

Examining Women Empowerment Through Media And Knowledge Sharing Among Women Of Sindh, Pakistan

Muhammad Yaseen Moroojo (Corresponding Author)¹, Dr. Muhammad Osama Shafiq², Ahmed Ali Hingoro³, Sadia Baqar⁴

¹Lecturer Department of Media & Communication Studies, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, SBA.

²Assistant Professor Department of Mass Communication University of Karachi.

³Lecturer Media & Communications Sukkur IBA University.

⁴Lecturer Department of Mass Communication University of Karachi.

Abstract

In the present era, the media is a powerful tool to make people aware of their rights and a significant pillar of advocacy among the masses and women's empowerment. The present paper attempts to investigate the role of media (social, electronic and print) and knowledge sharing (KS) towards women empowerment (WEN) among the women of Sindh. The quantitative study utilizes the cross-sectional data collected from women of Sindh randomly. The data is collected through a survey questionnaire adapted from the domain literature. This study concludes based on 210 samples. The researchers applied SEM analysis to explore the hypotheses. The findings of the study suggest a significant positive effect of social media (SMD), electronic media (EMD), print media (PMD) and knowledge sharing (KS) on women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh who use media. The study findings support policymakers in developing policies regarding access to more media to empower women, as media plays a pivotal role in making women aware of their issues and decisions. Besides, the study also would help in knowing the KS perceptions of women, which could be shared and enhance the women's creativity, vision and attitudes to play their constructive role in society and become economically, socially and psychologically empowered in developing communities. Finally, the study's outcomes would enrich the depth of the concerned literature.

Keywords Women empowerment; social media; Electronic media; Print media; Knowledge sharing; Women creativity.

1. Introduction

Women can realize their complete personality and strength in all spheres of life through the active, multifaceted empowerment process (Gangwani et al., 2021). Empowerment mentions the economic, political and psychological strength of individuals (Kadeswaran et al., 2020; Manoj et al., 2023). It frequently entails the emboldened person growing confident in their abilities (Sarrigiannidis et al., 2021; Soomro et al., 2022). Women's empowerment (WEN) is the capacity to shape societal change to establish a more equitable social and economic system. (Hassanzadeh, 2018).

In empowering women, media plays a protagonist part in the global advancement and freedom of women (Speer, 2000). Academic work has also recorded numerous studies emphasizing the relationship between media and WEN (Tharu et al., 2018; Soomro et al., 2019a; Kadeswaran et al., 2020; Yooetch, 2021; Ju et al., 2023). There are several factors such as finance, education, social media (SMD), microfinance, electronic media (EMD), provision of loans, PMD, and knowledge sharing (KS) which robustly contribute to the WEN (Chatterjee et al., 2018; Moroojo et al., 2021; AlAmmary, 2022; Lavilles et al., 2023; Chakraborty et al., 2023).

However, the investigation of the role of media (social, electronic and print) and KS is still at the infant level, particularly among women of Sindh province (Mirjat et al., 2019; Soomro et al., 2019b; Abdelwahed et al., 2022). Based on this deficiency, the researchers developed the research questions:

1. What is the role of media (SMD, EMD and PMD) in the WEN among women of Sindh province?
2. How does KS enhance the WEN among women in Sindh province?

The outcomes of study would provide the media's and KS's significance in various ways in which SMD, EMD, PMD and KS would support female empowerment. The research will help distinguish between social media channels and suggest practical tactics to increase female equality in Pakistan.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

Women's empowerment is a critical problem on national and foreign political agendas. Except for Snapchat and YouTube, most SMD use positively impacts women's freedom in the Kingdom of Bahrain (AlAmmary, 2022). According to Gangwani et al. (2021), any woman who experiences discrimination and disempowerment can express their concern to the world on various problems using SMD platforms. Saudi women, however, were found to be underrepresented on SMD platforms. Narayana and Ahamad (2016) demonstrate that the media significantly impacts how information, innovations, and events are shared and interpreted. The media play a significant role in our existence today. The mainstream media is beneficial to almost everyone. There is a lot of ability to express our beliefs and aspirations regarding women's economic empowerment. Instagram has been used to illustrate a theoretical model for looking at social media as a secondary object with material, routine-symbolic, and philosophical affordances. In general, the critical perspective begins to reimagine Arab women's

empowerment as actors entangled within visual SMD's conceptual and economic dynamics rather than just as isolated or material processes (Hurley, 2021). A seminal work by Dewi (2020) confirms that both times, SMD components were used successfully. Based on their prior usage of Instagram and Facebook, they chose to use those platforms over other SMD networks. Both situations enable collaboration with other women entrepreneurs or communities thanks to SMD, especially Instagram. Before they found virtual media in the Middle East, women had no platform to express their plight. They share messages on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube that promote women's freedom. Arab women have disregarded social, educational, and job disparities (Oline, 2013). In Pakistan, while control over resources is negligible, other variables that numerically showed a favourable effect on rural growth included self-esteem, decision-making ability, and freedom of movement. A good education and employment prospects can be crucial in promoting women. In view of Ju et al. (2023), SMD is suitable for controlling contagious risks, relieving tension and anxiety, and providing access to COVID-19-related information. Additionally, having access to media, particularly TV, can significantly strengthen women (Baig et al., 2018). In the same direction, the substantial impact of SMD involvement on female entrepreneurs' desire to engage in digital entrepreneurship, which in turn affects their psychological emancipation (Chakraborty and Biswal, 2023). The SMD allowed women to launch or maintain their own companies, grow their customer base through family and close friends, and create a secure and empowered life (Lavilles et al., 2023). Additionally, because female migrant labourers have a high risk of developing social media addiction and low information skills, it supports current restrictions and impedes resilience. Similarly, SMD increases each person's view of the group's effectiveness and social cohesion, empowering individuals regarding knowledge searching, sharing, socializing, and amusement

to encourage preventive behaviours at the individual level (Lu et al., 2023).

The development of SMD and EMD technology in civilization significantly impacts WEN. The best way to strengthen women is to bring them into the center of development through appropriate technology use and practical involvement in societal activities. The SMD and EMD allow women to engage effectively in various sectors and make choices in different facets of the country without prejudice (Tharu and Yadav, 2018). In India, the WEN comes through media awareness in terms of social, economic, human and legal (Sharma and Das, 2021). According to Manoj et al. (2023), information and communication technology (ICT) for implementing innovations in business operations, resulting in higher quality services at reduced costs, as well as efficient product marketing through social media, such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Afghan media continuously plays a significant contribution to WEN in Afghanistan. It can disseminate information and increase consciousness of the difficulties women encounter. The Afghan government, interest groups, and society can now effectively interact with women because of the media, which is the most significant achievement (Hassanzadeh, 2018). Akram (2018) underlines that the husband's educational background and use of print media have little bearing on the WEN. However, in South Africa, media helps eliminate discrimination, eventually leading to WEN (Govenden and Chiumbu, 2020). Likewise, SMD, TV and newspapers have a

significant role in assisting WEN, whereas radio, magazines and books were identified as having an insignificant role in improving WEN. The EMD is more participative than the PMD in helping WEN in society (Moroojo et al., 2021). In the views of Park et al. (2023), WEN marketing for premium companies on social media. The connection between message concreteness and a) brand mindset and b) desire to support the WEN campaign is positively mediated by the message's authenticity. Media outlets are owned by male social-power brokers who work with the legal system to play the blame game and absolve the same players of responsibility and accountability (Mowri and Bailey, 2023).

Both directly and tangentially through employee empowerment, the KM practices exploration has a statistically substantial beneficial impact on employee success and empowerment (Harb et al., 2023). The psychological empowerment of women and KS have a robust, valuable connection (Aldabbas et al., 2021). Lee et al. (2014) listed empowering leadership, task-technology match, and interoperability as critical factors in developing the KS management system (Kuo and Lee, 2011).

Consequently, the above literature suggests that factors such as SMD, EMD, PMD and KS are significant predictors of WEN in several contexts. However, these association needs further confirmation among women of Sindh, Pakistan. Thus, based on the earlier existence of relationships and needs, the researcher proposed Figure 1 to investigate among women of Sindh.

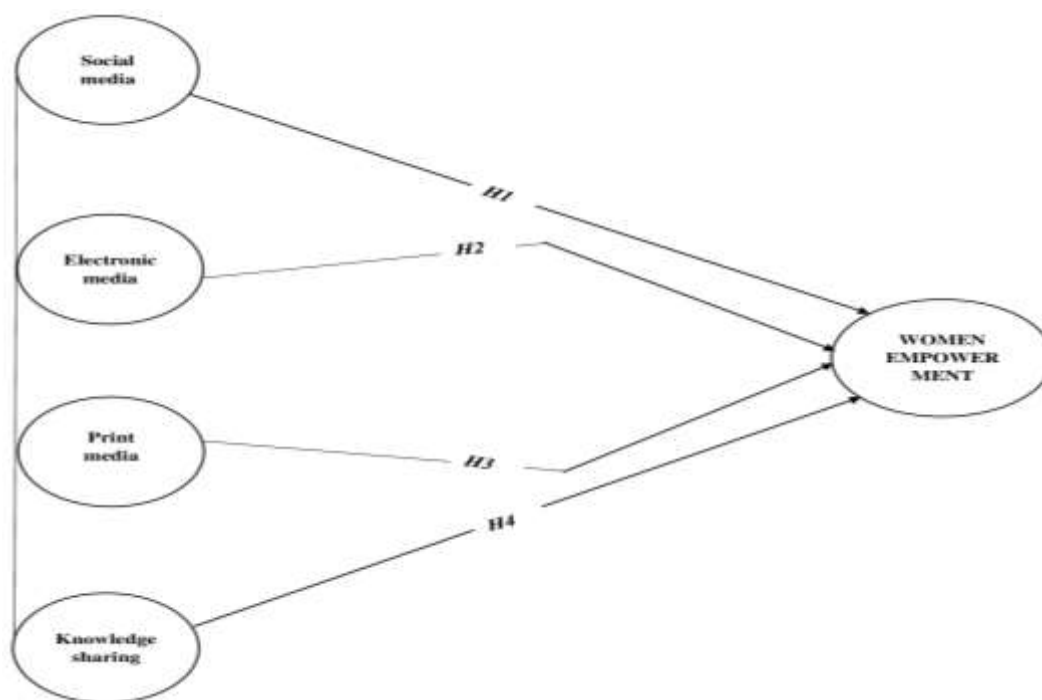


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

3. Aim and objectives of the study

Based on the above literature and conceptual model, the study aims to investigate the effect of media (social, electronic and print) and knowledge sharing on women empowerment among the women of Sindh province of Pakistan. On the basis of this aim, the researchers developed the following specific objectives:

Objective 1: To investigate the role of social media (SMD) towards women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Objective 2: To explore the role of electronic media (EMD) towards women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Objective 3: To examine the role of print media (PMD) towards women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Objective 4: To probe the role of knowledge sharing (KS) towards women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Moreover, based on the above objectives and the support of the existence of the relationship

in literature, the researchers developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Social media (SMD) positively and significantly affects women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Hypothesis 2: Electronic media (EMD) positively and significantly affects women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Hypothesis 3: Print media (PMD) positively and significantly affects women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

Hypothesis 4: Knowledge sharing (KS) positively and significantly affects women empowerment (WEN) among women of Sindh.

4. Methods

4.1 Research approach

The study applied the quantitative methods, which best predict the situation (Franklin, 2023) and provided the best scenario with numbers and graphs (Alam et al., 2023). These initiatives help give a clear-cut picture of society (Gillies et al., 2016). In the field of WEN, this strategy is applied by several

scholars like Kuo and Lee (2011), Lee et al. (2014), Govenden and Chiumbu (2020), Moroojo et al. (2021), Aldabbas et al. (2021), Harb et al. (2023), Park et al. (2023), Mowri and Bailey (2023), Manoj et al. (2023) and Lavilles et al., (2023) to investigate the WEN in the different regions and contexts. The study utilized cross-sectional data, offering the best glimpses of WEN through social, electronic and print media.

4.2 Respondents and sample size

The researchers collected the responses from women using social media, electronic media and print media. Besides, the researchers also focused on their empowerment through KS. The researchers targeted both rural and urban women to get the study outcomes. More specifically, the researchers tried to reach educated women who could fill out the survey and able to understand the aim and objectives of the study and know about the WEN in society. Contextually, the researchers focused on women of Sindh only.

The study is the initial part of a full-scale study, where the researchers collected 210 samples in the first phase to investigate the WEN through social, electronic, print media and KS. The researchers applied random sampling to trace out the respondents at both sites (rural and urban) in Sindh. Finally, the researchers used the samples (210) of the first phases to conclude the initial assessment of the study.

4.3 Data collection and respondents ethics

The researchers applied the survey questionnaire, which is the best analyst for collecting the facts quantitatively (Rosdahl and Muir, 2015). The researchers adopted the items of the questionnaire from previous literature to examine the WEN through social, electronic, and print media and KS among the women in Sindh, Pakistan. The researchers applied a random sampling technique to provide equal chances (Emerson, 2015) for urban and rural women to contribute to the study. To fulfil the ethical values of respondents, the researchers got proper consent from them to participate in the survey of the volunteer base. The researchers also ensured the privacy and confidentiality of their gained responses and utilized them only for study purposes. Hence, after insurance these, the researchers collect the facts from them.

4.4 Measures

The researchers adapted the items of the required factors from the previous studies, like Speer (2000), Tajurahim et al. (2020), Tsai et al. (2016), Chatterjee et al. (2018) and Yoopetch (2021) and slightly modified as per the domain of the study. The researchers applied a five-point Likert scale where 1=strongly agree; 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree and 5=strongly disagree. The detail of the survey is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement scales

S.No.	Variable	Code	Status	No. of items	Developer/originator
1	Social media	SMD	Independent variable	6	Speer (2000) and Tajurahim et al. (2020)
2	Electronic media	EMD	Independent variable	6	Speer (2000) and Tajurahim et al. (2020)
3	Print media	PMD	Independent variable	6	Speer (2000) and Tajurahim et al. (2020)
4	Knowledge sharing	KS	Independent variable	4	Tsai et al. (2016)

5	Women empowerment	WEN	Dependent variable	4	Chatterjee et al. (2018) and Yoopetch (2021)
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5. Analysis and results

5.1 Demography of respondents

Regarding the demography, this is the first part of the study, in which 210 women contributed. Classically, the age construct shows that most women (n=136 or 64.76%) were between 21 and 30 years old. 20% (n=42) were 31-40 years, 10.48% (n=22) were less than 20 years, and

only 4.76% (n=10) women were 40 and above years of age. With regard to background, a majority of women (56.19% or n=118) were from the urban background against rural (43.81% or n=92). Finally, a majority of respondents (40.95% or n=86) were social media users, 37.14% (n=78) were a user of electronic media, and 21.91% (n=46) were users of print media (Table 2).

Table 1. Demography

Construct	Category	Frequency	%
Age (years)	< 20	22	10.48
	21-30	136	64.76
	31-40	42	20.00
	40 and above	10	4.76
	Total	210	100.0
Background	Urban	118	56.19
	Rural	92	43.81
	Total	210	100.0
Media use	Social media	86	40.95
	Electronic media	78	37.14
	Print media	46	21.91
	Total	210	100.0

5.2 Factor loadings and reliability confirmation

Factor loading is regarded as the best measure to conduct the SEM analysis and useful insights into the quantitative results (Bueno et al., 2011). The researchers conducted the factor loading to gauge the relationship between items and their respective factors (Sarrigiannidis et al., 2021). As a result, the researchers noted that all the items on the scale were loaded above the

suggested value of loading as > 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019) (Table 3). Moreover, the analysis also observed Cronbach's alpha reliability to examine the internal consistency among the items. As a result, the overall alpha is found as 0.832, which is considered excellent. Furthermore, the researchers also noticed the individual's factor reliability within the acceptable ranges (> 0.70), as suggested by Hair et al. (2019) (Table 3).

Table 3. Loadings and reliability

Construct	Item	Factor loadings [Above 0.70]	α [Above 0.70]
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Social media [SMD]	smd1	0.889	0.809
	smd2	0.878	
	smd3	0.867	
	smd4	0.843	
	smd5	0.833	
	smd6	0.808	
Electronic media [EMD]	emd1	0.878	0.872
	emd2	0.853	
	emd3	0.849	
	emd4	0.832	
	emd5	0.820	
	emd6	0.802	
Print media [PMD]	pmd1	0.866	0.832
	pmd2	0.838	
	pmd3	0.821	
	pmd4	0.809	
	pmd5	0.781	
	pmd6	0.729	
Knowledge sharing [KS]	ks1	0.880	0.888
	ks2	0.867	
	ks3	0.839	
	ks4	0.818	
Women empowerment [WEN]	wen1	0.889	0.838
	wen2	0.866	
	wen3	0.830	
	wen4	0.809	

5.3 Hypotheses assessment

The researchers applied the structural equation model (SEM) to confirm the hypotheses through AMOS. With regard to the relationship between SMD and WEN, the analysis found it positive and significant ($H1=CR=5.002^{***}$), which accepted the H1. Likewise, there is a positive and significant effect of EMD on WEN

($H2=CR=6.182^{***}$). Therefore, H2 is accepted. Further, the researchers observed a positive and significant impact of PMD on WEN ($H2=CR=6.222^{***}$), which accepted the H3. Finally, the SEM path analysis also confirmed a significant positive effect of KS on WEN ($H2=CR=5.632^{***}$). As a result, H4 is supported by the data (Table 4 and Figure 2).

Table 4. SEM coefficients

H.No.	Independent variables	Path	Dependent variables	Estimate β (path co-efficient)	SE	CR (t-value)	Decision
H1	SMD	→	WEN	0.366	0.029	5.002***	Accepted
H2	EMD	→	WEN	0.475	0.051	6.182***	Accepted
H3	PMD	→	WEN	0.420	0.059	6.222***	Accepted
H4	KS	→	WEN	0.522	0.033	5.632***	Accepted

Note(s): SMD=social media; EMD=electronic media; PMD=print media; KS=knowledge sharing; WEN=women empowerment; Critical ratio=***p<0.001

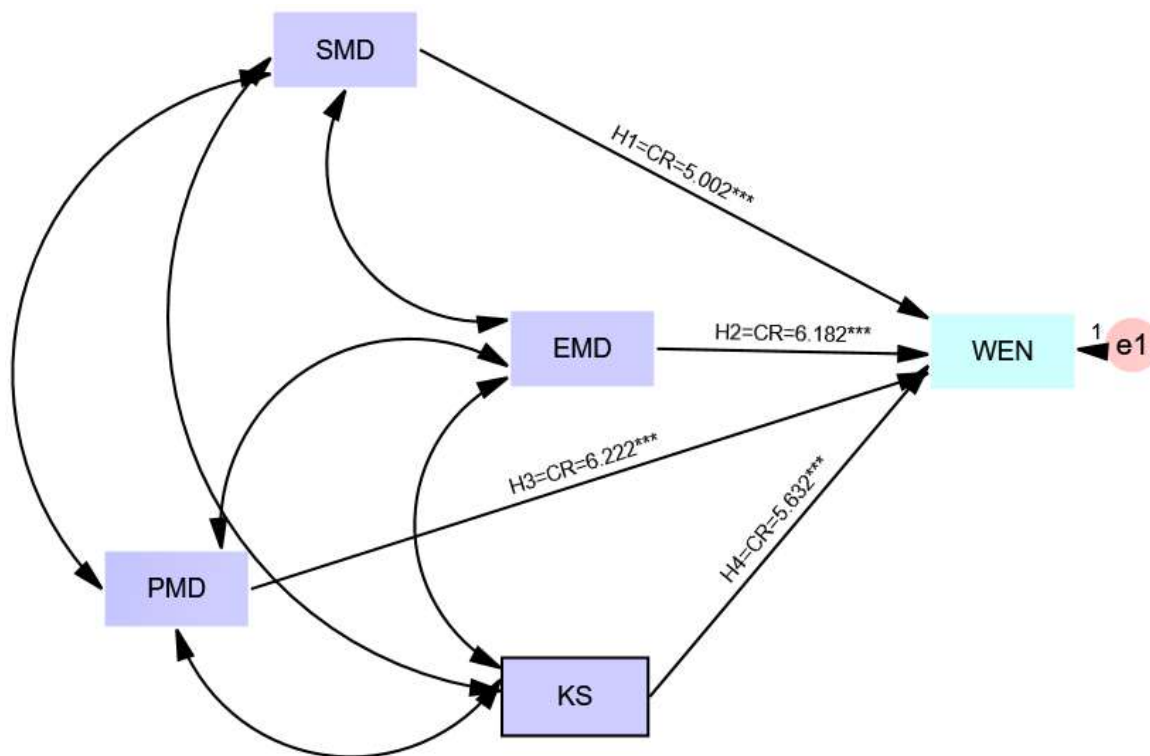


Figure 2. Structural equation model

Note(s): SMD=social media; EMD=electronic media; PMD=print media; KS=knowledge sharing; WEN=women empowerment; Critical ratio=***p<0.001

6. Discussion and conclusion

The present study proposed to examine the effect of media (social, electronic and print) and KS on WEN among women of Sindh. The SEM analysis found a significant positive effect of SMD on WEN (H1 supported). The literature reinforces this result like Oline (2013), Ahamad (2016), Kadeswaran et al. (2020), Dewi (2020), Gangwani et al. (2021), Narayana and Hurley (2021), AlAmmary (2022) and Ju et al. (2023) who found the positive and significant effect of SMD on WEN in the several contexts. These findings imply that SMD users have a higher sense of societal obligation and can act in concert. It has a significant impact on interacting with others. SMD has a role in broader social problems, aids problem-solving, and empowers women.

Additionally, it fosters female confidence. In a basic sense, SMD is responsible for empowering and motivating women to run their own businesses or look for chances to make money.

With regard to H2 the analysis underlined a significant positive effect of EMD on WEN. These positive connections also parallel the previous studies (Tharu and Yadav, 2018; Sharma and Das, 2021; Manoj et al., 2023). The results suggested that EMD has great significance in empowering the women in Sindh. This brought awareness and communication among the women to tackle the unemployment and poverty issues by earning with different sources, which were learnt through EMD.

Likewise, the association between PMD and WEN is positive and significant (H3 was supported). Like other studies, these results are also supported by the literature, i.e., Akram (2018), Govenden and Chiumbu (2020), Moroojo et al. (2021) and Mowri and Bailey

(2023). The PMD enhances individuals' knowledge and empowers women. These results demonstrate that PMD is available everywhere. So, women also studied it and searched for opportunities through this.

Finally, the KS factor was the significant factor affecting the WEN among urban and rural women of Sindh. These associations are also supported by literature, which emphasizes the positive connection between KS and WEN (Kuo and Lee, 2011; Lee et al., 2014; Aldabbas et al., 2021; Harb et al., 2023). These results suggest that women share their empowerment ideas and expertise at the request of other colleagues. They also share reports/documents. They think that the meaningfulness of work will make them empowered. They are competent in doing their work. They feel autonomous doing their work. They believe their impact is strong when they bring themselves into their work.

To sum it up, the overall results demonstrate that SMD, EMD, PMD and KS are the significant and robust factors which positively and statistically significantly enhance the WEN among the women in Sindh.

7. Limitations, contribution and future research agenda

The study is limited to only women participants who use media (social, electronic and print) in Sindh province. The study focused on well-known educated women and users of these media sources. The study is restricted to 210 samples.

Concerning the study's contribution, the study's outcomes assist in developing policies and strategies to enhance the interest and empowerment of women. The study claimed that media has great significance in WEN, which encourages hunting opportunities and jobs to eliminate poverty and unemployment. Moreover, the study claimed that KS is also a liable source for WEN among women. Thus, the study would open avenues to empower the KS in the community. Finally, the study findings would enhance the depth of

literature on mass communication or social science with empirical confirmation in Sindh, Pakistan.

In future, the longitudinal data should apply to undertake the same issue or examine the power of media in empowerment. Future studies must focus on males to investigate the role of media towards empowerment and poverty reduction. Finally, the context of the study should extend throughout Pakistan to observe the women's trends regarding media and empowerment.

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