Abstract

Purpose – Drawing from emotional geography framework promoted by Hargreaves (2000), our research sought to depict the emotional geography of two faculty members who engaged in a virtual teacher professional development (VTPD) sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed to focus on capturing participants’ emotional closeness or distance while they were engaging in VTPD.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employed narrative inquiry by exploring three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: temporality, personal-social interaction and place (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Following this step, the participants were interviewed online through Zoom meetings and WhatsApp to capture critical incidents of their emotional experience. All collected data were transcribed, and some data from Bahasa Indonesia were translated into English. Member checking was also done several times to ensure the accuracy of the data as well as to avoid misinterpretation. The data were analysed inductively to generate coding categories using systemic functional linguistics (SFL) language appraisal (Martin and White, 2007) and emotional geography parameter (Hargreaves, 2001b).

Findings – The findings of the study revealed that both participants experienced greater positive feeling than negative ones. The participants experienced positive feelings such as seriousness, happiness, successfulness and satisfaction. They also experienced negative feelings such as insecurity, unhappiness, dissatisfaction and impatience. Such positive and negative feelings create closeness and distance among participants, mentor and workshop organiser. This study indicates that maintaining positive feelings is a passport to succeed in VTPD.

Research limitations/implications – The study has two limitations. First, its findings cannot be overgeneralised since the analysis was restricted to data gathered from a small number of participants. Second, the scope of investigation was limited in virtual situations.

Practical implications – The present study empirically showed that faculty members need to engage in constructing or maintaining positive emotional bond with the mentor and other participants and create conducive situations to understand their own and others’ emotions (Mayer, 2011). Practically, a mentor in VTPD may ask faculty members to voice and share their emotional experience as an evaluation tool to make
VTPD programmes more successful. Future participants can benefit from these findings by engaging in emotional understanding and building a conducive situation during VTPD to develop their academic competence, agency and identity.

**Originality/value** – While previous research into VTPD in the context of higher education mainly focused on designs, attention to pedagogy of online teacher learning environments, trends toward innovation in teacher collaboration and communities of practice in online settings, the present study specifically looked into how participants emotionally engaged in VTPD, which is inevitably linked to physical, moral, sociocultural, professional and political geographies.

**Keywords** Closeness, Emotional geography, Faculty members, Higher education, Virtual teacher professional development

**Paper type** Research paper

**Introduction**

In the last decade, virtual teacher professional development (VTPD) has been a subject of great interest among scholars worldwide due to its accessibility, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, technological advancements, opportunities for global collaboration and potential for research and innovation (e.g. Cho and Rathbun, 2013; Dille and Røkenes, 2021; Lay et al., 2020; Teräs, 2016). These factors have propelled the exploration and investigation of virtual professional development programmes, making them a subject of great interest in education. This online mode furnishes great potentialities for personalised tutoring and assistance within virtual communities of practice and the nonsynchronous, text-based, and interactive character of online tutoring enables teachers to engage in robust and continuous reflections on their practice (Borko et al., 2010; Philipsen et al., 2019).

In the higher educational landscape, research into VTPD has been well documented. Cho and Rathbun (2013) examined the implementation of teacher centred-online professional development in a mid-western university in the USA and found that online teacher professional development programmes allow university teachers to engage in Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programmes and generate practicable knowledge straightaway to be applied in their own teaching contexts. Philipsen et al. (2019) reported that online teacher professional development played pivotal roles in fostering teacher reflection. Furthermore, Evans et al. (2019) found that offering professional development in a blended mode provides teachers with an authentic student perspective and at the same time, allows them to take guided steps in the teacher’s role in blended learning. Widodo and Allamnakrah (2020) also found that teacher educators (TEs) were able to develop their professional identity as curriculum creators through their participation in a three-year blended professional learning community (PLC) program.

Much previous research on VTPD primarily focused on advancements in design, the pedagogy of online teacher learning environments, the increasing trend of innovation in teacher collaboration and communities of practice in online settings (Borko et al., 2010; Dede et al., 2009). Studies investigating teachers’ emotional experiences during professional development, particularly in response to education reform remain under-explored (Cross and Hong, 2009; Darby, 2008; Saunders, 2013), and they show that emotions highly increase during periods of change (Fullan, 2015) such as in the time of COVID-19 pandemic, which has added an entire new level of urgency to the construction of participation in, and need for, online courses and programmes in education (Lay et al., 2020). To fill this gap, this study aims to investigate faculty members’ emotional experiences while they were engaging in VTPD. This paper begins by locating the issue of online teacher professional development and continues to explore the previous research and the concepts of teacher emotion and emotional geography. The next section presents the research method, the findings, the discussion and elaborates on the implications of the study.
Literature review

Emotion in teacher professional development

Schutz and Lanehart (2002) documented that research about emotion in educational settings has been under researched for decades. Educational researchers have started constructing narratives about teachers’ negative and positive emotions and their position in their professional and personal development (Zembylas, 2003). According to Kemper (1993), emotion is social-culturally constructed because “the social matrix determines which emotions are likely to be experienced when and where, on what grounds and for what reasons, by what modes of expression, [and] by whom” (p. 42). Much research has provided evidence on how the social and cultural dimensions significantly impact on emotional perception (e.g. Kawahara et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2015; Van Kleef et al., 2011).

Emotional geography

Hargreaves (2001b) contended that there has been no systematic convention in the ways teachers’ emotions are shaped by the variable and shifting conditions of their job and how teachers’ interactions with students, parents and staff are emotionally displayed. For this reason, he conceptualises emotional geography involving five parameters namely, physical, moral, socio-cultural, professional and political geography. Given these specific conceptions of emotion in the teaching context, the present study employs emotional geography as the conceptual and analytical tool for the study (see also Hargreaves, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2005).

Physical geography refers to the closeness or distance caused by time and space (Hargreaves, 2000). For example, COVID-19 pandemic has shifted face-to-face professional development to VTPD and that it results in the way faculty members emotionally adapt to this new situation. Hargreaves links moral geography with the closeness and distance driven by different goals and achievement in professional practice. These different goals are no exceptions in VTPD as the participants come from different educational disciplines and demographies. Hargreaves frames socio-cultural geography as closeness or distance caused by differences in gender, race, social environment, language and culture. These differences potentially lead to different emotional understanding. Meanwhile, the professional geography relates to closeness or distance because of different understandings of norms of professionalism and professional practice. Hargreaves conceptualise the political geography with closeness or distance because of different understandings of power and status.

Empirical studies and gaps in the current literature

Previous study findings documented virtual learning environments as a venue for teacher professional development. For example, Parsons et al. (2019) reported that participants sought to discover new ideas and foster collaboration through virtual professional development and they found that online professional development is beneficial. Richter et al. (2019) found the most significant correlations between practical enhancement, social contact and personal interest. Trust et al. (2017) reported that several higher educators believe that professional learning network engagement gives a positive impact on their professional development in numerous ways, including improvements in teaching, learning and student learning. Furthermore, Andersson et al. (2018) documented that the communities concentrate on different needs among teachers and maintain diverse outcomes as well as share numerous common characteristics. Sunggingwati et al. (2022) reported that virtual professional development enables TEs to explore teacher autonomy, research collaboration, goal orientation, and experience in writing research for publication. Despite extensive research into VTPD, little is known about the emotional experiences of faculty members in VTPD. The
The present study focused specifically on faculty members’ emotional experiences by exploring their emotional geography.

**Method**

The present study employed narrative inquiry methodology (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990), which is anchored in Dewey’s experiential philosophy (1938) and Schwab’s practical scholarship (1969). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) points out a story as a gate from which people enter the world. Our study focuses on exploring Tohas and Risa’s emotional experiences in VTPD program from a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: temporality, personal-social interaction, and places (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). We traced back Tohas’ and Risa’s experience prior to the VTPD program. For personal-social interaction dimension, we focused on Tohas and Risa’s relationship with participants of VTPD, mentor, and co-facilitator/VTPD organiser. This narrative approach allows the present study to closely explore the faculty member’s emotional experiences in VTPD program in Indonesia. Two research questions were formulated to guide our study: (a) how do faculty members express their emotional experiences, emotional geography and reflection during VTPD? and (b) in what ways do faculty members establish emotional closeness for continuous professional development?

**Research context and participants**

Situated in higher education institutions in Indonesia, this study documented how faculty members expressed their emotional experiences while engaging in virtual professional development for eight months (April to November 2020). Fifty participants actively engaged in a series of VTPDs during COVID-19 pandemic. They were faculty members from different universities from Indonesia. Their motivation to join a series of VTPDs was to enhance their competency in academic writing, particularly for publishing manuscripts in a Scopus-indexed journal. To know topic of VTPD, See Table 1. VTPD programs on writing for scholarly publication. The workshops comprised explanations from the teacher mentor, sharing sessions, and practical activities. These virtual workshops were typically held twice a week on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The participants engaged in breakout-rooms-mediated group discussions throughout the sessions.

Out of fifty participants who joined VTPDs during COVID-19 pandemic, two TEs were recruited as participants in this study on a voluntary basis. They were Tohas (pseudonym), a male teacher educator, and Risa (pseudonym), a female faculty member, aged between 34 and 51 years old. Tohas was an English teacher educator at one of the private polytechnics based in East Java, Indonesia. He had six years of teaching experience in a higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics of VTPD</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing our research project: topic, research problem, purpose statement, research question</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing research title, abstract and introduction</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing literature review</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing research methodology and data analysis</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing our research findings and discussion</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing for conclusion and implication</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing for scholarly publication project</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4–8 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.**

VTPD programs on writing for scholarly publication

**Source(s):** Author’s own creation/ work
context. In the same vein, **Risa** was a faculty member at a private university in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. She had been teaching English for 27 years. Both participants extensively engaged in virtual workshops from April to November 2020. They were also willing to share their experiences during their engagement in VTPDs. They were potential candidates as they experienced a whole range of emotions during VTPD. Following ethical considerations, before the study commenced, we conducted a virtual meeting and explained the research purposes and the benefits of investigating their academic experiences. We assured the participants that their data would be kept confidential for research purposes. After the study briefing, they agreed to participate and signed the consent form, the legal document for this study. To know the participants’ demography, see **Table 2. Participants’ demography**.

**Trustworthiness**
Maxwell (2005) argues that ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative interpretation involves addressing potential challenges to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon being studied. He further suggests that trustworthiness is achieved by employing logical procedures that establish validity. In this research, we enacted various procedures to ensure trustworthiness. We employed continuous observation and triangulation of sources to investigate the participants’ interaction with the data and the ongoing process of faculty members’ lived experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Driven by narrative inquiry, we captured the experiences of two participants in VTPD by having them select significant moments through interviews and reflections. This data collection method facilitated a thorough description of the participants’ emotional experiences, emotional geography and reflections. Through two rounds of data collection, interviews and analysis, we captured the participants’ critical incidents, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the researchers.

**Data collection**
This study spanned over eight months of data gathering in an intimate and collegial environment crucial for building rapport and trust between the participants and authors. The participants and the authors participated in the same VTPD. The data were collected through online interviews. The interview’s primary purpose was to investigate the emotional geography during a series of workshops through the Zoom application. Overall, we conducted three series of interviews that explored the participants’ emotional experiences, emotional geography and reflection during VTPD through WhatsApp chat, WhatsApp video and Zoom meetings with each participant. Also, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants, allowing them to share their stories in their own words. Following the interview methodology promoted by Widodo (2014) for data collection, the collected data were transcribed and some data in Bahasa Indonesia were translated into English. Member checking was also done by the authors and the participants several times to ensure the accuracy of the data as well as to avoid misinterpretations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tohas (pseudonym)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risa (pseudonym)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>27 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source(s):** Author’s own creation/work

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The emotional geography of faculty members

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**Table 2.** Participants’ demography
Data analysis
Drawing on the collected data, we analysed it inductively to generate coding categories. We adopted the interweaving SFL language appraisal parameter proposed by Martin and White (2007) and Hargreaves’s (2001b) emotional geography parameter for narrative data analysis. As the virtual series of workshops lasted eight months, we extracted the emotional themes chronologically. More specifically, we coded the participants’ emotional changes prior to the VTPD, their social interaction during VTPD, and at the end of the virtual workshop. We also added the participants’ emotional reflection after completing their virtual workshop.

Findings
The findings of the study are organised thematically based on the data collected from interview and reflection. The present study has five themes anchored in the dimension of physical, moral, socio-cultural, professional and political geography.

Physical geography: "I was eager to ask questions during a question-answer session.’
During the COVID-19 pandemic, VTPD created time and space among members of faculties in Indonesia as they could interact remotely and adjust their schedules to keep joining VTPD. In this regard, they felt a range of positive emotional experiences. Their emotional experiences can be seen in the following interview result:

To maintain my closeness with my mentor and other participants during VTPD, I was eager to ask questions (inclination) during a question-answer session. Furthermore, I was glad to have discussion about the workshop foci in a breakout room (physical geography/space – happiness) by conveying the ideas I got from the previous offline workshop. (Tohas/Zoom interview/December 1st, 2020)

It seems to me that VTPD was very interesting, creative, and innovative (satisfaction) in overcoming lacks of academic gathering activities. I could make friends from different regions (physical geography/places – happiness). I could discuss and share the given topic (physical geography – happiness) in the breakout room. VTPD made my time well managed (physical geography/time – satisfaction). I did not need to spent my time to reach the venue of workshop (physical geography/place – satisfaction) as it happened in offline TPD. (Risa/WhatsApp interview/January 9th, 2021)

The data above shows positive feelings such as desire, happiness and satisfaction. Participants had such positive feelings because they could make new friends from different places in Indonesia. The participants also felt positive feelings as time could be well managed because the workshop was held in an online setting. The second participant felt happy because they could still participate in online discussions through breakout rooms. A breakout room is a feature in Zoom meetings that can be used as a discussion room by participants, allowing them to focus and share academic experiences with each other. Risa also felt satisfied because VTPD could help her to make new academic friends from various regions. She also felt satisfied because through VTPD she did not need to spend a lot of time accessing the workshop as she used to do in a face-to-face workshop. Thus, the positive emotional experiences enable them to nurture their professional development during VTPD.

Moral Geography: “I believe that each of us is willing to develop our professional identities.”
Hargreaves (2001b) links moral geography with the closeness and distance driven by different goals and achievements in professional practice. While engaging in the virtual community, the participants had a range of purposes, beliefs, perceptions and a sense of achievement, as reported by two participants as follows:
Through this VTPD, I was very excited (moral geography – satisfaction) because by engaging in VTPD programme, my team could publish an article in one of reputable journals indexed in Scopus. This is an outstanding achievement (moral geography – satisfaction) I have ever had. It was very challenging and demanding (moral geography – insecurity). (Tohas / Zoom interview / December 20th, 2020)

I believe that each of us is willing to develop our professional identities (moral geography – inclination) because we have the same goal that is publishing articles in reputable journal. (Risa / WhatsApp interview / January 9th, 2021)

The data above show that participants experienced more positive emotional feelings than negative emotions. Tohas felt satisfied because by working collaboratively in a VTPD programme, his team succeeded in publishing an article in a reputable journal indexed in Scopus. He said that this success was the most valuable achievement he had ever had because it was full of challenges and demands. Another participant, Risa, also considered that writing for scholarly publication in reputable journals could build a professional identity. Thus, understanding purposes and valuing achievement allow participants to maintain positive emotions during VTPD.

Socio-cultural geography: “I felt uncomfortable as most female participants were very predominant”

Coming from multiple backgrounds, the participants have a myriad of socio-emotional dimensions as reported in the following narrative account:

At the beginning of VTPD, I felt uncomfortable (unhappiness) as most female participants were very predominant (socio-cultural geography – insecurity) in discussion session and asking-answering session during the workshop. Moreover, I also felt uncomfortable with them (socio-cultural geography – unhappiness) because they frequently spoke out rigidly. However, I was gradually accustomed to them and I felt comfortable (happiness). (Tohas / Zoom interview / December 5th, 2020)

At particular moment, I felt annoyed with the attitude of the participants (socio-cultural geography – insecurity) who tended to speak more and did not give other people the opportunity to ask the mentor. Some participants asked questions that are irrelevant (dissatisfaction) to the material being discussed. I was also annoyed with participants’ unpunctuality (socio-cultural geography – insecurity). They used to apologise with vague excuses (socio-cultural geography – dissatisfaction). (Risa / WhatsApp interview / January 9th, 2021)

Drawing on these excerpts, the virtual workshop challenged the participants in terms of socio-emotional relationships with other participants. The participants had more negative feelings than positive ones during VTPD. The negative feelings, such as insecurity, unhappiness and dissatisfaction, occurred due to the participants’ attitudes and behaviour during VTPD. For example, dominating discussions in question and answer sessions, interrupting frequently, asking irrelevant questions, speaking rigidly and not arriving on time.

Professional geography: “I kept being punctual in every workshop”

In the virtual mode, faculty members expressed a range of emotional experiences which enabled them to be professional learners. This can be seen in the following interview result:

I kept coming on time (professional geography – inclination) in every VTPD so that I would not miss the materials. It would be difficult for me (insecurity) to understand the materials if I came late for the workshop. For these reasons, all learning tools I needed such as laptops, mobile phones, stationery, and notebooks must be ready (professional geography – inclination) before the workshop. (Tohas / Zoom interview / December 10th, 2020)
I kept being punctual (professional geography – inclination) in every workshop and I felt really disappointed when the event was delayed (professional geography – dissatisfaction) because other participants were not on time. I greatly respect my mentor who taught punctuality to participants who came late. I was annoyed (insecurity) with those who did not respect other people. (Risa/ WhatsApp interview / January 9th, 2021)

The geography of professional emotions revealed in the data above shows that participants experienced positive and negative feelings. This can be known from the parameters of inclination, satisfaction, insecurity and dissatisfaction. Both participants felt comfortable arriving on time for every VTPD activity. Risa also felt satisfied because the mentor taught the importance of punctuality for those who came late. Both participants also experienced negative feelings. Risa’s feeling of dissatisfaction was caused by other participants who arrived late at the VTPD activity. According to Risa, arriving late implies a lack of respect for other participants because their unpunctuality caused delays in the VTPD activities.

Political geography: “although particular participants dominated question-answer session, our mentor was able to provide a balance”

In virtual interactions, a range of challenges and a new learning environment entail a need to understand both facilitators and participants. The power and status of mentors and participants affect participants’ emotionality in terms of political dimension as they expressed in these excerpts:

Although particular participants dominated question-answer session, our mentor was able to give a balance (political geography – satisfaction) by creating breakout room sessions so as to make participants engaged in discussion-question session (political geography – satisfaction) during the virtual workshop. (Tohas / Zoom interview / December 26th, 2020)

I appreciated my mentor because he is very expert in his field (political geography – satisfaction). On the other hand, I was not particularly attentive to some participants (university officials) who have power and status (political geography – disinclination) because I felt that the most important point was the expertise. (Risa/ whatsapp interview / January 9th, 2021)

The geography of political emotions drawn from the data above showed that participants felt more positive than negative. Both participants felt satisfied with the mentor during VTPD. Tohas felt satisfied because the mentor had a strategy to prevent particular participants from dominating the VTPD sessions by creating breakout rooms. Risa was also satisfied with her mentor’s expertise. She argued that the power of expertise of mentors can control participants who have positions in higher education. Both participants indicated that the power and status of mentors are critical factors in VTPD, as they control and resolve the problems that occur during VTPD.

Discussion

From physical geography dimension, the findings showcased that the participants engaged in VTPD overcoming distance and space. These empirical evidences agree with previous research findings (Evans et al., 2019; Gaines et al., 2019; Widodo and Allamnakhrah, 2020). Thus, VTPD fosters closeness between mentors and participants. This positive emotion is a passport for teachers to engage, nurture, implement and reflect on their professional development (Gaines et al., 2019). From moral geography perspectives, the findings showed that the closeness among VTPD participants is a key factor. The closeness between a mentor, participants and other participants is crucial to build mutual understanding, working towards both individual and common goals (Postholm, 2020). This intimate social interaction allows them to build their professional relationships and networks (Parsons et al., 2019). From
socio-cultural perspective, the findings showed that faculty members experienced more negative emotions. This finding responds to previous research that teachers nowadays experience more negative emotions than positive ones (Hassard et al., 2016; Thompson, 2014). With this in mind, regulating emotional states during VTPD is crucial. Studies have demonstrated that educators with greater emotional control capacity are more adept at managing their emotions, leading to increased job satisfaction and overall well-being (Yin, 2015; Yin et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, the results from the professional geography dimension showed that engaging in VTPD allows participants to raise the awareness of professionalism. This finding corresponded with earlier research, which discovered that emotionality aspects enable the participants to keep the norms of professionalism in learning and professional development (Gaines et al., 2019; Liu, 2016). From the political geography point of view, the findings indicated that power and status could create distance and emotional closeness during VTPD. Thus, understanding the concept of emotional geographies from political dimensions helps us identify the supports for and threats to the essential emotional bonds and understandings of schooling and professional development that arise from forms of distance or closeness in people’s interactions or relationships (Hargreaves, 2001b). While facilitators have the primary responsibility for establishing and developing common understandings among the participants (Dille and Røkenes, 2021), it is emphasised that both facilitator and participants are equally active (Rogoff, 1990). In other words, the closeness between facilitators and participants, as well as among participants themselves, makes it possible to build a foundation with shared understanding, working towards both individual and common goals (Postholm, 2020).

While the study findings provide insight into exploring emotional geography of faculty members during VTPD, the present study also has limitations. First, its findings cannot be over-generalised since the analysis was restricted to data gathered from a small number of participants. Second, the scope of investigation was limited in virtual situations. Further studies are suggested to investigate emotional experiences of faculty members in a broader context with a more comprehensive range of participants in the post-pandemic scenario.

Conclusion
The present narrative inquiry study explores the emotional geography of faculty members in a VTPD programme in Indonesia. During the VTPD programme in the COVID-19 pandemic, the faculty members experienced a range of emotions in physical, moral, social, professional and political geography. Drawing from language appraisal parameters such as happiness and unhappiness; satisfaction and dissatisfaction; inclination and disinclination; security and insecurity, it was found that faculty members experienced greater positive emotion than negative ones. Such positive and negative emotion created closeness and distance among participants and mentor.

The present study empirically showed that faculty members need to engage in constructing or maintaining positive emotional bond with the mentor and other participants and create conducive situations to understand their own and others’ emotions (Mayer, 2011). The present study also contributes to practical aspect. First, mentor in VTPD may ask faculty members to voice and share their emotional experience as an evaluation tool to make VTPD programmes more successful. Second, future participants can engage in VTPD by maintaining emotional closeness to succeed in VTPD. Furthermore, co-facilitators who play a moderator role should be able to engage participants in knowledge sharing by nurturing debates, raising their awareness of new challenges and motivating them to be agent of changes in their institution.
References


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