Assessing The School Environment And Facilities Of Jolo-I District, Division Of Sulu: Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT. This study assessed the extent of school environment and facilities at Jolo I District, Division of Sulu. It employed a descriptive-correlational research design with 100 teacher-respondents Jolo I District through a purposive sampling procedure and treated data through frequency, percentage score, weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson's test of correlation, t-test, and ANOVA. This study examined the extent of school environment and facilities in terms of classroom and learning space, sanitation and health facilities, safety and security, teaching-learning resources and ICT, and school ground and support facilities while considering the respondents' demographic profiles such as age, gender, civil status, length of service, and educational attainment. Findings revealed that most of the teacher-respondents were 36-50 years old, majority were female teachers, majority married, serving for 5 years and below, and with bachelor's degree. Results indicated that the teachers' perception of the extent of school environment and facilities across all domains investigated were predominantly perceived as favorable, consistently garnering a 'Great Extent' rating. 36-50 years old, female, married teachers tend to appreciate and perceive the extent of school environment and facilities in supporting the teaching-learning environment. On the significant correlation, very high positive significant correlation has been observed. This supports Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory suggesting that school environment and facilities in this district function as a holistic ecosystem that shapes the overall quality of education. Finally, this study emphasizes the significance of the role of school administrators and teachers managing school environment and facilities in order to effectively facilitate the quality of education.

KEYWORDS: School Environment, Educational Facilities, Teachers' Perspectives, Learning Environment, School Infrastructure, Descriptive-Correlational Study

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Introduction

Student attendance, teacher satisfaction, and overall school performance are all significantly influenced by school environmental factors, including ventilation, lighting, classroom safety, and sanitation (UNICEF, 2021). Nevertheless, educators in numerous rural and island communities encounter obstacles such as insufficient furniture, damaged or temporary structures, and inadequate classrooms, which impede effective classroom administration (Schneider, 2018.). National assessments in the Philippines demonstrate persistent disparities in school infrastructure,

with Mindanao, notably isolated regions of Sulu, experiencing substantial shortages in classrooms, sanitation facilities, and learning resources (Navarro, 2022).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education, which underscores the necessity of safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments, is consistent with these concerns. SDG 4 is a call to action for the enhancement of educational facilities that are gender responsive, disability inclusive, and child-friendly (UN, 2020). It is particularly important to address these disparities in marginalized and conflict-affected communities, where schools frequently operate under challenging geographical conditions and face resource constraints.

The quality of school facilities, which encompasses classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and water and sanitation systems, is a critical factor in the development of both student learning experiences and professional conditions for instructors. Research suggests that students' engagement, teacher performance, and instructional quality are considerably improved by adequate infrastructure (OECD, 2020; Earthman, 2019). In contrast, the Jolo I District in the Division of Sulu is a prime example of an area where effective teaching is made difficult by inadequate or inadequately maintained facilities.

Due to their direct experience with daily operational realities that may not be recorded in official reports, teachers offer valuable insights into the actual conditions of school environments. Informed decision-making and resource allocation are significantly facilitated by their perspectives, which provide dependable evaluations of the functionality, safety, and utilization of school facilities (Cleveland & Fisher, 2018).

Thus, this study aims to assess the school environment and facilities in the Jolo I District, Division of Sulu, from the perspectives of teachers. In order to facilitate evidence-based planning and contribute to the pursuit of high-quality and equitable education, it evaluates the safety, usability, and adequacy of infrastructure, as well as their impact on instructional delivery.

Research Questions

1. What is the demographic profile of the faculty-respondents in terms of:
    - 1.1. Age;
    - 1.2. Gender;
    - 1.3. Civil Status;
    - 1.4. Length of Service; and
    - 1.5. Educational Attainment?
2. What is the extent of school environment and facilities at Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu, as perceived by teachers in the context of:
    - 2.1. Classroom and Learning Space;
    - 2.2. Sanitation and Health Facilities;
    - 2.3. Safety and Security;
    - 2.4. Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT; and
    - 2.5. School Ground and Support Facilities?
3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of school environment and facilities at Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu when data are classified according to their demographic profile in terms of:
    - 3.1. Age;
    - 3.2. Gender;
    - 3.3. Civil Status;
    - 3.4. Length of Service; and

3.5. Educational Attainment?

4. Is there a significant correlation among the subcategories subsumed under the school environment and facilities?

Literature

School Environment and Facilities in Education

The school environment and facilities are widely recognized as critical factors in teaching effectiveness and student learning. Research shows that classroom design, lighting, ventilation, and spatial arrangement significantly influence both instruction and student performance. Barrett et al. (2019) emphasize that well-designed school structures create comfortable and supportive learning environments. Teachers, as daily users of these spaces, are in a strong position to observe how infrastructure affects instruction.

The importance of adequate facilities is also highlighted in global policies and reports. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022) found that flexible and well-equipped learning spaces promote collaboration, creativity, and engagement. Similarly, UNICEF (2023) stressed that safe, well-ventilated classrooms and access to water and sanitation improve learning outcomes and attendance, especially in developing countries. In addition, strong infrastructure builds institutional confidence by signaling quality, readiness, and reliability, strengthening stakeholder trust and effectiveness (Gregorio & Chavez, 2025).

Empirical Evidence on Teaching and Learning Outcomes

Studies consistently show that school facilities influence both student engagement and teacher performance. Park et al. (2020) found that overcrowded classrooms and poor infrastructure reduce instructional effectiveness and student attentiveness. Sam-Kalagbor and Ezeala (2021) reported a link between well-equipped environments and teacher commitment, while Sari et al. (2021) found that adequate facilities improve teacher motivation and productivity.

Environmental conditions are also important in teaching practice. Husin et al. (2020) noted that supportive environments enhance instruction and engagement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rasmitadila et al. (2022) found that classroom safety and conditions directly affected teachers' confidence in delivering instruction. Francis et al. (2022) reported that school environments support students' emotional well-being, while Tay et al. (2021) found that ICT-equipped classrooms encourage innovation and participation.

In the Philippines, Dela Cruz et al. (2023) found that WASH facilities improve attendance and reduce health-related absences, while Barcarse (2024) reported that lack of materials and facilities hinders teaching and learning.

Gaps and Need for Localized Assessment

Although the importance of school infrastructure is well established, implementation remains limited in resource-constrained settings. Brezicha et al. (2020) found that teachers' perceptions of school environments are shaped not only by infrastructure but also by school climate, leadership, and instructional conditions. However, most assessments focus on physical facilities and often overlook teachers' lived experiences. Navarro (2022) identified regional disparities in classroom adequacy, water access, and electricity in the Philippines. However, localized studies on teachers' perspectives in specific districts remain limited.

This gap calls for a focused assessment of the Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu. Examining teachers' perspectives will provide context-specific insights on facility conditions, identify improvement priorities, and support targeted interventions to enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Methodology

1. Research Design

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was implemented in this investigation. This method was employed to ascertain the demographic profile of teacher-respondents and evaluate the extent of the school environment and facilities in Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu, as perceived by teachers. Additionally, it was employed to investigate the relationships and differences between the profiles of teachers and their assessments.

2. Participants and Sampling

The research comprised one hundred (100) permanent public elementary school teachers from the Jolo I District, Division of Sulu. Purposive sampling was implemented to guarantee that respondents had pertinent knowledge and experience associated with their educational environment and facilities. For accurate assessment, instructors were required to have a minimum of one year of teaching experience at their current school in order to meet the inclusion criteria. The number of respondents was disseminated proportionally to guarantee equitable representation. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, in that participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, confidentiality and anonymity were preserved, and ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate Ethics Committee of Sulu State College.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by School

Indanan South District School	Number Of Respondents
1. Cirilo Bueno Elementary School	14
2. Hadji Gulamu Rasul Elementary School	14
3. Hamid Halim Elementary School	14
4. Mohammad Jajurie Elementary School	14
5. Mohammad Tulawie Central School	14
6. Salih Ututalum Elementary School	15
7. Salih Yusah Elementary School	15
Total:	**100**

3. Instruments

The data were collected using a structured, two-part questionnaire that was contextualized to the Jolo I District, Division of Sulu, and was adapted from the DepEd SBM Assessment Tool (DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012), UNESCO Learning Environment Framework (2017), WHO Global School Health Initiative (2009), and AACCUP Accreditation Instruments (2020 Edition). The demographic profile of the respondents was the subject of Part I, while Part II evaluated the school facilities and environment in five subcategories: Classroom and Learning Spaces, Sanitation and Health Facilities, Safety and Security, Teaching–Learning Resources and ICT, and School Grounds and Support Facilities. The assessment was conducted using a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from "No Extent" to "Very Great Extent."

The instrument, which was initially standardized, was slightly modified for local use and validated by two faculty experts from the School of Graduate Studies of Sulu State College to assure clarity and suitability.

4. Data Collection Procedure

Permits to administer the questionnaire were secured from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies of Sulu State College, the Schools Division Superintendent, the District Supervisor, and the seven (7) elementary school principals. The researcher personally conducted the launching, administration, and retrieval of the questionnaires. Afterwards, the accomplished questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and encoded prior to the preparation of the final draft.

5. Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed to analyze the data gathered in this study. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, length of service, and educational attainment. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to determine the extent of the school environment and facilities of Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu.

For inferential analysis, the t-test for independent samples was used to determine significant differences when data were grouped according to gender, while One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied for age, civil status, length of service, and educational attainment. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the degree of correlation among the subcategories of school environment and facilities.

A 5-point Likert scale with corresponding verbal descriptions ranging from No Extent (1.00–1.49) to Very Great Extent (4.50–5.00) was adopted to interpret the results of the computations.

Results

1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Analysis of the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents (N = 100) shows that most belong to the middle-adulthood group, with 46% aged 36–50 years, followed by 40% aged 26–35 years, 10% aged 51 years and above, and 4% aged 25 years and below. In terms of gender, the teaching workforce is predominantly female (90%), while males comprise 10%. Regarding civil status, most respondents are married (64%), while 30% are single and 6% are separated or widowed. For length of service, a relatively larger proportion have five years and below experience (36%), followed by those with 6–10 years (22%), 11–15 years (20%), and 16 years and above (22%). As to educational attainment, most are bachelor's degree holders (63%), while 22% have master's units, 13% have completed a master's degree, and both doctoral units and doctoral degree holders account for 1% each.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Number of Respondents (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Age		
25 years old and below	4	4%
26 to 35 years old	40	40%
36-50 years old	46	46%
51 years old and above	10	10%
Gender		
Male	10	10%
Female	90	90%
Civil Status		
Single	30	30%
Married	64	64%
Widowed/ Separated	6	6%
Length of Service		
5 years and below	36	36%
6-10 years	22	22%
11-15 years	20	20%
16 years and above	22	22%
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	63	63%
With Master's Units	22	22%

Master's Degree	13	13%
With Doctorate Units	1	1%
Doctorate Degree	1	1%

2. Extent of School Environment and Facilities in Jolo I District, Division of Sulu

Overall, the teacher-respondents perceived the school environment and facilities in Jolo-I District, Division of Sulu as being to a "Great Extent" across all five domains. Among these, Classroom and Learning Spaces obtained the highest composite mean (M = 4.254, SD = .47978). The highest-rated indicator was well-ventilated classrooms (M = 4.27, SD = .50960), followed by sufficient lighting, adequate classroom space, and supportive seating arrangements.

The remaining domains were also rated to a "Great Extent," including Sanitation and Health Facilities (M = 4.090, SD = .45160), Safety and Security (M = 4.070, SD = .45693), Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT (M = 3.908, SD = .43338), and School Grounds and Support Facilities (M = 4.070, SD = .45693). Across these areas, the highest-rated indicators included access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation practices, availability of safety equipment and drills, adequate instructional materials and ICT resources, and the presence of playgrounds, canteens, and functional laboratories.

Table 3: Extent of School Environment and Facilities in Jolo I District, Division of Sulu as Perceived by Teachers

Statements	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation (S.D.)**	**Descriptive Interpretation**
Classroom and Learning Spaces	**4.254**	**.47978**	**Great Extent**
1. The classrooms are spacious enough to accommodate all students comfortably.	4.25	.55732	Great Extent
2. The seating arrangement and furniture support effective teaching and learning.	4.25	.51981	Great Extent
3. The classrooms have sufficient lighting for learning activities.	4.26	.54346	Great Extent
4. The classrooms are well-ventilated and conducive for learning.	4.27	.50960	Great Extent
5. Noise levels inside and around the classrooms are minimal and manageable.	4.24	.53409	Great Extent
Sanitation and Health Facilities	**4.090**	**.45160**	**Great Extent**
1. The school provides clean and well-maintained toilets for students and teachers.	4.06	.52839	Great Extent
2. Safe drinking water is accessible to both students and staff.	4.12	.49808	Great Extent
3. Handwashing facilities are available and functional in the school premises.	4.08	.48576	Great Extent
4. The school maintains proper waste disposal and garbage management.	4.09	.53362	Great Extent
5. The overall sanitation of the school promotes health and hygiene.	4.10	.48200	Great Extent
Safety and Security	**4.070**	**.45693**	**Great Extent**
1. The school buildings and structures are safe and well-maintained.	4.08	.50612	Great Extent
2. Emergency exits and safety equipment (e.g., fire extinguishers, alarms) are available.	4.09	.51434	Great Extent
3. 4The school conducts regular safety drills and disaster preparedness activities.	4.08	.48576	Great Extent
4. The school premises are free from hazards that may endanger students and teachers.	4.05	.53889	Great Extent
5. Security measures (e.g., gates, guards, visitor policies) ensure a safe learning environment.	4.05	.47937	Great Extent
Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	**3.908**	**.43338**	**Great Extent**
1. Textbooks and instructional materials are adequate and updated.	3.89	.49021	Great Extent
2. Visual aids and other teaching materials are readily available for teachers.	3.92	.44222	Great Extent
3. ICT facilities (computers, projectors, internet) are accessible for teaching.	3.90	.48200	Great Extent

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Descriptive Interpretation
4. The school library provides sufficient resources to support learning.	3.89	.44710	Great Extent
5. Teachers are supported with adequate materials for lesson preparation.	3.94	.50891	Great Extent
School Grounds and Support Facilities	**4.240**	**.49889**	**Great Extent**
1. The school provides playgrounds and sports facilities for students' physical development.	4.27	.56593	Great Extent
2. The science and computer laboratories are adequate and functional.	4.23	.56595	Great Extent
3. The canteen or feeding facilities are available and well-maintained.	4.26	.52455	Great Extent
4. The school grounds are clean, organized, and conducive for student activities.	4.22	.52378	Great Extent
5. The school has facilities that are accessible to students with special needs or disabilities.	4.22	.56102	Great Extent

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very Great Extent; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Great Extent; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderate Extent; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less Extent; (1)1.00 – 1.49=No Extent

3. Differences in the Extent of School Environment and Facilities Based on Demographic Profiles

To determine whether differences exist in the extent of school environment and facilities as perceived by teachers, inferential tests such as ANOVA and t-test were employed. The results revealed that significant differences were found when respondents were grouped according to age ($p < 0.05$), gender ($p < 0.05$), and civil status ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant differences were observed when grouped according to length of service and educational attainment ($p > 0.05$); thus, the hypotheses for these variables were accepted.

In terms of age, significant differences were observed across all facility domains, with post-hoc results indicating that the 36–50 years old group consistently obtained higher mean perceptions compared to other age groups. For gender, female teachers reported higher mean ratings across all domains compared to male teachers, indicating a significant difference. In terms of civil status, results showed that the married group had higher mean perceptions than the single group across all facility categories.

Table 4: Differences in the Extent of School Environment and Facilities as Perceived by Teachers

Demographic Grouping	Domains	Test Statistic (t / F)	p-value (Sig.)	Description
Age				
	Classroom and Learning Spaces	22.611	.000	Significant
	Sanitation and Health Facilities	11.588	.000	Significant
	Safety and Security	9.760	.000	Significant
	Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	9.052	.000	Significant
	School Ground and Support Facilities	15.051	.000	Significant
Gender				
	Classroom and Learning Spaces	-1.784	.078	Significant
	Sanitation and Health Facilities	-2.662	.009	Significant
	Safety and Security	-2.310	.023	Significant
	Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	-2.765	.007	Significant
	School Ground and Support Facilities	-2.466	.015	Significant
Civil Status				
	Classroom and Learning Spaces	11.798	.000	Significant
	Sanitation and Health Facilities	6.024	.003	Significant
	Safety and Security	9.934	.000	Significant
	Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	6.956	.002	Significant

Demographic Grouping	Domains	Test Statistic (t / F)	p-value (Sig.)	Description
	School Ground and Support Facilities	6.263	.003	Significant
Length of Service				
	Classroom and Learning Spaces	2.636	.064	Not Significant
	Sanitation and Health Facilities	1.837	.146	Not Significant
	Safety and Security	.865	.462	Not Significant
	Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	2.838	.062	Not Significant
	School Ground and Support Facilities	2.098	.105	Not Significant
Educational Attainment				
	Classroom and Learning Spaces	1.204	.314	Not Significant
	Sanitation and Health Facilities	.833	.507	Not Significant
	Safety and Security	.598	.665	Not Significant
	Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	.548	.701	Not Significant
	School Ground and Support Facilities	.772	.546	Not Significant

**Significance at alpha 0.05*

4. Correlational Analysis Among School Environment and Facilities Subcategories

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's r) was utilized to examine the interrelationships among the subcategories of the school environment and facilities. As presented in Table 4.1, all subcategories exhibited statistically significant positive correlations (p = .000). The strongest relationships were observed between sanitation and health facilities and school ground and support facilities (r = .778), sanitation and health facilities and safety and security (r = .774), and safety and security and school ground and support facilities (r = .767). Other very high positive correlations were found between sanitation and health facilities and teaching-learning resources and ICT (r = .745), classroom and learning spaces and school ground and support facilities (r = .737), classroom and learning spaces and sanitation and health facilities (r = .731), safety and security and teaching-learning resources and ICT (r = .729), and classroom and learning spaces and safety and security (r = .712). Meanwhile, high positive correlations were noted between teaching-learning resources and ICT and school ground and support facilities (r = .673), and teaching-learning resources and ICT and classroom and learning spaces (r = .638).

Table 5. Correlation among the subcategories subsumed under the school environment and facilities at Jolo I District, Division of Sulu

Variables	Pearson *r*	Sig.	N	Description
Classroom and Learning Spaces				
Sanitation and Health Facilities	.731**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Safety and Security	.712**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	.638**	.000	100	High Correlation
School Ground and Support Facilities	.737**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Sanitation and Health Facilities				
Safety and Security	.774**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	.745**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
School Ground and Support Facilities	.778**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Safety and Security				
Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT	.729**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
School Ground and Support Facilities	.767**	.000	100	Very High Correlation
Teaching-Learning Resources and ICT				
School Ground and Support Facilities	.673**	.000	100	High Correlation

*** Correlation Coefficient is significant at alpha .01 level*

Discussion

The results indicate that the teacher workforce in Jolo I District is predominantly composed of individuals aged 36–50, with most respondents being female and married. This profile reflects a relatively mature and stable teaching population. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of teachers hold bachelor's degrees, indicating that while basic professional qualifications are met, opportunities for advanced academic progression remain limited.

In terms of the school environment and facilities, classroom and learning spaces received the highest ratings, indicating a generally high level of adequacy across the district. These spaces are characterized by adequate ventilation, sufficient lighting, and appropriate spatial conditions, which collectively support effective instruction and student engagement. Similarly, sanitation and health facilities, safety and security measures, school grounds, and support facilities were rated positively, suggesting that essential physical and environmental requirements are largely in place.

However, teaching-learning resources and ICT emerged as the least developed area, although still rated to a "great extent." This finding indicates that while baseline implementation exists, further improvement is necessary to strengthen technological infrastructure and instructional materials. This supports Legarde et al. (2025), who emphasized that ICT-integrated learning environments enhance student engagement and instructional effectiveness. Similarly, Diamante et al. (2025) reported that limited digital competence and misalignment between technology and pedagogy remain key challenges in ICT integration. Comparable findings were also noted by Saik et al. (2025) in Patikul District, Sulu, where teachers reported favorable perceptions of school environments despite persistent gaps in ICT, library resources, and laboratory facilities, suggesting a broader regional pattern.

Regarding differences in perceptions based on demographic profile, results show significant variation across age, gender, and civil status. Teachers who were female, married, and within the 36–50 age group generally provided more favorable evaluations of the school environment and facilities. In contrast, no significant differences were observed based on educational attainment and length of service, indicating that academic qualification and teaching experience do not substantially influence perceptions of school conditions.

Correlation analysis further reveals that the school environment operates as an interconnected system rather than isolated components. Strong relationships were observed among sanitation and health facilities, school grounds, and support facilities, with safety and security serving as a central reinforcing factor. Additionally, positive correlations between classroom learning spaces, teaching resources, and ICT highlight the complementary role of instructional and physical resources in supporting teaching and learning.

Overall, the findings suggest that Jolo I District maintains generally adequate and interconnected school facilities, particularly in physical infrastructure and safety. However, ICT and teaching-learning resources remain critical areas for improvement. Strengthening these components would further enhance instructional effectiveness and reinforce the overall quality and coherence of the school environment.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that teachers in Jolo I District, Division of Sulu are characterized by a stable and mature demographic profile, predominantly composed of married, female educators aged 36–50 with early to mid-career experience, though with limited advanced academic qualifications. From the teachers' perspectives, the school environment and facilities are generally perceived to be of high quality, particularly in terms of classroom conditions, sanitation and health services, safety and security, and school support structures. However, teaching-learning resources

and ICT infrastructure, while still rated positively, emerged as the least developed area. Variations in perception were influenced by age, gender, and civil status, while strong positive relationships among facility components indicate that the school environment functions as an interconnected system supporting the teaching-learning process.

As a result, the Department of Education is advised to prioritize investments in ICT infrastructure, instructional resources, and teacher professional development, which includes opportunities for advanced studies. A comprehensive and integrated approach to facility improvement should be implemented by school administrators to guarantee that all elements of the school environment are in alignment. Support should be provided to teachers to improve their qualifications and to employ innovative, resourceful strategies to optimize the utilization of existing facilities. Students should be encouraged to assume responsibility for the maintenance of school resources. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of school environment factors on learners' outcomes, future research may further investigate the ways in which they interact with external contexts, such as home environments.

(Disclaimer: While artificial intelligence (AI) was used for language enhancement, all concepts that were generated are entirely original.)

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