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Effect of structured Gayatri Mantra chanting with Sanskrit phonetic pronunciation on self-confidence among students with disabilities: An experimental study

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Abstract
Self-confidence is an important psychological attribute that influences students' participation, emotional adjustment, academic engagement, and social functioning. Students with disabilities may encounter educational, social, and environmental challenges that can influence their confidence and participation in different activities. The present study was designed to examine the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting on self-confidence among students with disabilities. A pre-test–post-test control group experimental design was employed. Forty students with disabilities aged 13–18 years were selected and divided into experimental and control groups, with 20 participants in each group. The experimental group participated in a structured Gayatri Mantra chanting programme for 12 weeks, whereas the control group did not receive the intervention. Self-confidence was assessed before and after the intervention. The findings indicated a substantial improvement in self-confidence among the experimental group. The experimental group's mean self-confidence score increased from 135.20 in the pre-test to 172.10 in the post-test. A paired-samples analysis showed a statistically significant improvement, $t(19) = 26.165$, $p < .001$. ANCOVA further demonstrated a significant group effect after controlling for pre-test scores. The findings suggest that regular Gayatri Mantra chanting may be a useful complementary practice for supporting self-confidence among students with disabilities.

Keywords: Gayatri Mantra, self-confidence, disabilities, mantra chanting, meditation, psychological development

Introduction

Self-confidence is an important psychological characteristic that influences how individuals perceive their abilities, respond to challenges, and participate in educational and social situations. In the educational context, confidence may influence students' willingness to participate, persistence in difficult tasks, communication, decision-making, and responses to failure. For students with disabilities, the development of positive psychological resources may be particularly important because educational participation can be affected by environmental barriers, social attitudes, communication difficulties, and limited opportunities for independent participation.

Research has further explored confidence in specific performance situations. Hall (1990) [8] examined the influence of performer gender, performer skill level, and opponent gender on self-confidence in competitive situations. Sleeper and Nigro (1987) [9] investigated self-confidence in achievement settings and emphasized the importance of social context in confidence-related performance. Wilson (2000) [10] examined sources of sport confidence among senior adult, college, and high-school athletes, demonstrating that confidence is also an important psychological component of sports performance. Dharakrswari (2025) [2] more recently investigated the effects of combined pranayama and meditation practices on self-confidence among young handball players and reported significant improvement in self-confidence following the intervention. Collectively, these studies indicate that psychological practices involving meditation and related techniques may contribute to the development of confidence in different performance contexts.

Academic self-confidence has similarly been investigated among students in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. Huang and Brainard (2001) [17] examined determinants of academic self-confidence among students in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology, emphasizing the relevance of confidence within academically demanding disciplines. Salinas *et al*. (1999) [16], through the study titled I Think I Can: Improving Teaching Self-Confidence of International Teaching Assistants, examined approaches for improving teaching self-confidence among international teaching assistants. These studies suggest that confidence can influence an individual's willingness to engage in demanding academic and professional tasks. The association between confidence and achievement-related characteristics has also been explored among academically talented students. Ziegler and Heller (2000) [15] examined conditions for self-confidence among boys and girls achieving highly in chemistry. Their work highlights the importance of understanding the factors that support confidence even among students who demonstrate high academic achievement. Purwar (2002) [14] investigated self-confidence, intelligence, and level of aspiration among urban and rural Scheduled Caste boys and girls, thereby linking confidence with cognitive ability and aspirations in different educational and social contexts.

Self-confidence is a critical determinant of academic success, social interaction, and overall psychological well-being. For students with disabilities, systemic barriers, societal stigma, and personal functional limitations

frequently impede the development of robust self-efficacy and self-confidence (Sethi & Sharma, 2020).

Mantra meditation, including practices involving rhythmic vocalization, breath regulation, and sustained attention, may contribute to psychological regulation and well-being. Evidence from meditation research indicates potential benefits for stress, anxiety, emotional regulation, attention, and self-regulation (Goyal *et al*., 2014; Tang *et al*., 2015) [11, 12]. In addition, Pradhan and Derle (2012) [13] reported effects of Gayatri Mantra chanting on performance in a digit-letter substitution task, suggesting its potential relevance to cognitive functioning. These psychological and cognitive effects may provide a supportive context for developing positive self-perception and confidence.

Mantra-based practices generally involve repeated verbal or mental attention to a specific sound or phrase. The repetitive nature of chanting may encourage sustained attention and mental regulation. In the case of Gayatri Mantra practice, the activity combines repetition, attention, breathing, and a structured rhythm. These features provide a basis for examining whether regular practice can contribute to psychological outcomes such as self-confidence.

Recent research has specifically examined Gayatri Mantra meditation. Tripathi, Sharma, and Vishvakarma (2024) [7] investigated a 40-day Gayatri Mantra meditation intervention among young adults and reported improvements in psychological capital and well-being. Psychological capital included self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—constructs that are conceptually related to positive psychological functioning and confidence.

The relationship between meditation and self-confidence has also been examined using other forms of meditation. Research on Vipassana meditation has reported improvements in self-confidence among student-teachers, while studies involving combined pranayama and meditation have reported positive effects on self-confidence among young athletes. These findings provide a theoretical and empirical basis for examining whether a structured Gayatri Mantra intervention can similarly support self-confidence.

However, an important gap remains in research concerning students with disabilities. Much of the existing literature has focused on healthy adults, university students, student-teachers, or athletes. Therefore, examining Gayatri Mantra chanting among students with disabilities may contribute to the literature on accessible complementary approaches for psychological development.

Meditation and Psychological Well-being

Meditation has increasingly been recognized as a psychological practice that may contribute to emotional balance, stress management, attentional regulation, and overall psychological well-being. Research suggests that regular meditation may help individuals manage negative emotional states and develop greater psychological awareness. Goyal *et al*. (2014) [12], through a systematic review and meta-analysis, reported that meditation programmes were associated with improvements in psychological outcomes, particularly anxiety, depression, and stress-related symptoms. Similarly, Goldberg *et al*. (2021), after reviewing evidence from 44 meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials, found that mindfulness-based interventions generally produced beneficial effects across several psychological outcomes.

Research involving students has also indicated potential benefits of meditation for mental health and well-being. González-Martín *et al*. (2023) reported positive effects of mindfulness-based interventions on the mental health of university students, while Chen *et al*. (2023) found that mindfulness meditation interventions may support improvements in stress, anxiety, depression, well-being, and resilience among university students. These findings suggest that meditation may create a favourable psychological environment by promoting emotional regulation, attentional control, and stress reduction. However, differences in intervention duration, meditation techniques, outcome measures, and research designs indicate the need for further controlled experimental studies. Such evidence provides a theoretical basis for examining specific contemplative practices, including Gayatri Mantra chanting, in relation to psychological well-being and self-confidence.

Gayatri Mantra and Psychological Capital

Overall, the existing literature suggests that Gayatri Mantra chanting may have beneficial effects across several cognitive and psychological domains, including attention, memory, emotional regulation, psychological distress, mindfulness, resilience, and psychological capital. Pradhan and Derle (2012) [13] reported improvement in performance on a digit-letter substitution task following Gayatri Mantra chanting, indicating its potential relevance to attentional and cognitive functioning. Similarly, Narayanan and Venugopalan (2018) [18] examined Gayatri Mantra chanting in school children and reported potential benefits for cognitive functions, including memory-related abilities. Samajdar and Mukherjee (2020) [19] further investigated the practice among young athletes and reported positive changes in attention, memory, anxiety, and mental state. More recent research has extended these findings to broader psychological outcomes. Tripathi and Vishvakarma (2024) [7] reported significant improvements in psychological capital, including hope, optimism, resilience, and efficacy, following a 40-day Gayatri Mantra meditation programme, together with reductions in psychological distress. Research has also indicated potential changes in mindfulness and emotional regulation following Gayatri Mantra practice (Tripathi *et al*., 2024 [7]; Sharma *et al*., 2025). Neurophysiological investigations have further explored possible changes associated with Gayatri Mantra meditation, although such findings should be interpreted cautiously because some studies have used small samples or pilot designs (Thomas & Rao, 2016) [20]. Collectively, these findings provide a theoretical and empirical basis for examining Gayatri Mantra chanting as a structured contemplative practice that may support cognitive functioning, emotional well-being, and positive psychological development. However, the available evidence remains relatively limited, particularly among students with disabilities, highlighting the need for well-controlled experimental research in this population.

The findings are relevant to self-confidence because self-efficacy and self-confidence are closely related psychological constructs, although they are not identical. Bandura (1997) explained that self-efficacy represents an individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform specific tasks, whereas self-confidence reflects a

broader perception of one's competence and ability. Psychological Capital theory further identifies self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience as important positive psychological resources that may help individuals cope with challenges and maintain motivation (Luthans *et al*., 2007).

Previous research has also reported positive psychological effects of meditation. Brown and Ryan (2003) associated mindfulness with psychological well-being and self-regulation, while Goyal *et al*. (2014) [12] found that meditation programmes may improve psychological stress and well-being. Dileepkumar (2017) [3] reported improvement in self-confidence following Vipassana meditation among student-teachers. Similarly, Dharakrswari (2025) [2] found significant improvement in self-confidence following combined pranayama and meditation.

Thus, although psychological capital cannot be considered synonymous with self-confidence, improvements in self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism may provide a possible psychological pathway through which Gayatri Mantra meditation could support confidence. This provides a rationale for examining its effect on self-confidence among students with disabilities.

Meditation and Cognitive Functioning

Singh, Sharma, and Talwar (2012) [6] examined the immediate and longer-term effects of meditation on stress, cognitive functions, and intelligence. Their study included 34 healthy male students and assessed physiological stress indicators, intelligence, short-term memory, and cognitive flexibility. The researchers reported that short-term meditation was associated with a relaxation response and improved Stroop-test performance, while one month of regular meditation was associated with improvements in intelligence and cognitive functions.

These findings are relevant because cognitive functioning and psychological confidence may interact in educational settings. Improved attention and cognitive control can potentially help students experience greater competence when approaching academic tasks.

Meditation and Self-Confidence

Dileepkumar (2017) [3] examined the effect of Vipassana meditation on self-confidence among 152 B.Ed. student-teachers. The study employed a non-randomized control group pre-test–post-test design. ANCOVA results indicated that Vipassana meditation was effective in improving self-confidence. Both male and female participants benefited from the intervention after controlling for pre-test self-confidence and general intelligence.

Similarly, Dharakrswari (2025) [2] investigated the effect of combined pranayama and meditation practices on self-confidence among 30 handball players aged 14–17 years. Participants were divided into experimental and control groups, and the experimental group received six weeks of combined pranayama and meditation training. Self-confidence was assessed using Vealey's Trait Sports Confidence Inventory. The results indicated a significant improvement in self-confidence in the experimental group.

Kendole and Patil (2025) [4] examined meditation and self-confidence among 145 engineering students. Their survey indicated that 81% of participants believed meditation could increase self-confidence, while 76% expressed willingness to practise Rajyoga meditation. The researchers also reported a significant relationship between stress and self-doubt and greater emotional resilience among meditation practitioners.

Together, these studies provide preliminary evidence that meditation-related practices may be associated with improved self-confidence and psychological resilience. However, they do not directly establish the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting among students with disabilities, highlighting the need for the present investigation.

Rationale of the Study

Students with disabilities may experience psychological challenges associated with participation, communication, academic demands, social interaction, and perceived limitations. Developing positive psychological characteristics such as self-confidence may therefore be an important component of holistic education.

Existing research provides evidence that meditation and mantra-based practices can influence psychological well-being, stress, attention, and related positive psychological characteristics. However, research specifically examining Gayatri Mantra chanting and self-confidence among students with disabilities remains limited.

The present study was therefore undertaken to examine whether a structured Gayatri Mantra chanting programme could produce measurable changes in self-confidence among students with disabilities. The study may also contribute to the development of complementary, low-cost and structured psychological practices that can potentially be incorporated into educational settings.

Methodology

The present study employed an experimental research approach using a pre-test–post-test control group design to examine the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting on the self-confidence of disable students. This design allows researchers to assess changes associated with an intervention by comparing an experimental group receiving the intervention with a control group that does not receive it. Before the intervention, self-confidence was measured in both groups to establish their initial levels. Following the intervention period, the same self-confidence assessment was conducted again. The difference between pre-test and post-test performance provided a basis for determining changes in self-confidence and assessing the effect of regular Gayatri Mantra chanting as the independent variable.

Sampling

The participants for the present study were selected using purposive sampling technique. A total of 40 students with disabilities, aged between 13 and 18 years, were included in the study. The participants comprised students with different types of disabilities, including visual impairment, hearing impairment, and locomotor disability. The selected participants had mild to moderate levels of disability and were considered suitable for participation in the intervention programme.

After selection, the participants were divided into two groups consisting of 20 students each. The experimental group (n = 20) participated in the Gayatri Mantra chanting programme, whereas the control group (n = 20) did not receive the intervention during the study period. Both groups were assessed before and after the intervention using the selected self- confidence measure.

The participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Appropriate ethical procedures were followed throughout the study. Efforts were made to maintain comparable conditions for both groups so that meaningful differences in the outcome variable could be assessed.

Intervention

The experimental group participated in a structured Gayatri Mantra chanting programme for a period of 12 weeks. The sessions were conducted regularly from Monday to Saturday, Participants were guided to chant the Gayatri Mantra 108 times during each session under appropriate supervision. Special attention was given to correct pronunciation, rhythm, breathing pattern, posture, and focused attention during chanting. Initially, participants received proper instructions and demonstrations to ensure uniform practice. Throughout the intervention, they were encouraged to maintain concentration and follow the prescribed chanting procedure consistently. The control group did not receive the Gayatri Mantra intervention and continued their usual routine during the study period. The intervention was implemented as a structured contemplative practice and was not intended to replace educational, psychological, medical, rehabilitation, or other disability-related support services.

Measurement of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence was assessed using the selected standardized self-confidence) developed by Prof. (Dr.) Madhu Gupta and Ms. Bindiya Lakhani, measure employed in the study. Pre-test assessment was conducted before the intervention, and post-test assessment was conducted following completion of the intervention.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Paired-samples t-test was used to examine changes in the experimental group, while one-way ANCOVA was used to compare groups after statistically controlling for pre-test self-confidence scores.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Confidence

Group	Pre Mean ± SD	Post Mean ± SD
Experimental	135.20±5.67	172.10±2.84
Control	135.15±5.66	134.55±5.75

The descriptive findings indicate that the experimental and control groups demonstrated comparable levels of self-confidence at baseline, as reflected by their pre-test mean scores of 135.20 ± 5.67 and 135.15 ± 5.66, respectively. Following the Gayatri Mantra chanting programme, the experimental group showed a considerable increase in self-confidence, with its mean score rising to 172.10 ± 2.84. In contrast, the control group demonstrated virtually no change, with its post-test mean score recorded as 134.55 ± 5.75. The substantial increase in the experimental group, along with the minimal change observed in the control group, indicates a positive effect of the Gayatri Mantra chanting programme on participants' self-confidence.

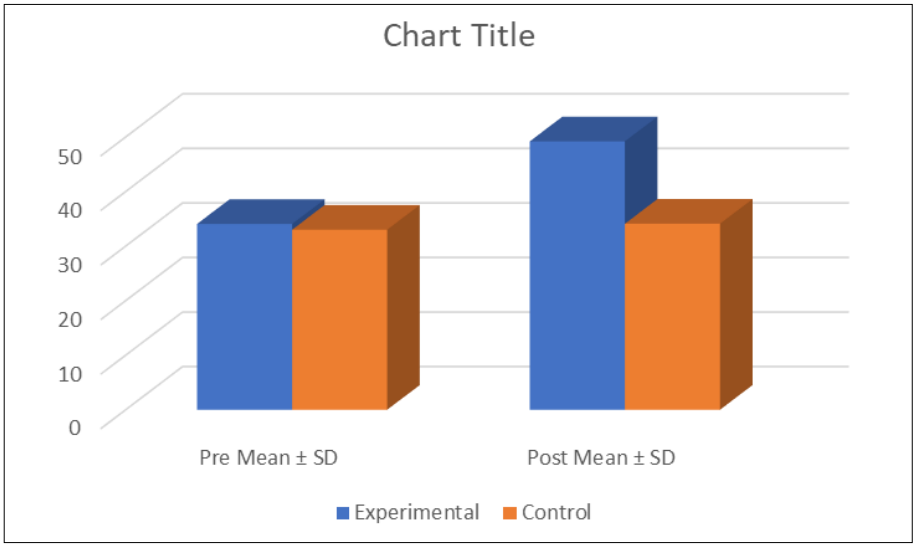

Fig 1: Graphical illustration of Mean Score of Confidence for Experimental Group and Control Group

Table 2: Paired Samples Test-Confidence

Group	Mean Differences	Std. Deviation	t-value	Df	P Value
Experimental	36.90000	6.30706	26.165	19	.001
Control	.60000	1.56945	1.710	19	.104

Confidence among participants in the experimental group. The group showed a mean pre-test to post-test difference of 36.90 (SD = 6.307), with a *t*-value of 26.165 at 19 degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant (p = .001). This result indicates a significant enhancement in self-confidence following the intervention. In comparison, the control group exhibited Only a small mean difference of 0.60 (SD = 1.569), and the corresponding *t*-value of 1.710 with 19 degrees of freedom was not statistically significant (p = .104). Thus, the absence of a significant change in the control group suggests that the observed improvement in the experimental group was associated with participation in the Gayatri Mantra chanting programme.

Table 3: Summary of One-Way ANCOVA for Post-Test self- Confidence Scores by Taking Pre-Test Self-confidence Scores as a Covariate

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre- Confidence	295.593	1	295.593	22.451	<.001	.378
Group	14081.273	1	14081.273	1069.485	<.001	.967
Error	487.157	37	13.166			
Total	955225.00	40				
Corrected Total	14882.775	39				

a. R Squared = .967 (Adjusted R Squared=.965)

The ANCOVA results revealed a statistically significant effect of pre-test self-confidence on post-test self-confidence, $F(1, 37) = 22.451$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .378$, indicating that baseline self-confidence significantly contributed to participants' post-test scores. After controlling for the pre-test self-confidence scores, a highly significant difference was observed between the experimental and control groups, $F(1, 37) = 1069.485$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .967$. The exceptionally large effect size indicates a substantial group-related difference in post-test self-confidence. Furthermore, the ANCOVA model yielded $R^2 = .967$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .965$), indicating that approximately 96.7% of the variance in post-test self-confidence was explained by the model. Overall, the findings provide strong evidence that participants who received the structured Gayatri Mantra chanting intervention demonstrated significantly greater improvement in self-confidence than those in the control group, even after controlling for their baseline self-confidence.

Discussion

The present study investigated the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting on self-confidence among students with disabilities. The findings demonstrated a substantial and statistically significant improvement in self-confidence among participants who underwent the Gayatri Mantra intervention. The experimental group increased from a pre-test mean of 135.20 to a post-test mean of 172.10, representing an improvement of 36.90 points. The paired-samples test further confirmed that this change was statistically significant. ANCOVA results revealed a highly significant group effect with an exceptionally large effect size (Partial $\eta^2 = .967$), indicating that the intervention accounted for most of the variance in post-test self-confidence scores.

One possible explanation for this improvement is that regular chanting provides a structured attentional activity. Repeated chanting may require participants to focus on pronunciation, rhythm, breathing, and the sequence of the practice. Such sustained attention may help reduce distraction and encourage greater awareness of thoughts and emotions. However, the present study demonstrates an association with the intervention rather than establishing a specific physiological mechanism.

The findings are consistent with research on meditation and self-confidence. Dileepkumar (2017) [3] reported that Vipassana meditation significantly improved self-confidence among student-teachers. Similarly, Dharakrswari (2025) [2] reported significant improvement in self-confidence among young handball players following combined pranayama and meditation practice.

The present findings also correspond with recent Gayatri Mantra research. Tripathi *et al*. (2024) [7] reported improvements in psychological capital and well-being after 40 days of Gayatri Mantra meditation. Their findings included improvements in self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Since self-efficacy represents beliefs about one's capacity to perform successfully, improvement in this domain may be relevant to the development of confidence, although self-efficacy and self-confidence should not be considered identical constructs.

Research on cognitive functioning provides an additional perspective. Singh *et al*. (2012) [6] reported improvements in cognitive functions and intelligence following regular meditation practice. Cognitive and emotional benefits may indirectly support confidence by enabling students to approach tasks with greater perceived competence.

The results should nevertheless be interpreted carefully. The sample was relatively small, the intervention was specific to the selected population and setting, and the study design does not establish whether the effects would remain after the intervention ended. Therefore, larger controlled studies with longer follow-up periods are required.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken to examine the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting on self-confidence among students with disabilities. Self-confidence is an important psychological attribute that influences an individual's willingness to participate in activities, face challenges, interact with others, and develop a positive perception of personal abilities. For students with disabilities, the development of self-confidence may be particularly important because educational experiences, social interactions, and opportunities for participation can influence their psychological development and sense of personal competence.

The findings of the present study indicate that participation in a structured Gayatri Mantra chanting programme was associated with improvement in self-confidence among students with disabilities. The intervention provided participants with a regular and organized opportunity to engage in mantra chanting in a systematic manner. The practice incorporated regular vocal recitation, appropriate pronunciation, rhythm, breathing, and focused attention. Such structured participation may provide a consistent environment in which students can engage in a meaningful activity and develop greater involvement in their own practice.

Gayatri Mantra chanting may also be considered from the perspective of its contemplative and attentional components. Repeated recitation requires participants to maintain attention on the mantra and its rhythmic vocalization. The regularity of the practice may encourage discipline, sustained participation, and focused engagement. In addition, controlled and rhythmic breathing accompanying chanting may contribute to a calm and organized state of mind. These features may potentially support positive psychological experiences that are relevant to self-confidence. However, the present study was not specifically

designed to determine the independent contribution of each component of the intervention; therefore, these factors should be considered possible explanatory elements rather than established mechanisms.

The findings can also be viewed in relation to the broader literature on meditation, mantra practices, and contemplative approaches. Previous research has suggested that such practices may be associated with psychological outcomes including emotional regulation, self-efficacy, psychological well-being, attention, resilience, and other aspects of positive psychological functioning. The present study adds to this area of research by examining the application of a structured Gayatri Mantra chanting programme specifically in relation to self-confidence among students with disabilities.

From an educational perspective, Gayatri Mantra chanting may have potential as a complementary practice for supporting positive psychological development. When appropriately implemented, a structured chanting activity may provide students with opportunities for regular participation, focused engagement, and personal involvement. Such practices may be incorporated into suitable educational or well-being programmes according to the needs, preferences, and circumstances of the students.

At the same time, Gayatri Mantra chanting should not be viewed as a substitute for individualized educational, psychological, rehabilitation, or disability-related support services. Students with disabilities have diverse needs, and their psychological development is influenced by multiple personal, educational, family, and social factors. Therefore, chanting may be considered one complementary component within a broader supportive environment rather than a standalone intervention for all psychological needs.

In conclusion, the present study supports the potential role of structured Gayatri Mantra chanting as a complementary practice for promoting self-confidence and positive psychological development among students with disabilities. The study also provides a basis for further research exploring mantra-based and contemplative practices in disability education and psychological development. Future studies may examine different disability groups, larger samples, longer intervention periods, and additional psychological variables to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the potential contribution of such practices.

Recommendations

Future research may:

- Investigate the effect of Gayatri Mantra chanting across different disability categories;
- Compare Gayatri Mantra chanting with other meditation or yoga-based interventions;
- Examine whether improvements are maintained after the intervention ends;
- Investigate possible relationships among self-confidence, concentration, memory, stress, and emotional well-being;
- Use larger samples and randomized controlled designs where feasible;
- Examine the effectiveness of different durations and frequencies of chanting.

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