

A Character Values Education Model Based on School Culture

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ABSTRACT. This study examines a school-culture-based character education model at Muhammadiyah Leading Primary School in Lemahdadi, Bantul, Yogyakarta. It focuses on how school routines and extracurricular programs are used to support the development of students' religious commitment, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, leadership, and entrepreneurial awareness. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. Primary information was gathered through purposive selection of the school director, two Ismuba teachers, and the head of administration, while observation, interviews, and documentation were used as data collection techniques. Relevant literature served as secondary material. Data validity was considered through source triangulation, and the collected material was analyzed using content analysis. The article identifies five main program areas: strengthening obligatory and sunnah worship, Hizbul Wathan, Tapak Suci, leadership training, and Market Day. These programs provide different but complementary learning contexts. Worship routines support religious habituation; Hizbul Wathan offers opportunities to practise discipline and teamwork; Tapak Suci supports self-control and confidence; leadership training creates opportunities to exercise responsibility; and Market Day introduces creativity and basic entrepreneurial learning. The model illustrates how character education can be embedded in everyday school culture rather than treated only as a classroom topic. Because the study is descriptive and focused on one school, the findings should be understood as a contextual model rather than proof of measurable effects or a universal solution.

Keywords: *Character Education, School Culture, Muhammadiyah, Islamic Education, Primary School.*



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INTRODUCTION

This research is motivated by cases of child delinquency since elementary school age, such as cases of bullying, fading manners, and various other shifts in normative values at elementary school age (Mandira & Stoltz, 2021). The worrying shift in value standards has an impact not only on students' growth and development, but also leads to delinquency in adolescence, for which Islamic education is important in shaping children's character and behavior from an early age (Ayano et al., 2024). This research is an alternative reference for studying the Islamic Education values model based on Muhammadiyah school culture.

Early childhood delinquency is a problem that has not been resolved. Furthermore, school culture at Muhammadiyah Elementary School is an alternative whose interpretation model has not been fully studied to overcome shifts in normative values. For this reason, this research was prepared on the basis of addressing the issues raised. So, in order to determine the direction of the research and discover the novelty of this research, a literature review was compiled, consisting of: *first*, research on models of religious moderation within the scope of Islamic organizations in Indonesia (Jubba et al., 2022). While this research focuses on models of character education in institutions mainstream Islamic organizations in Indonesia, namely Muhammadiyah. Research on the study of the character education of elementary school children based on Javanese culture in the form of *uploads* (Nurasiah et al., 2022). While this research examines the character education of elementary school children based on the cultural values of Muhammadiyah schools. *third*, research on character education models in Christian Religious Education (Horowski, 2020). While this research examines character education in the realm of Islamic Education. So based on previous research, the direction and novelty of this research lies in the model of character education values in school culture under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah institution which operates in the field of Islamic Education.

Character formation in primary school requires attention because children are still developing habits for understanding rules, responding to others, and managing their own conduct (Schütz & Koglin, 2023). At this stage, explanations about good behavior are important, but explanations alone may not be sufficient. Children also need repeated opportunities to practise what they learn in concrete situations. A school environment can provide these opportunities through routines, relationships, shared expectations, and activities that make values visible (Wang et al., 2020). For example, a routine that asks students to prepare for prayer, cooperate in group activities, or take responsibility for a task gives abstract values a practical meaning. In this sense, school culture is not simply a collection of ceremonies or extracurricular events (Čamber Tambolaš et al., 2023). It is the pattern of everyday practices through which members of a school learn what the institution values.

The focus on school culture also helps connect formal teaching with the social environment in which students spend much of their time (González et al., 2023). A value such as discipline can be discussed in a lesson, but its meaning becomes clearer when students experience consistent expectations about punctuality, preparation, participation, and completion of responsibilities (Lee & Gage, 2020). Similarly, care and respect can be strengthened when adults model considerate communication and when students are guided to resolve disagreements constructively. These examples indicate why the relationship between the curriculum and daily routines matters (Aningsih et al., 2022). Character education is more likely to be coherent when the values described by the school are reflected in the conduct of teachers, school leaders, administrative staff, and students.

This article therefore approaches the school as an educational community rather than viewing character development as the responsibility of an individual teacher alone. The programs described in the study involve religious practice, organized group activity, physical training, leadership, and simple economic activity. Their variety is analytically important. Students encounter values in different settings and can connect religious commitments with social conduct, self-management, and practical responsibility. The study does not assume that participation automatically produces lasting character change. Instead, it considers the educational opportunities

these programs provide and the ways in which they may contribute to a coherent school-culture model.

The aim of this research is to examine in more depth the model of character education values that exist in the culture of the superior primary school Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Bantul Yogyakarta, and examine the benefits of this educational model, its interpretation for students in dealing with early childhood delinquency. Furthermore, this research can be an alternative model of character education for educational institutions in designing a series of school cultures, so that they can overcome the common problems of students in each respective institution.

METHOD

This research method adapts the type and method of qualitative descriptive research, so that this research does not need to involve testing hypotheses or generalizations, so it places more emphasis on an in-depth study of the research cycle process (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024). So the researchers examined the objectives and contributions of the usefulness of the educational model of school cultural character values at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Leading Primary School. The use of this approach is to understand the meaning and events and their relevance to school culture in order to improve character values at the superior Muhammadiyah Elementary School Lemahdadi Yogyakarta. This is important because it exists Individual behavior is influenced by a series of external factors, the social environment, habituation to routines, and other aspects related to awareness and self-actualization (Albarracín et al., 2024). The selection of research objects at the relevant agencies was carried out because the school was a quality Muhammadiyah educational institution and was deemed to have succeeded in implementing a school culture that was able to improve students' character values.

The descriptive qualitative design is appropriate to the stated purpose because the study seeks to describe a school-based educational model and interpret the meaning of its programs in context (Albarracín et al., 2024). Rather than measuring a causal effect or comparing student outcomes across schools, the approach emphasizes the practices reported and observed in the selected institution (Tomaszewski et al., 2020a). The school was selected purposively because it was described as a Muhammadiyah educational institution considered to have developed a school culture intended to strengthen students' character. This selection supports a contextual account of the case, while also limiting the extent to which conclusions can be generalized to other schools.

Data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary. Primary data was collected using purposeful sampling from the school director, two Ismuba teachers, and the head of administration (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). While secondary power is obtained from other relevant literature to complement primary data, such as theories, books, journal articles and so on which are suitable for studying school culture and improving character values (Tomaszewski et al., 2020b). For this reason, data collection techniques are carried out through observation, documentation and interviews (Busetto et al., 2020). After the data has been successfully obtained, it is necessary to triangulate the data sources (Schlunegger et al., 2024), this functions as a data validity technique between all research data. Data that is valid and has been narrated in narrative form is then analyzed using content analysis techniques (Singh et al., 2021). So the main views that will be processed in this research include an in-depth study of the form of cultural education models in schools towards improving students' character values

Each data collection technique serves a complementary purpose within this design. Interviews provide participants' accounts of the intended programs and the reasons they are maintained (Koh et al., 2023). Observation can help the researcher consider how stated values are expressed in the school setting, while documentation can provide supporting information about activities and institutional practices. Using more than one source is important because a program may be described in aspirational terms by its organizers, whereas its everyday implementation may involve practical constraints. Triangulation therefore provides a way to compare information across sources and to identify points of convergence or differences (Farquhar et al., 2020). The article does not report a numerical coding scheme or a formal outcome measure; consequently, the analysis is presented as an interpretive description of the model.

Content analysis was used to organize the information around the study's central topic: the relationship between school culture and character values. In practical terms, this means reading the collected material in relation to recurring program themes, identifying the character-related purposes attributed to each activity, and interpreting how the activities complement one another (Saunders et al., 2023). The analysis is guided by the information available from the stated participants, observations, documents, and relevant literature. This procedure should not be confused with a claim that every possible student experience was captured. The selected informants provide institutional perspectives, and future research could add student and parent perspectives to produce a more comprehensive picture.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Education is defined as a series of processes to shape individual character, knowledge and skills. It is stated that the National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003, education includes changing attitudes, forming religious and moral values, and developing personal potential (Hidayat et al., 2021). The role of education is important in building a state administration system, preparing human resources capable of economic growth, and improving the quality of human life, both individually and in groups (Odhiambo, 2024). It does not only focus on the transfer of academic knowledge, but also on changing attitudes, forming religious and moral values, and developing personal potential. In the social context and community life, the role of education is very important (Metcalf & Moulin-Stožek, 2021). This is not only related to individual readiness to become part of economic life or as quality human resources, but also in building a strong state structure (Metcalf & Moulin-Stožek, 2021).

The importance of an effective educational model arises from its role in shaping students' character from an early age. Character education is no longer just conveying facts or theories, but rather becomes the basis for developing moral values, ethics and behavior that build individuals with integrity (Pike et al., 2021). Various educational models have developed from traditional ones to more inclusive and interactive ones (Budirahayu & Saud, 2023). One educational model that has its own characteristics is the Muhammadiyah educational model. In the Muhammadiyah approach, education does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also involves the individual's emotional, social and spiritual dimensions (Sutarman et al., 2017).

The Muhammadiyah education model emphasizes holistic aspects, involving all dimensions of students' lives. Islamic principles are the basis for this model, where religious education is closely

integrated with daily learning(Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). This creates an environment that encourages the strengthening of Islamic values in students' daily lives. Character education in the Muhammadiyah context often focuses on the values of rahmatan lil alamin, which include teachings about compassion, tolerance and justice(Khosiin et al., 2023).

It is important to note that this Muhammadiyah education model pays special attention to the overall development of students. Character education is not only the main goal, but also a method implemented in the learning process. This concept embraces important aspects of students' lives, provides a strong foundation of moral, ethical and religious values and creates an education that goes beyond just academic knowledge. Thus, education rooted in Islamic principles, as promoted by Muhammadiyah, not only contributes to increasing knowledge, but also plays a vital role in shaping the character and morals of students, creating empowered and ethical individuals in society(Lecturer, Elementary School Education Departement, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, putri.mahanani.fip@um.ac.id et al., 2022).

Muhammadiyah School Culture

The school culture in the Muhammadiyah environment displays the foundation of organizational values that originate from Islamic teachings. The main focus lies on aqidah (beliefs), sharia (Islamic legal rules), akhlak (morality), and muamalah (ethics in social interactions)(putri.mahanani.fip@um.ac.id et al., 2022). At the Muhammadiyah Flagship Elementary School, the school culture prioritizes activities that support the formation of student character(Parjiman et al., 2023). This includes religious activities, a culture of mutual cooperation, competency development, as well as familiarization with Islamic ethics and manners. Muhammadiyah school culture highlights these values by promoting close collaboration between teachers, students, parents and the community(Djazilan & Wuri Wuryandani, 2024a). All of these parties are considered as one unit whose aim is to create a conducive educational environment. Through this collaboration, school culture seeks to provide real examples and practices of Islamic values in everyday life. In this way, an atmosphere is created that supports the growth and development of student character(Aldridge et al., 2024).

Through a collaborative approach involving various related parties, Muhammadiyah school culture does not just generate ideas, but also embodies Islamic values in real action(Suyatno et al., 2023). In everyday life in this school environment, Islamic values are not only spoken or taught, but are practiced and integrated into students' lives. Collaboration between teachers, students, parents and the community forms a strong foundation for creating an atmosphere that encourages character growth based on Islamic teachings(Djazilan & Wuri Wuryandani, 2024b). Muhammadiyah school culture, with its emphasis on the real practice of Islamic values, forms an environment that not only plays a role in the formal education process, but also acts as a real-life laboratory for students. This allows them to learn and live the values of Islamic teachings not only as a theoretical aspect, but as a way of life that is integrated into everyday life. Thus, Muhammadiyah school culture becomes a strong foundation for character development based on Islamic principles(Sutarman & Yusutria, 2021a).

Character Values

In the context of Muhammadiyah education, the character values instilled come from the teachings of the Islamic religion. This includes values such as honesty, discipline, caring, simplicity, and example(Hastasari et al., 2022a). This approach is not just about incorporating these values into the formal curriculum, but also integrating them into daily practice, such as in interactions

between teachers and students, celebrating religious holidays, social activities, as well as real efforts to instill character (Hastasari et al., 2022a). Character education within the Muhammadiyah environment aims to create a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has strong morality. The main goal is for students to be able to make a positive contribution to society and have a deep understanding of human values (Milal et al., 2020).

Instilling these character values is not just rhetoric, but is a practice that is carried out every day in the educational environment (Sutarman & Yusutria, 2021b). For example, when the value of honesty is instilled, it is not only expressed as a concept, but implemented in real actions at school. Teachers and school staff act as role models, demonstrating these values in their daily activities, providing concrete examples that students can emulate (Döring et al., 2024). This effort not only aims to create academically intelligent individuals, but also to form strong character, firm morality, and awareness of social responsibility. In this way, students who are trained in the Muhammadiyah educational environment are expected to have a strong moral and ethical foundation in living their daily lives and interacting with society in a positive way (Hastasari et al., 2022b). An education system like this provides a guarantee that the educational process will not only produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent, but also have a solid moral foundation, ready to play a role in society, and understand and apply human values in real action. This is an important foundation in creating a generation that is not only intelligent, but also ethical and capable of bringing positive change to the surrounding environment.

Based on the results of an interview with the director of Muhammadiyah Primary School Unggulan Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Bantul Yogyakarta, related to the school culture-based character education model, including: (1) Strengthening obligatory and sunnah daily worship (2) Hizbul Wathan (3) Holy site (4) Leadership Training (5) Market Day. The program to strengthen mandatory and sunnah daily worship at the Muhammadiyah Primary School, Lemahdadi Bantul Yogyakarta, consists of a series of worship services, which include praying before studying, memorizing the Koran, midday prayer, then midday prayer and Asr prayers in congregation. The Hizbul Wathan program at Muhammadiyah Primary School, Lemahdadi Bantul Yogyakarta, is carried out once a week. Furthermore, the Tapak Suci program is part of an extracurricular program which is held once a week. Furthermore, the leadership training program is carried out as a leadership training program. Finally, the market day program is carried out by schools as a means of honing entrepreneurial intelligence.

The first program area, the strengthening of obligatory and sunnah worship, places religious practice within the rhythm of the school day. Praying before learning, Qur'an memorization, and congregational prayers give students repeated opportunities to practise commitment and to understand worship as part of ordinary life. From a character-education perspective, the potential value of routine lies in repetition and consistency: students are invited to prepare, participate, and follow shared expectations. Teachers' own conduct remains important in this process because students can learn from the example set by adults as well as from direct instruction. At the same time, the educational purpose should not be reduced to the completion of a routine. Reflection, age-appropriate explanation, and supportive guidance can help students connect the practice with values such as gratitude, responsibility, and respect.

The second program, Hizbul Wathan, provides a group-based setting in which discipline and cooperation can be practised. Activities organized through scouting can require students to listen to instructions, coordinate with peers, take turns, and contribute to a shared task. These

experiences may help make teamwork more concrete than a definition given in a classroom. The educational opportunity depends on how activities are facilitated: students need clear expectations, fair participation, and constructive feedback. When mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn rather than as reasons for humiliation, group activities can also support perseverance and mutual respect. Thus, the value of Hizbul Wathan in the model is not limited to the activity itself but includes the habits and relationships cultivated through participation.

The third program, *Tapak Suci*, adds a physical and self-management dimension to character education. The article associates this activity with physical health, confidence, and self-defense skills. It can also be interpreted as a setting in which students learn to follow rules, practise with persistence, respect instructors and peers, and exercise restraint. Such qualities are important because confidence should be accompanied by responsibility and respect for others. The program's contribution to character formation therefore depends on safe supervision and an emphasis on discipline rather than aggression. Within the wider model, *Tapak Suci* complements religious routines and group activities by providing a practical context for self-control and consistent effort.

The fourth program, leadership training, is intended to develop students' ability to take responsibility and guide activities. Leadership at primary-school age need not mean holding a formal position; it can involve helping organize a group task, communicating instructions respectfully, listening to suggestions, or ensuring that a responsibility is completed. These experiences can help students understand that leadership involves service and accountability rather than authority alone. To make this learning inclusive, schools can distribute responsibilities among students and provide opportunities for quieter students to contribute. Reflection after activities can help students identify what worked, what needs improvement, and how their decisions affected others.

The fifth program, *Market Day*, introduces students to practical learning associated with creativity and entrepreneurship. In a supervised school context, students may encounter the need to prepare a product or service, communicate with others, cooperate with peers, and understand simple transactions. These tasks can be connected to character values such as honesty, responsibility, fairness, and careful use of resources. *Market Day* is especially relevant to a holistic educational model because it links learning with everyday social and economic situations. Its purpose, however, should not be interpreted only in terms of commercial success. The learning process planning, sharing roles, solving problems, and reflecting on decisions is equally important for students' development.

Taken together, the five program areas form a complementary structure. Worship routines emphasize religious commitment and habituation, Hizbul Wathan emphasizes group cooperation and discipline, *Tapak Suci* provides opportunities for self-control and confidence, leadership training foregrounds responsibility and initiative, and *Market Day* introduces creativity and practical economic awareness. The programs address different dimensions of character, but they can reinforce one another when the school communicates a consistent set of expectations. For example, honesty can be relevant both to religious and moral instruction and to fair conduct during *Market Day*. Responsibility can be practised in worship routines, team tasks, and leadership assignments. This cross-program relationship is one reason school culture can be understood as an integrated model rather than a list of unrelated activities.

Discussion

The issue of a worrying shift in character from an early age is a common problem in the world of education. Islamic education is one of the things that carries out a mandate that is in line with overcoming changes in character. Education basically also has various alternatives to overcome the main problems that occur, it's just that the appropriate model is an important formulation to study (Vanlommel & Van Den Boom-Muilenburg, 2024). The educational model must have a strong aspect of improving the character of students. Improvement is only possible if the educational model has character values that are able to overcome students' problems in the contemporary era.

Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia that responds to changes in character. Operating in the field of formal education, Muhammadiyah has a series of character education programs in its curriculum and school culture. The role of Muhammadiyah in providing an educational model needs to be studied further, regarding how far its interpretation goes in overcoming changes in character from an early age. Therefore, the educational model must be able to hone a series of skills and potential of students in many aspects.

This research uses the research object at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Primary School as a model to study school culture in overcoming character shifts. The study of the values education model at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Elementary School is guided by school culture which can indeed be used as a reference in character education. This is in line with the school director who said that the school culture at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Elementary School was designed to overcome the increasingly worrying shift in the character of early childhood. The words of the school director also appear to be truly applied in the relevant agencies regarding school culture at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Elementary School which operates with full wisdom in instilling character values. Therefore, the achievements of the profile of school graduates are appropriate in forming a generation based on commendable morals.

An important implication is that the school's formal and informal environments should support the same educational aims. If a school teaches honesty but tolerates unfairness in everyday interactions, students may receive contradictory messages. Conversely, when rules are explained clearly and adults apply them consistently, the institution can help students see values as practical standards for action. This does not require every student to respond identically or develop at the same pace. Children differ in experience, confidence, and support outside school; educators therefore need to combine consistent expectations with patient guidance and opportunities to practise again.

The model also suggests that character education should be evaluated as an ongoing process. Attendance at a program or completion of an activity is not, by itself, sufficient evidence that a student has internalized a value. Schools may strengthen their understanding by observing patterns over time, gathering reflections from teachers and students, and communicating with families about the behaviors being encouraged. Such evaluation can focus on concrete, age-appropriate indicators for example, whether students increasingly take turns, care for shared materials, complete agreed responsibilities, or interact respectfully. These examples are suggestions for future evaluation, not outcomes measured by the present study.

Family and community cooperation can further support continuity between school expectations and students' lives beyond the classroom. The article describes Muhammadiyah

school culture as involving teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. In practice, collaboration may include communicating the purpose of programs to families, inviting appropriate participation in school activities, and sharing consistent language about responsibility and respect. This partnership should remain supportive rather than punitive the goal is to help children understand and practise positive conduct in multiple settings. When families understand why a routine or activity matters, they may be better positioned to reinforce its educational message at home.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focuses on one primary school, so the described model reflects a particular institutional and cultural context. Other Muhammadiyah schools may have different resources, student needs, staffing arrangements, or program designs. Second, the participant group described in the method consists of school leadership and staff, which means the account may emphasize institutional intentions more than students' own experiences. Third, the article does not present longitudinal evidence or a systematic measurement of changes in student behavior. Accordingly, statements about the programs' benefits should be read as interpretations of their educational potential and the school's stated aims, rather than as experimentally established causal effects. Future studies could include students and parents, compare more than one school, and document implementation over time.

A series of superior programs which serve as models for character education in schools include: (1) Strengthening mandatory daily worship and sunnah; (2) Hizbul Wathan; (3) Holy site; (4) Leadership Training; (5) Market Day. The program to strengthen mandatory daily worship and the Sunnah helps students to understand and deepen religious values, so that they are able to form strong and responsible characters. Furthermore, the Hizbul Wathan program is able to develop leadership, teamwork and a sense of discipline. The Tapak Suci program improves physical health, self-confidence and self-defense skills. Furthermore, the leadership training program hones leadership skills that are useful in everyday life and the future. Finally, in the market day program, students can learn about financial management, creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit.

Based on the following picture, the character education model found in school culture at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Primary School, which consists of a series of programs, is used as study material in examining the usefulness of Muhammadiyah school culture in overcoming changes in student character. So the interpretation of the character values education model found at the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Elementary School combines strengthening religious values, leadership development, involvement in physical activities, and developing business skills, with the aim of forming strong character, good morals, and readiness. students in facing future challenges.



Figure 1. Benefits of the character education model

CONCLUSION

The ideal condition of early childhood students' character should be able to become a model of moral strength in facing students' future readiness. However, the fact is that there are now many shifts in values among students from an early age, which actually has an impact on delinquency in adolescence. For this reason, an appropriate character education model is needed among students to overcome the problem of character shifts. One alternative that exists is in Muhammadiyah's charitable efforts in the field of education. An educational model in which students' character is constructed through the internalization of character values in school cultural programs. A series of programs that are able to provide benefits to students revitalize their character values.

As the object of this research highlights Muhammadiyah school culture, precisely the Muhammadiyah Lemahdadi Yogyakarta Flagship Elementary School is able to provide a model of character education. The program to strengthen mandatory daily worship and the Sunnah helps students to understand and deepen religious values, so that they are able to form strong and responsible characters. Furthermore, the Hizbul Wathan program is able to develop leadership, teamwork and a sense of discipline. The Tapak Suci program improves physical health, self-confidence and self-defense skills. Furthermore, the leadership training program hones leadership skills that are useful in everyday life and the future. Finally, in the market day program, students can learn about financial management, creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit. The benefits of school culture provide an interpretation of the integration of strengthening religious values, leadership development, involvement in physical activities, and developing business skills, with the aim of forming strong character, good morals, and students' readiness to face future challenges. So that character values increase and prevent delinquency in adolescence. This education model is a formulation both theoretically and practically for Muhammadiyah education units to answer alternative models of character education in each agency.

For implementation, the model can be understood as a cycle: the school identifies the values it wants to cultivate, embeds them in regular and extracurricular activities, provides adult examples and guidance, and reflects on whether students have opportunities to practise the values meaningfully. Consistency across programs is central to this cycle. Religious activities, scouting, martial arts, leadership training, and Market Day should not operate as isolated events; their

educational purposes can be connected through shared expectations about honesty, discipline, cooperation, respect, and responsibility. Schools adapting the model should consider their own context and ensure that activities remain age-appropriate, inclusive, and adequately supervised. The present study offers a descriptive reference for planning such integration, while further empirical research is needed to assess its outcomes.

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