of department or Unit, that inaccurate data, underfunding, and poor group of research methods are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators.

Results from research question three and Table 3 revealed that adequate funding development of inclusive environment, and operational flexibility are some of the strategies for

promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. The test of hypothesis three implied no significant difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal and state owned tertiary institutions regarding the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity for academic research among business educators. These findings are in tandem with the position of Ramachandran and Sujathamahni(2024) that engaging local communities, and utilising technological tools like virtual desktop environment as some of the strategies for boosting equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The findings were also corroborated by the findings obtained through interviews conducted on the 10 heads of department/Unit that adequate funding, functional collaboration, and the establishment of a viable framework are some of the strategies for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators.

1.9 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that, discovery of appropriate pedagogical methods, advancing the frontiers of business educators, and proffering viable solution to problems in Business Education programme, are some of the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. It was also concluded that inaccurate data, underfunding and politicization are some of the challenges of embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity in academic research among business educators. The implication of this, is that the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity are very essential in the conduct of result-oriented academic research by business educators.

1.10 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Business educators should engage in academic research by collaborative on intra- institution and inter-institution bases.
2. Business Education departments or units in tertiary institutions should establish a unit or section for industry- institution collaboration.
3. There should be a forum for all business educators within a geographical area to gather for professional interaction at the grassroots level.

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