

RESEARCH PAPER

Fe₃O₄@Nano-Coconut Shell/Cu(II) as a Unique, High Efficient and Reusable Natural Based Nano-Catalyst for Synthesis of Polyhydroquinolines

Farhad Hajati ¹, Bi Bi Fatemeh Mirjalili ¹*, Abdolhamid Bamoniri ²

¹ Department of Organic Chemistry, Faculty of Chemistry, College of Science, Yazd University, P. O. Box 89195-741, Postal code 8915813149, Yazd, Iran

² Department of Organic Chemistry, Faculty of Chemistry, University of Kashan, Kashan, Iran

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25 November 2025

Accepted 27 March 2025

Published 01 April 2026

Keywords:

Green Chemistry

Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell /
Cu(II)

Multi-component reactions

Nano-coconut shell

Polyhydroquinolines

ABSTRACT

Polysaccharides are the most plentiful biopolymers in nature, which are abundantly in nature. Biopolymers such as coconut shell's cellulose is a biocompatible, renewable and biodegradable material. The OH groups in cellulose section of coconut shell act as nucleophile for binding to metal ions. Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell /Cu(II) catalyst was synthesized and characterized by different techniques such as FTIR, FESEM, TEM, EDX, MAPPING, BET and TGA. According to different analysis, Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell /Cu(II) has good stability under heating with particle size under 50 nm. Polyhydroquinolines as significant nitrogen-containing compounds have excellent pharmaceutical applications. In this research work, Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell /Cu(II) was applied for the synthesis of Polyhydroquinoline derivatives. Polyhydroquinoline were synthesized via reaction of aldehyde, dimedone, ethyl acetoacetate and ammonium acetate under solvent-free condition using an electrical mortar-heater. This protocol has some advantages such as simple operation and work up, high yields of products, reusability of catalyst with no any leaching in reaction mixture.

How to cite this article

Hajati F., Mirjalili B., Bamoniri A. Fe₃O₄@Nano-Coconut Shell/Cu(II) as a Unique, High Efficient and Reusable Natural Based Nano-Catalyst for Synthesis of Polyhydroquinolines J Nanostruct, 2026; 16(2):4357-4369. DOI: 10.22052/JNS.2026.02.079

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the synthesis and utilization of naturally occurring catalysts have become a serious study subject in following of green chemistry principles.

Polysaccharides are the most plentiful biopolymers in nature, which are abundantly found in plants and animals, microorganisms, microalgae, bacteria and fungi [1].

Biopolymers such as coconut shell's cellulose is a biocompatible, renewable and biodegradable

material containing OH groups [2-7]. Fe₃O₄ nanoparticles are coated with various materials such as surfactants [8], polymers [9,10], silica [11], cellulose [12] and carbon [13] to form core-shell structures. Magnetic nanoparticles as heterogeneous catalyst have many advantages such as high dispersion in reaction media and easy recovery by an external magnet [14]. Cu(II) as a safe and ecofriendly cation is a good Lewis acid and can activate the carbonyl group for nucleophilic addition reactions [15]. The presence of large

* Corresponding Author Email: fmirjalili@yazd.ac.ir



numbers of polar hydroxyl groups, cellulose can be coordinated to many metal ions (Mg²⁺, Ca²⁺, Pb²⁺, Cu²⁺, and Co³⁺) [16–19].

Polyhydroquinoline (PHQ) derivatives are significant nitrogen-containing compounds. Some of them possess antitumor, anticancer, neurotropic, neuropeptide, hepatoprotective, neuroprotective, vasodilator, platelet anti-aggregation, antidiabetic activity and bronchodilator [20–21]. Various catalysts such as [Msim]Cl [22], nano-Fe₃O₄@dextrin/BF₃ [23], CeO₂-ZrO₂ [24], V-TiO₂ [25], IRMOF-3 [26], Yb(OTf)₃ [27], Cs_{2.5}H_{0.5}PW₁₂O₄₀ [28], LaCl₃·7H₂O [29] and NiO-ZrO₂ [30] have been applied for synthesis of polyhydroquinoline

derivatives.

In this study, Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) was prepared as a natural based, biocompatible and green magnetic nano-catalyst. And its effects considered in the reaction of aldehyde, dimedone, ethyl acetoacetate and ammonium acetate for the synthesis of polyhydroquinoline derivatives (PHQs) (Fig. 1 (a, b)).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

General

All chemical materials were purchased from Aldrich, Merck and Fluka chemical companies. The synthesized magnetic nanocatalyst were

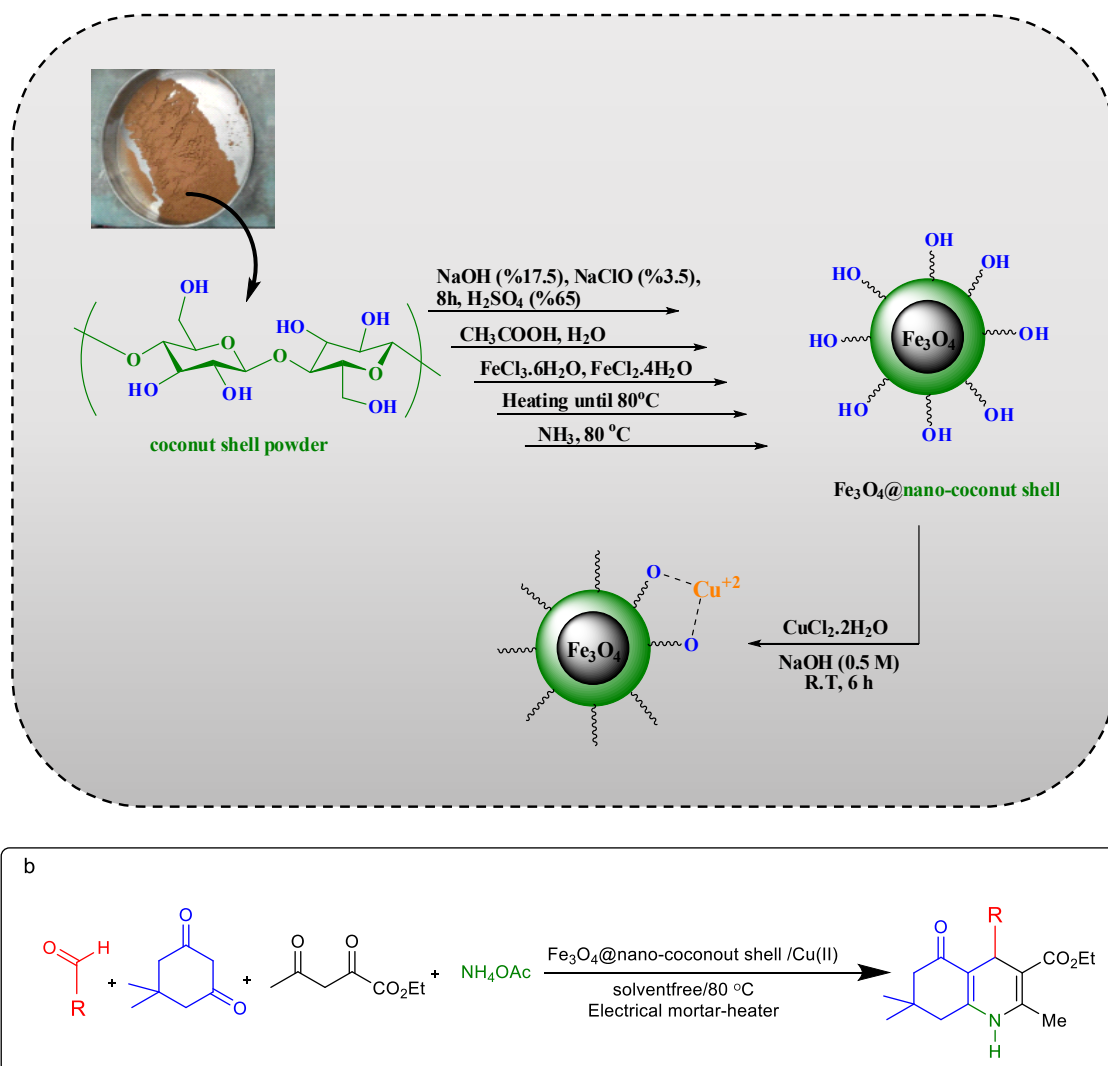


Fig. 1. Preparation of (a) Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) and (b) Synthesis of polyhydroquinoline derivatives catalyzed by Fe₃O₄@nano-Coconut shell /Cu(II)

characterized by FT-IR spectra (Bruker, Equinox 55 spectrometer). The ¹H-NMR spectrum was measured on a Bruker (DRX-400 Avance) NMR. Melting points were measured on a Buchi melting point B-540 B.V.CHI instrument and uncorrected. X-ray diffraction (XRD) pattern was obtained by a Philips Xpert MPD diffract meter equipped with a Cu K α anode ($k = 1.54 \text{ \AA}$) in the 2θ range from 10 to 80°. Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy (FESEM) was obtained on a Mira 3-XMU. XRF analysis was done with Bruker, S4 Explorer instrument. The magnetization of the prepared catalyst was characterized by using a Vibrating Sample Magnetometer (Meghnatis Daghigh Kavir Co. Kashan, I.R.IRAN). Quantitative elemental information and maps of catalyst was studied *via* energy-dispersive X-Ray spectroscopy (EDX) by a Phenom pro X instrument. BELSORP MINI II nitrogen adsorption apparatus (Japan) was used for recording of Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) specific surface area of catalyst at 77 K.

Preparation of nano-coconut shell

To prepare the nano-coconut shell, the Coconut shell was heated in boiling water for 30 minutes, dried, and powdered. The next, treated with a 17.5 w/v NaOH solution at 90°C for 24 h under reflux condition. Subsequently, the Coconut shell

was filtered and washed with distilled water. Then, bleached with 100 mL of 1:1 aqueous dilution of 3.5% w/v sodium hypochlorite (NaOCl) at 80 °C for 3 h under reflux condition. The resulting powder was hydrolyzed partially using 35% sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) aqueous solution with a Coconut shell-to-acid weight ratio of 1–10 at 45 °C. After 3 h, the obtained suspension was diluted with water five-fold to stop the hydrolysis reaction. The suspension was centrifuged at 4000 rpm to separate the nano-coconut shell from the acid solution (yield 65%).

Preparation of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell

1.5 g of nano-coconut shell powder was poured in 100 mL of 0.05 M acetic acid solution; Then, FeCl₃·6H₂O (3.51 g, 0.013 mol) and FeCl₂·4H₂O (1.29 g, 0.0065 mol) were added to it. The mixture was stirred for 6 h at 80 °C. As a result, 6 mL of 25% NH₄OH was added dropwise into the reaction mixture with constant stirring. After 30 min, the mixture was cooled to room temperature. Then Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell was separated by using an external magnet, washed with distilled water and dried at 80 °C for 4 h. The weight of the nano-Fe₃O₄@almond shell obtained is 2.073 g.

Preparation of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

CuCl₂ (75 mL, 0.04 M) was added to the mixture

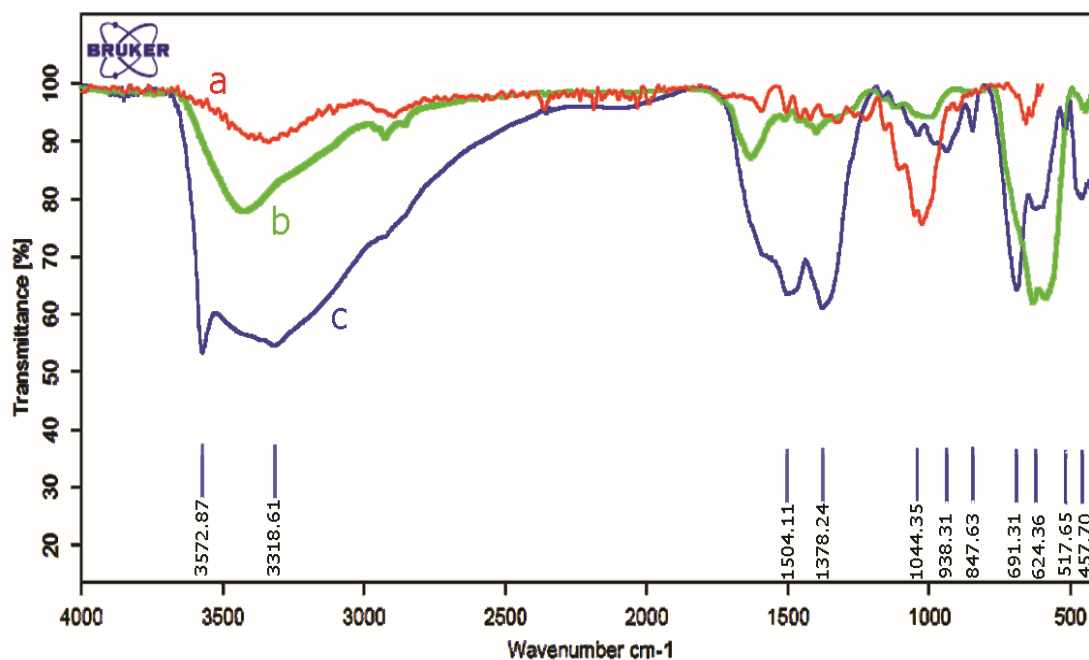


Fig. 2. FT-IR (ATR) spectra of (a) nano-coconut shell (b) Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell, (c) Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut (1 g) in ethanol (20 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for six hours at room temperature. The resulted magnetic nanocatalyst was washed with ethanol and water, filtered and then dried in an oven at 80 °C.

Synthesis of polyhydroquinolines in the presence of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

To the mixture of ethyl acetoacetate (1mmol), aldehyde (1mmol), dimedon (1mmol) and NH₄OAc (1.3mmol), Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) (0.03 g) was added. The reaction mixture was stirred under the solvent-free condition at 80 °C with an electrical mortar-heater. After completion of the reaction (as monitored by TLC (hexane/ethyl acetate 4:1)), the reaction mixture was colden to room temperature and dissolved in ethanol. The Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) catalyst was separated by using an external magnet. Thereafter, by pouring crushed ice on to the obtained mixture, the product was precipitated. For further purification, the solid product was recrystallized from methanol. The recovered catalyst was washed with water and ethanol, dried in an oven at 60°C and reused for subsequent runs.

Hot filtration test

The leaching of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/

Cu(II) in the reaction mixture was studied using the hot filtration test. The hot filtration test was performed for the synthesis of PHQs using benzaldehyde, ethyl acetoacetate, dimedon and NH₄OAc as a model reaction under the optimal reaction conditions. After the half-reaction time (7.5 min), the progress of reaction was obtained 78% by TLC . Then, the catalyst was separated from the mixture, and the reaction was continued for 7.5 minutes. We have found that the progress of reaction was terminated. These evidences show that the catalyst is stable under reaction condition with no any leaching.

Spectral data for selected compounds

Ethyl 2,7,7-trimethyl-4-(4-nitrophenyl)-5-oxo-1,4,5,6,7,8-hexahydroquinoline-3-carboxylate(4n)

Yellow solid, Mp: 234-236°C (lit. 234-236°C [31]).

IR (ATR) $\bar{\nu}$ (cm⁻¹): 3277 (NH), 1702 (C=O, ester), 1607 (C=O, dimedone), 1518 (NO₂), 1492 (C=C, aromatic), 1345 (NO₂), 1216(C-O). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ =8.08 (d, *J*=7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.48 (d, *J*= 7.9 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 5.91 (s, 1H, NH), 5.15 (s, 1H, CH), 4.05 (q, *J*= 7.1 Hz, 2H, OCH₂), 2.42 (s, 3H, CH₃), 2.10–2.36 (m, 4H, 2 CH₂), 1.17 (t, *J*= 7.1 Hz, 3H, CH₃CH₂), 1.09 (s, 3H, CH₃), 0.91 (s, 3H, CH₃). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (ppm)= 195.84, 167.03,

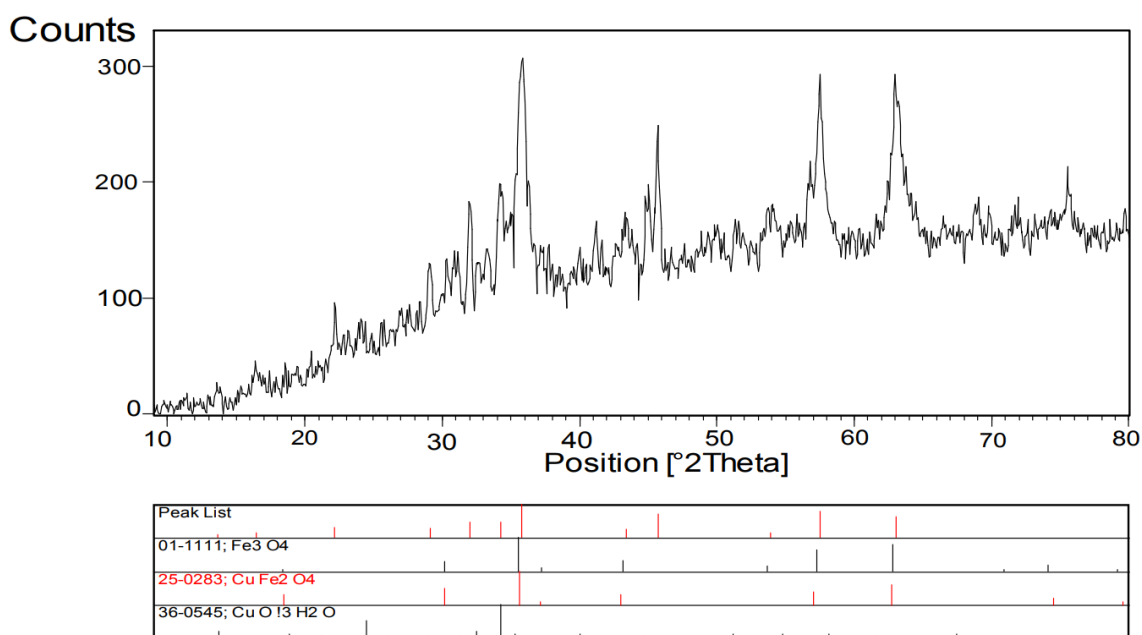


Fig. 3. XRD patterns of the Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II).

154.72, 150.16, 146.11, 145.10, 128.97, 123.28, 110.55, 104.59, 58.22, 50.64, 40.60, 37.30, 32.62, 29.37, 26.98, 19.16, 14.21.

Ethyl 2,7,7-Trimethyl-5-oxo-4-phenyl-1,4,5,6,7,8-hexahydroquinoline-3-carboxylate(4a)

Yellowish solid, Mp: 223-224°C (lit. 223-225°C

[31]).

IR (ATR) $\bar{\nu}(\text{cm}^{-1})$: 3187 (NH), 1701 (C=O, ester), 1605 (C=O, dimedone), 1489 (C=C, aromatic), 1213 (C-O). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.29 (m, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.19 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H, Ar-H), 7.09 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H, Ar-H), 6.44 (s, 1H, NH), 5.05 (s, 1H, CH), 4.06 (q, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H, OCH₂), 2.35 (s,

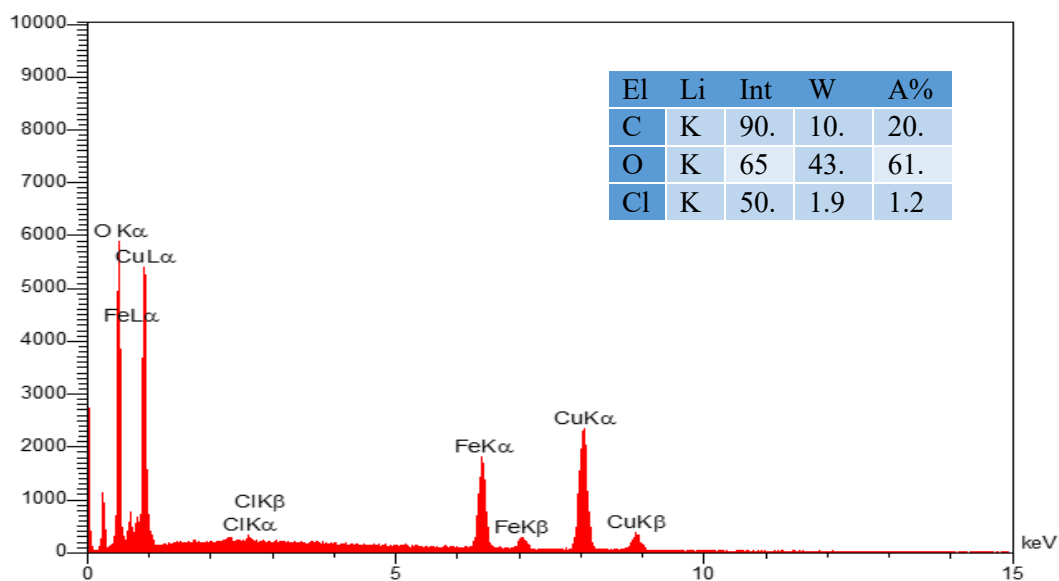


Fig. 4. EDX analysis spectra of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

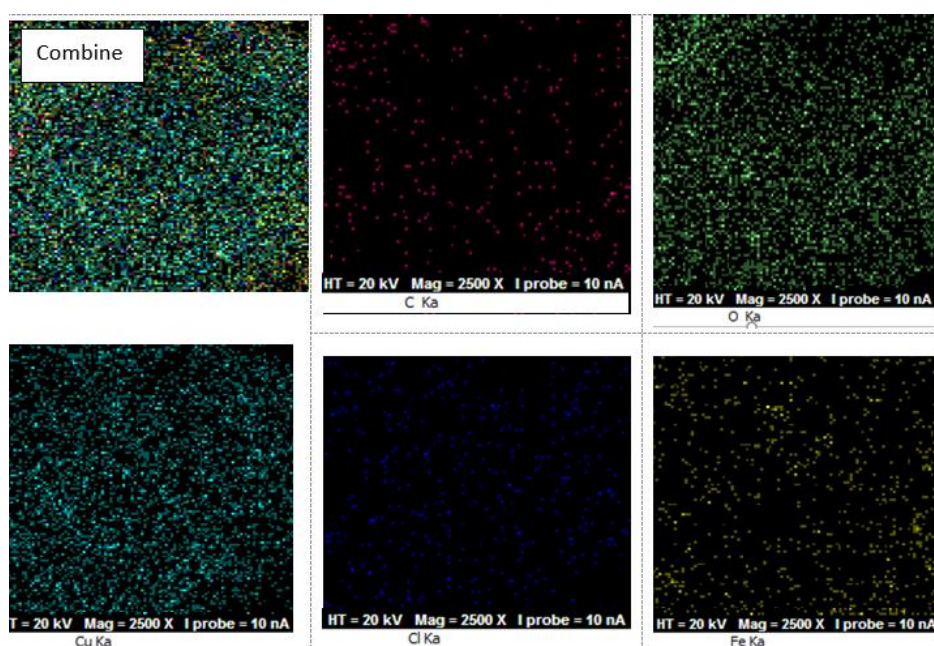


Fig. 5. Elements mapping images of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

3H, CH₃), 2.13–2.30 (m, 4H, 2 CH₂), 1.18 (t, *J*=7.2 Hz, 3H, CH₃CH₂), 1.07 (s, 3H, CH₃), 0.93 (s, 3H, CH₃).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, chemical co-precipitation of Fe⁺³ and Fe⁺² ions in presence of nano-coconut shell as natural source of cellulose, Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut

shell was prepared. In the next step, Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell was used as a support for binding of Cu(II) to form Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II). The structure of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) as a novel natural-based magnetic nano-catalyst was investigated by TEM, SEM, FT-IR, XRD, VSM, BET, MAP and EDS techniques.

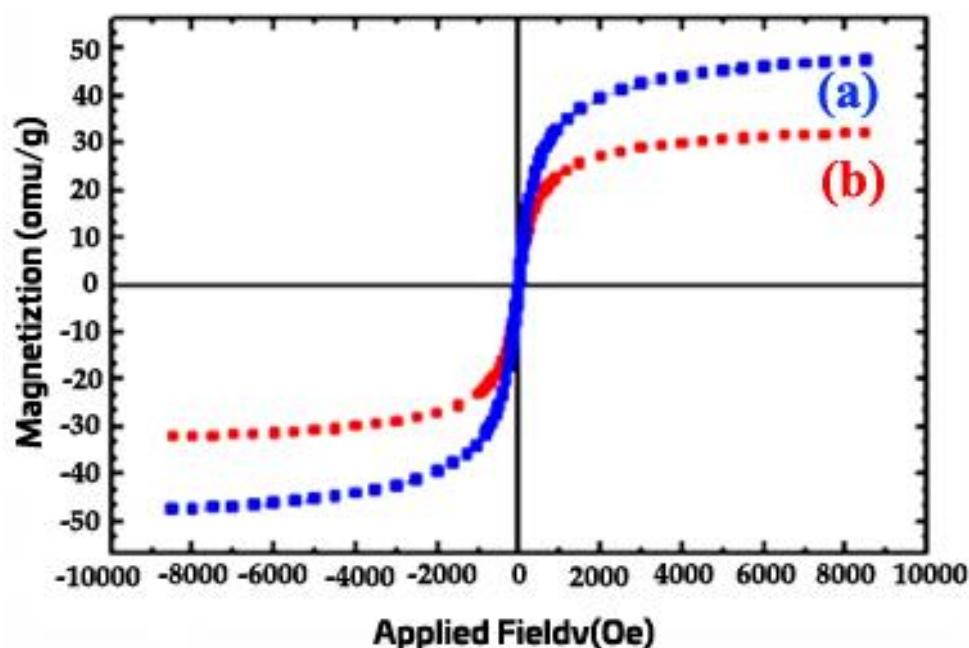


Fig. 6. Magnetization loops of (a) Fe₃O₄ and (b) Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

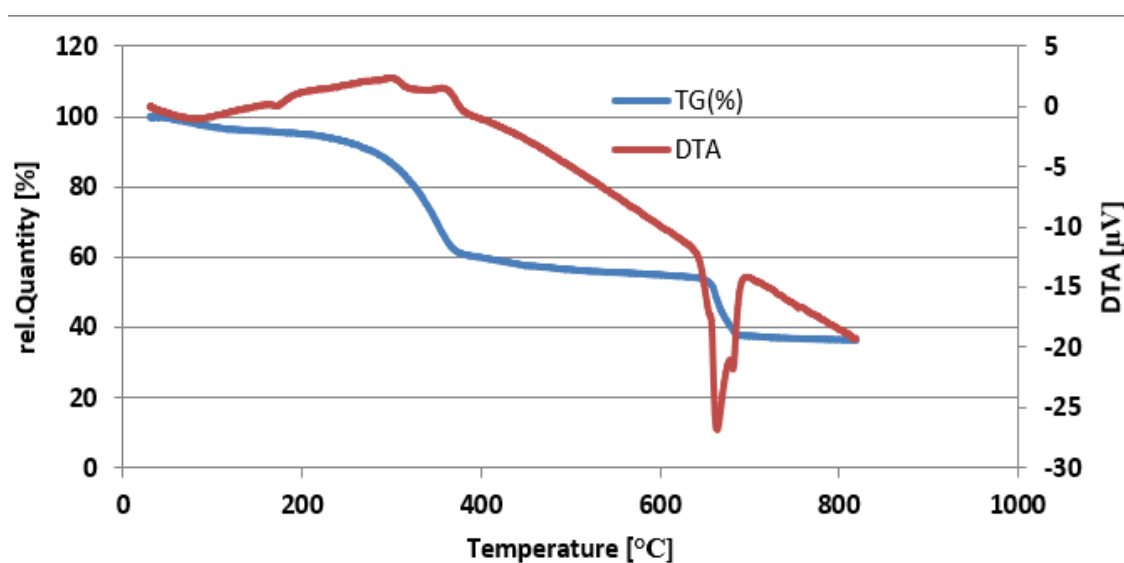


Fig. 7. TGA and DTA patterns of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

Characterization of the prepared catalyst

FT-IR Analysis

For identification of the structure of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II), FT-IR (ATR) spectra of (a) coconut shell (b) Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell, (c) Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) were recorded (Fig. 2). The FT-IR spectrum of nano-coconut shell shows a broad band at 3250-3450 cm⁻¹ which related to the stretching vibrations of OH groups. The absorption band at 2950 cm⁻¹ is attributed to C-H aliphatic bonds. The absorption band around 1044 cm⁻¹ is due to the C-O bonds`

stretching vibrations. For Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell, the absorption at 624 cm⁻¹ indicates the Fe/O groups` stretching vibrations that shows the magnetic Fe₃O₄ is coated by nano-coconut shell. The peak at 1504 cm⁻¹ is associated with the bending vibration of H-O-H that catalyst adsorbed water. The absorption bands at 691 cm⁻¹ that may be attributed to Cu-O band.

XRD analysis

The Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) XRD pattern in a range of 10–80 ° was shown in Fig. 3.

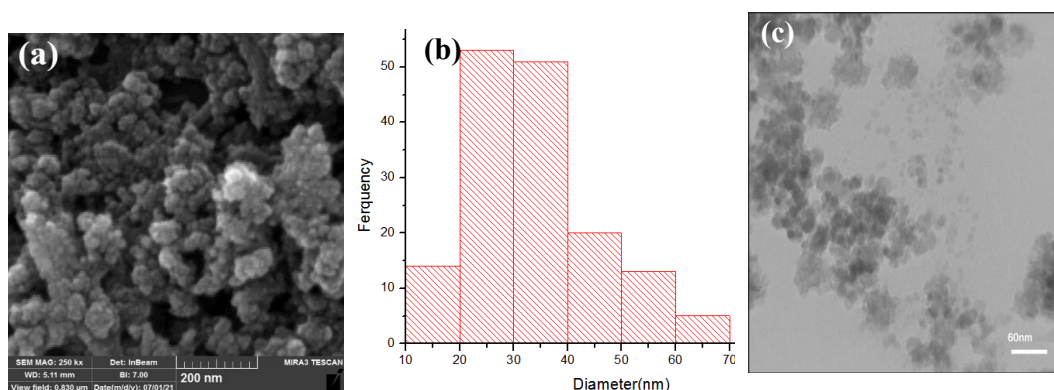


Fig. 8. (a) FESEM (b) histogram and (c) TEM images of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II).

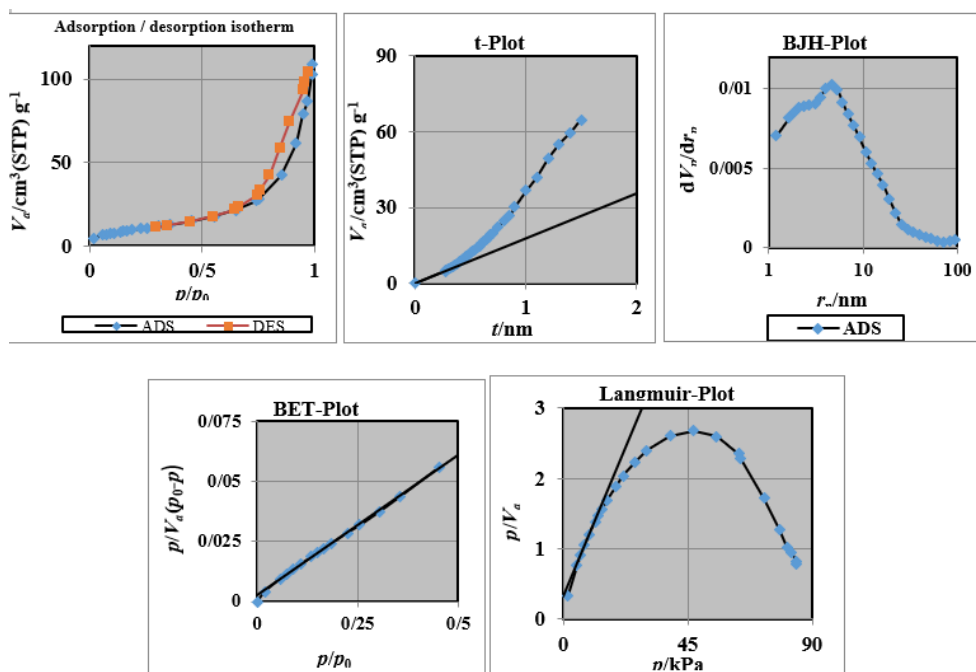


Fig. 9. N₂ adsorption (black line) - desorption (orang line) isotherm and corresponding diagrams

In this pattern, in addition to all peaks of naked Fe₃O₄ ($2\theta = 30^\circ, 37^\circ, 43^\circ, 53^\circ, 57^\circ, 63^\circ, 71^\circ$ and 73°), the additional diffraction peaks at $2\theta = 35^\circ$ and 25° shows the existence of Cu(II) in catalyst structure.

EDS and MAP analysis

In order to ensure the presence of expected elements in the catalyst structure, EDX analysis was used. EDX spectra taken at different points of the images are shown C, O, Cl, Fe and Cu elements in the catalyst (Fig. 4). In Fig. 4, the presence of the

elements C, O, Cl, Fe and Cu with the corresponding weight percentages of 20.64, 61.88, 1.22, 6.06 and 10.20 % respectively is clearly evident the formation of Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II).

The distribution of the Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) is also analyzed by elements mapping that shows C, O, Cl, Fe and Cu elements are distributed homogeneously in the synthesized catalyst (Fig. 5).

By measuring the Fe and Cu content in the catalyst using Inductively Coupled Plasma (ICP),

Table 1 Parameters obtained from porosity analysis

BET Plot	
V_m	8.4111 [cm ³ (STP) g ⁻¹]
$a_{s,BET}$	36.609 [m ² g ⁻¹]
C	43.125
Total pore volume($p/p_0=0.990$)	0.1657 [cm ³ g ⁻¹]
Mean pore diameter	18.107 [nm]
Langmuir plot	
V_m	10.609 [cm ³ (STP) g ⁻¹]
$a_{s,Lang}$	46.174 [m ² g ⁻¹]
B	0.2929
t plot	
Plot data	Adsorption branch
a_1	27.312 [m ² g ⁻¹]
V_1	0 [cm ³ g ⁻¹]
BJH Plot	
Plot data	Adsorption branch
V_p	0.1698 [cm ³ g ⁻¹]
$r_{p,peak}(Area)$	4.61 [nm]
a_p	49.768 [m ² g ⁻¹]

Table 2. Synthesis of 4a under various conditions

Entry	Catalyst amount (g) ^d	Solvent	Temp. (°C)	Tim(min)	Yield% ^b
1	-	EtOH	r.t	120	Trace
2	-	EtOH	80	100	25
3	0.05	EtOH	r.t.	100	53
4	0.05	EtOH	80	45	85
5	0.05	CH ₃ CN	80	45	65
6	0.05	CH ₃ OH	80	45	77
7	0.05	Solvent free	80	45	85
8	0.05	Solvent free ^a	80	15	96
9	0.05	Solvent free ^a	r.t	15	55
10	0.05	Solvent free ^a	60	15	74
11	0.05	Solvent free ^a	80	15	96
12	0.04	Solvent free ^a	80	15	96
13	0.03	Solvent free ^a	80	15	96
14	0.02	Solvent free ^a	80	15	88
15	0.00	Solvent free ^a	80	15	-

Reaction was performed with ethyl acetoacetate (1 mmol), benzaldehyde (1 mmol), dimedone (1 mmol), ammonium acetate (1.25 mmol).

^a Electrical mortar-heater. ^b Isolated yield. Fe₃O₄@nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)^d

we have found that the amount of Fe is 190 mg/g and Cu is 100 mg/g. Thus, according to ICP, the molar ratio of Cu:Fe is 1: 1.6.

VSM magnetization study

The magnetic properties of Fe₃O₄ and Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) was studied by using vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM) (Fig. 6). A super paramagnetic behavior was achieved from the measured samples of Fe₃O₄ and the catalyst. At room temperature, the saturation magnetization (*M_s*) values of Fe₃O₄ and Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) are ~50 emu g⁻¹ and ~32 emu g⁻¹, respectively. The resulting values show that bonding Fe₃O₄ @ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) has considerable effect on the magnetic properties of Fe₃O₄.

TGA analysis

Thermal gravimetric analysis (TG-DTA) pattern of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) catalyst was shown in Fig. 7. A minor weight loss (10%) in the range of 50-280° can be related to remove the adsorbed water in catalyst. The other weight losses of the catalyst are occurred 30% in the range of 280-380 °C and 10% in the range of 630-650 °C are attributed to burning of carbohydrate section of catalyst. The char yield of catalyst at 800 °C is 39% that confirm the existence of metal in catalyst. Thus, the catalyst is stable up to 280 °C. and can be used under 280°C.

SEM and TEM analysis

To clarify the morphologies and sizes of the Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II), FESEM, TEM and histogram images of it were shown in Fig. 8. These results exhibit that the dimension of catalyst particles are 20-40 nm.

Burunauer-Emmett-Taller (BET) analysis

The Burunauer- Emmett- Taller specific surface area (*S_{BET}*) of the Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) catalyst was measured by N₂ adsorption-desorption analysis at 77 K (Fig. 9 and Table 1). As shown, the N₂ adsorption- desorption isotherm for Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) is of the II-type with H₃ hysteresis. As shown in Table 1, mean pore diameters and total pore volume were 18.107 nm, and 0.1657 cm³.g⁻¹, respectively.

Application of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) in the synthesis of polyhydroquinolines

In this investigation, we have synthesized polyhydroquinoline derivatives through MCRs using Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II). The reaction of benzaldehyde, dimedone, ethyl acetoacetate and ammonium acetate, to forming 4a, was done as model reaction for determination of the best reaction conditions. The resulted data about reaction solvent, temperature and the amount of the catalyst were tabulated in Table 2. Based on the obtained data, the model reaction under solvent free condition in electrical mortar-heater using 0.03 g of catalyst has higher yield than other conditions (Table 2, entry13).

Table 3 shows the comparison of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) with the several other catalysts in the synthesis of (4a). The results showed that Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) promotes the reaction with shorter reaction time and higher yield.

Finally, by applying the best condition, different polyhydroquinoline derivatives were prepared and the obtained results were tabulated in Table 4.

Recyclability of the Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

Reusability is one of the applied features of

Table 3. Catalytic performances of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) in comparison

Entry	Catalyst	Solvent/conditions	Time(min)	Yield ^a (%)	[Lit.]
1	AFGO nanosheets	EtOH, r.t.	120-240	87-91	[32]
2	MCM-41@serine@Cu(II)	EtOH, Reflux	170	96	[33]
3	KH2PO4	EtOH:H2O/ 100 °C	300	91	[34]
4	TEDETA@BNPs	EtOH/ 80 °C	60	95	[35]
5	SBA-15@Glycine-M	EtOH/	110	92	[36]
6	Ga ₂ O ₃ nanomaterial	EtOH, Reflux	60	90	[37]
7	Ascorbic acid	Solvent free/ 80 °C	1.5-5 h	70-99	[38]
8	Cu(II)-DCC-CMK-3	solvent-free/80 °C	25	98	[39]
9	spinel FeAl ₂ O ₄	EtOH/ 80 °C	30	96	[40]
10	Aluminized polyborate	-	15	94	[41]
11	Fe ₃ O ₄ @ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)	under solvent-free/ 80 °C	15	96	Present work

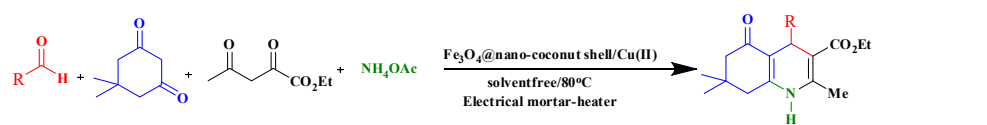
heterogeneous catalysts which is important from industrial and environmental view. To investigate this property, the retrieved catalyst from the reaction was reused for seven consecutive runs and results was presented in Fig. 10. These data show that the product yield was not reduced

considerably after seven consecutive runs.

Mechanism for the synthesis of polyhydroquinoline derivatives

The proposed mechanism for the synthesis of polyhydroquinoline 4a in the presence of Fe₃O₄@

Table 4. Synthesis of polyhydroquinolines in the presence of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)



Ent.	R	Prod.	Time (min)	Yield ^b (%)	M.P.(°C) Found	Lit. Mp (°C) [Refs.]
1		4a	20	96	223–224	223–225[31]
2		4g	15	92	196–197	196–198[31]
3		4h	17	85	234–236	234–237[31]
4		4j	20	96	248–251	248–250[31]
5		4n	15	89	234–236	234–236[31]
6		4b	20	70	231–232	229–232[42]
7		4f	20		234–235	234–235[43]
8		4i	20	80	235–237	236–238[44]
9		4c	20	78	254–256	253–255[45]
10		4e	20	94	202–204	203–205[46]
11		4q	20	92	208–210	209–213[47]
12		4d	15	87	204–205	205–207 [31]
13		4k	20	84	218–220	219–221[43]
14		4l	18	70	216–218	214–216 [45]

Reaction was performed with ethyl acetoacetate (1 mmol), benzaldehyde (1 mmol), dimedone (1 mmol), ammonium acetate (1.25 mmol), Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) (30 mg). ^b Isolated yield.

nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) is shown in Fig. 11. As is shown, in the first and second steps, the carbonyl groups of the ethyl acetoacetate and aldehyde were activated by interactions with the

Cu(II) on the catalyst. The active aldehyde reacts with dimedone via Knoevenagel condensation to form intermediate 9. On the other hand, intermediate 8 is formed during the condensation

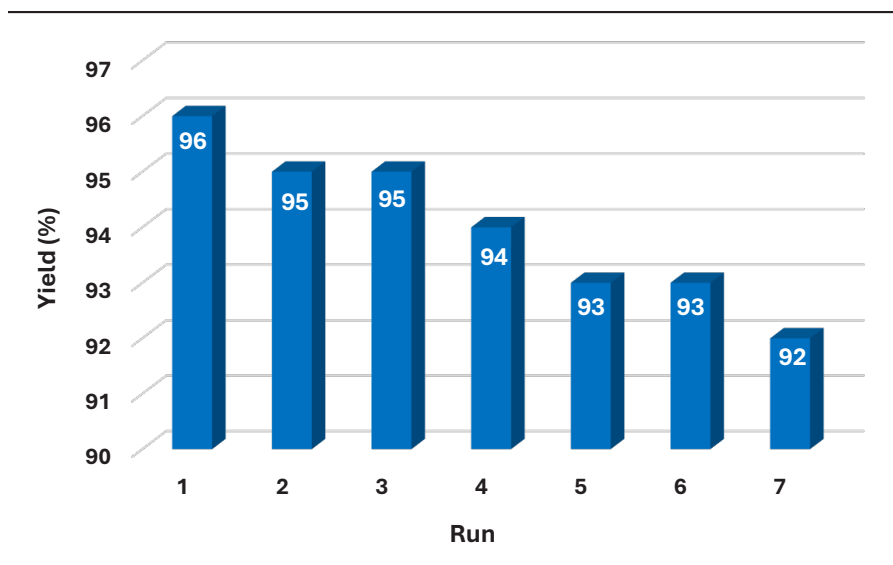


Fig. 10. Reusability of Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II)

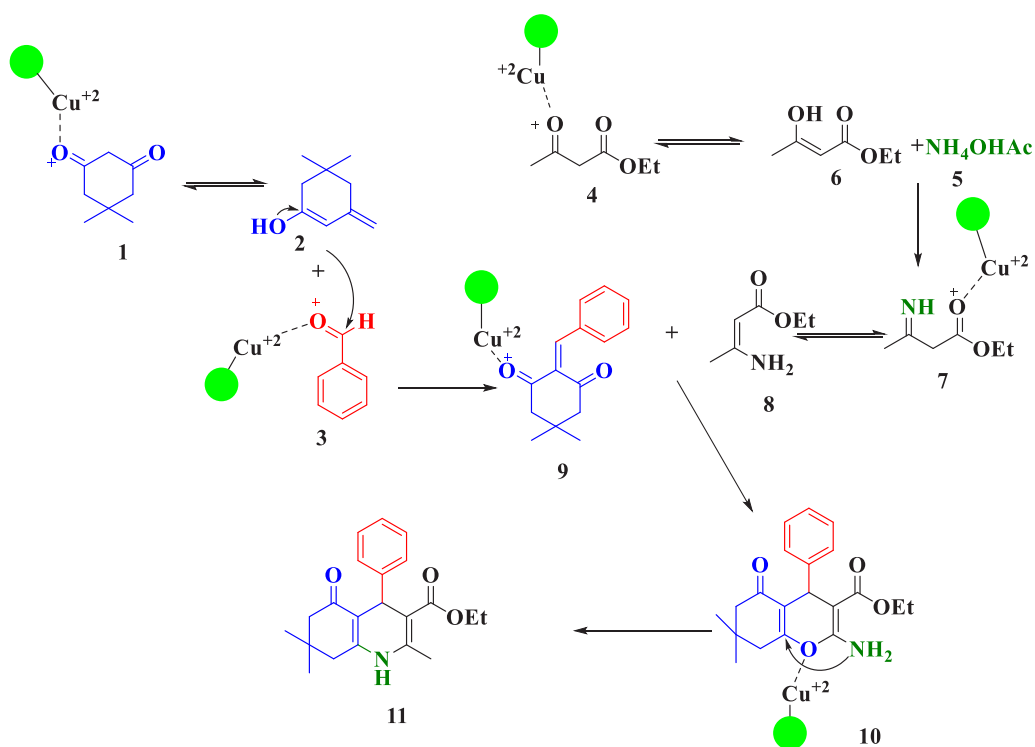


Fig. 11. Proposed mechanism for the synthesis of Polyhydroquinoline

reaction between the active ethyl acetoacetate and ammonium acetate. Then, Michael addition reaction between intermediates 9 and 8 forms the intermediate 10. Finally, polyhydroquinoline 11 is generated by an intramolecular nucleophilic reaction.

CONCLUSION

In this work, Fe₃O₄@ nano-coconut shell/Cu(II) was introduced as a novel, green, efficient and magnetically removable solid acid catalyst for the synthesis of polyhydroquinoline derivatives. This protocol was done by using an electrical mortar-heater under solvent free condition. The reusability of catalyst, simplicity of procedure and high yields are some advantages of this protocol.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Research Council of Yazd University is gratefully acknowledged for the financial support for this work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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