

## Implementation of Character Building Training in the Framework of Cultivating a Moderate Attitude of Religion in Students

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### Abstract

This study examines the implementation of Character Building Training (PPK) and the content delivered. This qualitative study involved 60 students, and eight lecturers selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques, with data collection considered sufficient if it has reached saturation point. Data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews from June to September 2022. Data analysis was carried out manually using the Discovering Cultural Themes model, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The study results indicate that PPK is implemented through a PPK campaign cycle, capacity building, and institutionalization with an approach including mentoring, learning, guidance, and support. The content includes attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and integrative moderate insights, strengthening tolerant, open, critical, caring, and creative behavior, respecting differences, and behaving politely. The CBT program has specifically strengthened the religious character and love of the homeland, with the most significant improvements in this area. The implications and contributions of this study highlight the importance of continuous character education among youth as a tool to strengthen religious moderation.

### Keywords

Character; Islamic University; Religious Moderation; Youth

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As an Islamic college, most students at IAIN Palopo have a strong tendency towards religious values. This can be seen in their daily activities, such as participation in campus religious activities and Islamic discussions. The massive use of social media among IAIN Palopo students also influences the formation of their character. Social media is often a means to express views related to religious and social issues. Character generally relates to a person's habits, attitudes, and morality (Fathoni, 2024; Susilawati et al., 2022). The sustainability and progress of a nation's civilization are greatly influenced by its people's moral character and performance. Moral character includes honesty, tolerance, mutual respect, and positive attitudes. Meanwhile, performance character includes all aspects of an individual's identity, including ways of thinking, attitudes, and skills that are internalized and become individual habits in carrying out tasks or work. In Indonesia, deviant behavior is still a crucial issue that needs to be addressed, especially among the young millennial generation through education. (Zulela et al., 2022).



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The focus of this issue is for the younger generation to have characters based on the moral and ethical values that apply in society. (Santika, 2020)The stages required to achieve these goals include instilling knowledge, strengthening emotions, and rationalizing actions, ultimately shaping a person's character (Munawwaroh, 2019).

A survey conducted by the Center for Research and Development of Religious and Religious Education in Indonesia showed that the Student Character Index (IKPD) at the secondary education level in 2019 reached 70.70. This value is a combination of 58 indicators and 22 aspects or components grouped into dimensions of religiosity, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity from 34 provinces in Indonesia. When viewed from the overall score, the IKPD in Indonesia is included in the "high" category, although it has not yet reached the "very high" category (Puslitbang, 2021). The strengthening of this index is supported by dimensions such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity (Azzahra et al., 2023; Harahap, 2022; Saptadi et al., 2023). However, Indonesia still faces many cases, such as brawls between students, free association, drug abuse, and bullying cases.

The Character Building Training (CBT) model at IAIN Palopo aims to strengthen religious moderation among students of Islamic universities by combining a character learning approach based on local and religious values. This program is designed to shape the character of students who are religious, disciplined, polite, care about the environment, and love their homeland, which is expected to support the integration of knowledge and improve the quality of student character as a whole. At IAIN Palopo, Character Building Training (CBT) is the main strategy for developing student character, focusing on strengthening religious moderation. This program combines character training with relevant local and religious values and includes activities that support the formation of positive attitudes and social awareness. Students will be better prepared to face social challenges and contribute constructively to society through this approach.

Indonesia faces major challenges in building the character of its young generation, including in higher education, with the emergence of issues such as deviant behavior. (Hisyam & MM, 2021), lack of honesty (Abdi, 2020; Anam & Sakiyati, 2019), and decreased academic responsibility (Utami et al., 2020; Wiantisa et al., 2022) This problem impacts the declining quality of social interactions in the campus environment. It increases conflict, which indicates the need for effective and relevant character education policies to shape student character by society's moral and ethical values .

The major theory in this study focuses on character formation, which combines aspects of morality and individual performance, as well as the role of education in forming strong and commendable characters. (Lickona, 2012). This theory emphasizes the importance of integrating religious, social, and cultural values in character formation and the positive impact of good character on religious moderation and social success. Previous research shows that character education in higher education, such as in IAIN and other PTKINs, improves student character through various methods such as character training, habituation, and implementing a code of ethics. For example, encouraging interfaith dialogue, improving multicultural education, interfaith cooperation, the active role of religious figures in promoting religious moderation, and increasing individual awareness (Wiguna & Andari, 2023). Moderate religious education in madrasas, supported by the role of the principal as an agent of change, is effective in forming individuals who are faithful, pious, tolerant, and able to live in harmony and be civilized in society. (Dermawan et al., 2024). Nurul Jadid plays a strategic role in instilling the values of religious moderation through training that teaches tolerance, respect for differences, and social harmony, as well as being an example in building an inclusive and stable Indonesian society. (Hasan & Abidin, 2024).

Initial observations at IAIN Palopo show that the Character Building Training (CBT) program has been implemented well and received a positive student response. Initial data shows increased students' religious attitudes, discipline, and social awareness. However, a more in-depth evaluation of its impact on religious moderation and student character is still needed. This study offers novelty by focusing on

an in-depth evaluation of how the Character Building Training Model at IAIN Palopo influences religious moderation among students and the integration of local and religious values in character training. This provides new insights into the effectiveness of the CBT program in holistically improving student character and religious moderation. The gap in this study lies in the lack of in-depth analysis of the specific impact of the Character Building Training Model on student character at IAIN Palopo, as well as how this program can effectively address character issues that arise among students. Previous studies have not fully explained the relationship between CBT policies and measurable character changes. This study aims to examine the implementation of Character Building Training and its impact on student character at IAIN Palopo, focusing on strengthening religious moderation.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, and the place or locus of research is PTKIN IAIN Palopo. Data sources are determined using purposive sampling based on certain criteria (inclusive criteria) closely related to characteristics relevant to the research objectives. This study will involve 60 students and eight lecturers as informants. Researchers will interview lecturers and observe student behavior using observation sheets based on character indicators. Data is collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation from June to September 2022 in Palopo. Participant observation will be carried out using an observation guide to record activities. Field documentation will be used to document events related to the implementation of CBT to ensure the validity of observations. Data analysis will be carried out manually using the Discovering Cultural Themes model to understand phenomena different from previous analyses. This involves collecting themes, cultural focuses, values, and symbols in each domain. Cultural and social analysis is considered the most appropriate for evaluation and control because understanding the national community is an important component of the entire collaboration process. Data analysis will be carried out through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Results*

The Character Building Training (CBT) program implemented at PTKIN IAIN Palopo does not only focus on the formation of main characters, such as religiosity, discipline, politeness, environmental awareness, and love for the homeland. This program also emphasizes the integration of local wisdom values that are an inseparable part of the cultural identity of the Indonesian people. Integrating these local values provides an additional dimension that enriches the formation of students' characters.

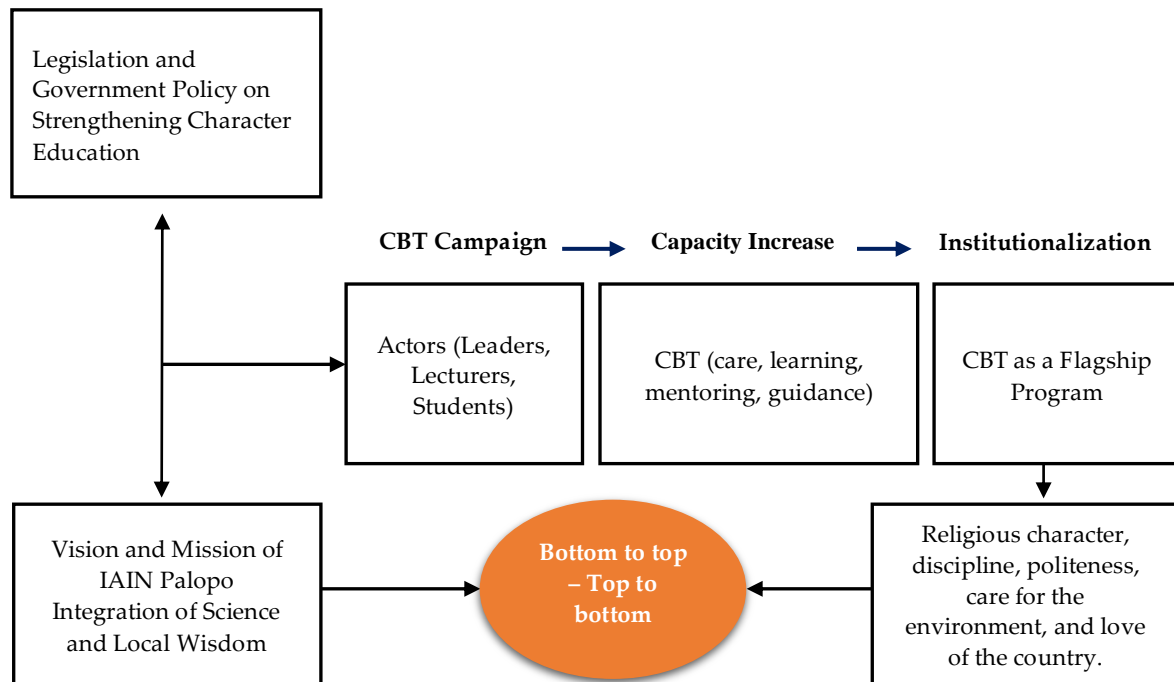


Figure 1. CBT Model Flow in Character Formation

Figure 1 shows how the CBT flow is formed, starting from various government policies to strengthen character. The first process begins with the central government's policy to mainstream character education, which can factually strengthen students' character. (Gunawan & Gunawan, 2019; Purwanto et al., 2021) This policy became the vision of an institution that wanted to combine science and local wisdom. In several studies, local wisdom is a noble value that strengthens the character of students and society in general. (Pajarianto, 2018, 2022a, 2022b; Pajarianto et al., 2022; Pajarianto & Junaidi, 2020; Pajarianto & Muhaemin, 2020) This character contains moderate values that characterize implementing Islamic values in Indonesia. In the second stage, actors, including leaders, lecturers, and students, are involved in implementing the socialization and mainstreaming of CBT. The involvement of all parties in character education is very important to ensure the sustainability and success of this program as the main pillar of character learning in higher education. (Pradana et al., 2020) The third stage is capacity building, carried out through care, learning, mentoring, and guidance, which is very much needed to strengthen students' character. (Gayatri, 2020; Sulastra & Handayani, 2020). In the fourth stage, CBT was institutionalized as one of the flagship programs of IAIN Palopo.

"Regarding the Character Building Training (CBT) Program, this is a policy at PTKIN that we consider useful for student character building. This activity is mandatory for students, and this policy is still in effect today. However, there are modifications to the form of training to form an Islamic character for students. The purpose of this CBT program is for students to have an Islamic character; we hope that students are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually intelligent (AP et al., interview; 2022).

In the fifth stage, an evaluation is carried out on the inculturation of student characters expected to grow and strengthen in PKB activities, including religion, discipline, politeness, caring for the environment, and love for the homeland. This character distinguishes IAIN Palopo from other universities with the same programs and levels of education. The PKB implementation process is carried out in a bottom-up and top-down manner that complements each other. Laws and regulations have centrally supported the PKB program, but technically, it still pays attention to the socio-religious characteristics of each environment. Technically, the Ministry of Religion has released the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 7272 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Religious Moderation in Islamic Education. (Ministry of Religion, 2019). This is described in the form of

technical policies at the level of Islamic educational institutions. The content of the Character Building Training material is compiled based on the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI). Learning outcomes include attitudes, values, skills, knowledge, and moderate and integrative insights. The content and learning outcomes are presented in Table 1 as follows:

**Table 1.** Learning Outcomes of Character Building Training

No.	Learning outcomes	Information
1.	Attitudes and Values	These attitudes and values are reflected in practicing and implementing the knowledge learned through daily attitudes and behavior, such as being tolerant, open, critical, caring, creative, appreciating differences, and behaving politely and commendably.
2.	Skills	Having skills as an imam of congregational prayers, leading congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an fluently and smoothly, taking care of corpses, reading and understanding yellow books, and leading worship practices in daily life. In addition to being skilled in the field of religion, I am skilled in the fields of language, art, and social society.
3.	Knowledge	Mastering religious knowledge and (Islamic) science according to the specified competencies, such as mastery and understanding of the science of tajwid, fiqh, tafsir, aqidah, morals, tasawuf, and so on.
4.	Moderate and Integrative Insight	Having moderate religious insight and behavior (i.e., tolerant, non-violent, open or local insight, and national commitment) and having competence in applying knowledge, skills, and abilities in an integral (integrated) manner.

Source: Ma'had al-Jami's IAIN Palopo Curriculum 2021

Table 1 shows that the learning outcomes of the Character Building Training (CBT) program are very much in line with important 21st-century competencies, such as tolerance, openness, critical thinking, caring attitude, creativity, respect for diversity, and polite behavior, as stated by Zubaidah (2018). These achievements align with the five main domains of 21st-century skills: digital literacy, critical thinking, effective communication, productivity, and spiritual and moral values. In addition, 21st-century skills and attitudes are categorized into ways of thinking (knowledge, critical thinking, and creativity), ways of learning (literacy and soft skills), and ways of collaborating (personal, social, and civic responsibility). These learning outcomes also strengthen integrative insights into religious moderation.

Thus, CBT plays an important role in higher education institutions in Indonesia, as it is an integral part of character education, significantly impacting the nation's future. While this program, guided by central government policy and tailored to the context of each university, is a positive development, much work still needs to be done to ensure its continued success. A more comprehensive policy, incorporating local wisdom, is needed to address the complex challenges of the modern era, from threats to national integrity and prospects to global competition. Such a policy would provide a framework for more concrete steps to ensure that character education is effective and sustainable.

Character education is crucial in forming a superior young generation in the modern era of global changes and challenges. The Character Building Training (CBT) program in universities is one of the efforts to strengthen student character values. In this narrative, we will review the impact of the CBT program on students, explore the results of observations, and assess the integration of local wisdom values applied in this program. The CBT program aims to shape students' character through activities involving religious aspects, politeness, discipline, concern for the environment, and love for the homeland. In higher education, this program is expected to significantly impact student behavior and attitudes, creating individuals who excel academically, have strong characters, and are integrated with national values. The CBT program at PTKIN IAIN Palopo aims to shape students' character by

emphasizing five main aspects: religiosity, politeness, discipline, concern for the environment, and love for the homeland. Each of these aspects has a specific purpose in character formation, and the activities carried out in the CBT program are directed at strengthening each character.

The Character Building Training (CBT) program at PTKIN IAIN Palopo has had a significant impact on the development of student character. The results of observations show positive changes in various aspects of student character, as reflected in the data in Graph 1. The following is a detailed analysis of the impact of the CBT program on student character.

a. Religiosity

One of the main focuses of the CBT program is to increase student religiosity. Based on the data obtained, it can be seen that most students show a high level of religiosity; namely, 85% are in the high category, and 15% are in the moderate category. This achievement shows the program's success in encouraging students to be more active in religious activities. The CBT program encourages students to engage in routine religious activities such as congregational prayer, an inseparable part of forming religious character. In addition, students are encouraged to read the Quran regularly and practice religious teachings daily. Student involvement in these religious activities shows that CBT effectively strengthens religious values and forms positive spiritual habits.

b. Discipline

Discipline is one of the areas that also receives special attention in the CBT program. Data shows that 83% of students are in the high discipline category, significantly increasing compliance with time and schedules. Only 4% of students show low discipline, which significantly increases discipline. The CBT program has successfully taught students the importance of time and responsibility, reflected in increased attendance and compliance with activity schedules. Students who may have previously had problems with discipline are now showing positive progress, which confirms the program's effectiveness in forming good discipline habits.

c. Politeness

Regarding politeness, 62% of students showed a high level of politeness, while 30% were in the moderate category. The improvement in politeness can be seen in the students' more polite behavior in daily interactions and the habit of dressing neatly. The CBT program has succeeded in instilling politeness values in communicating and acting that reflect progress in ethics and manners. Students are now more aware of the importance of saying hello before speaking, showing respect for others, and maintaining their appearance by dressing neatly and politely. This is a positive result of the CBT program that educates students to respect social norms and ethics.

d. Environmental Care

The environmental awareness aspect also showed encouraging results. As many as 75% of students are in the high category in terms of environmental awareness. This data shows that students are active in maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding environment and implementing good habits such as not littering and participating in clean-up activities. The CBT program teaches students the importance of maintaining cleanliness and caring for the environment as part of their social responsibility. This increase in environmental awareness reflects that students understand and apply the principles of protecting the environment as part of their developing character.

e. Love for the Country

One of the most prominent impacts of the CBT program is the strengthening of the sense of love for the homeland among students. As many as 96% of students are in the high category in terms of love for the homeland, which is reflected in their attitudes towards nationality. Students respect the national flag, actively sing the national anthem, and recognize Pancasila as the foundation of the state. The CBT

program has instilled a sense of pride and love for the homeland and increased students' awareness of the importance of maintaining diversity and tolerance. This shows that the CBT program not only shapes individual character but also strengthens the sense of nationalism and national identity among students.

### **Discussion**

Character education has become a nursery for noble religious and cultural values in Indonesia through the State Islamic Religious College (PTKIN) as an official government institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. Technically, the implementation of character education in organizations within the Ministry of Religion has been strengthened by the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 2 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Strengthening Character Education, which states that PPK in the type of Religious Education through formal channels is implemented at the level of early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, and higher education independently, integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. In the context of this research locus, implementing the vision of IAIN Palopo as a university that integrates local knowledge and wisdom will be needed. The value and norm systems in the society's culture can be optimized to support the continuous strengthening of character education. (Hermino & Arifin, 2020).

Forming student character through an attitude of religious moderation is a strategic step toward creating a tolerant and inclusive generation. (Bahar, 2022; Ballianie et al., 2023; Umah et al., 2022; Zulkhaini & Putra, 2022). Through formal education, extracurricular activities, and support from educational institutions, students can be equipped with a deep understanding of the importance of moderation in religion. Although there are challenges to be faced, collective efforts from all parties will greatly determine the success of this character formation. Thus, it is hoped that students will not only become religious individuals but also be able to appreciate differences and create harmony in society.

If examined, various government policies to implement character-strengthening programs should be carried out across ministries. Policies on character education include Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 7272 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education, and Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 1595 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah at State Islamic Religious Colleges. The context of the birth of this policy is the mandate of Nawa Cita, which is stated in point 8, namely the mental revolution. (Ismail et al., 2020) In addition, graduates of national educational institutions are required to be able to compete in the international world. The implication is that it is urgent for every domestic educational institution, especially universities, to graduate Indonesian human resources whose quality is equal to those abroad. Seeing these internal and external developments, IAIN Palopo, as an Islamic higher education institution, has carried out a transformation, including formulating a vision and mission that can represent the strength of this institution as an organization that maintains Islamic values and local culture and integrates science as a differentiation with other universities. This response was then institutionalized into a CBT program that students must follow.

The results of observations on the character of students who participated in the CBT program showed very positive results. This program increased students' religiosity, discipline, politeness, concern for the environment, and love for the homeland. This success reflects the effectiveness of the CBT program in shaping the character of students who are not only academically superior but also have strong moral and social values. The CBT program has proven to be an effective way to shape students' character and create individuals with integrity and social responsibility. These observations show that character education can produce significant and positive impacts with the right approach.

One of the local wisdom values taught in the CBT program is sipakatau, which is an attitude of

mutual respect. (Astri, 2011). This value is important in Indonesian multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural society. (Acep et al., 2023; Azzahra et al., 2023; Harahap, 2022; SUTALHIS & Novaria, 2023; Wales, 2022). In a society consisting of various cultural and religious backgrounds, mutual respect is the key to maintaining harmony. The CBT program seeks to instill tolerance in students' character by teaching them to appreciate differences and work together in a diverse environment. Through activities that promote these values, students are expected to develop mutual respect and empathy for others.

The second local wisdom value integrated into the CBT program is sipakalebbi, which means treating others well. This value reflects high emotional intelligence, placing humans in a very important position after their relationship with God. In the context of the CBT program, sipakalebbi teaches students to treat others with respect and compassion. This approach not only helps students interact with others but also builds a character that cares and is responsive to the needs of others. By instilling these values, the CBT program seeks to shape individuals who excel in academics and humanitarian aspects.

The third local wisdom value taught in the CBT program is sipakainge, which means reminding each other. This attitude reflects a critical and reflective approach, where students are encouraged to support and remind each other in the learning process. The CBT program facilitates an environment where students can share experiences, provide constructive feedback, and help each other achieve academic and personal goals. By instilling this attitude, students are expected to develop important social skills, such as the ability to work in a team and communicate effectively. (Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022).

The CBT program at PTKIN IAIN Palopo has proven effective in shaping students' character through strengthening aspects of religiosity, discipline, politeness, concern for the environment, and love for the homeland. Integrating local wisdom values, such as sipakatau, sipakalebbi, and sipakainge, adds a cultural dimension to character formation. This program is more relevant and contextual for students who live in a society rich in cultural diversity.

Although the CBT program has shown positive results, several challenges must be overcome. One of them is ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the program in the long term. Efforts need to be made to expand the scope of the CBT program to include other aspects of character education that may not have been fully explored. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen national character education more comprehensively by considering the principles of sustainability and continuity. This includes developing policies that sustainably support the program's implementation and ensuring that the character values taught can be applied in the student's daily lives. Integrating local wisdom values in the CBT program enriches character-building and strengthens students' bonds with local culture. By continuing to develop and improve this program, it is hoped that it will produce a young generation with good character and can appreciate and preserve existing cultural values.

The results of observations on the character of students who participated in the CBT program showed very positive results. This program increased students' religiosity, discipline, politeness, concern for the environment, and love for the homeland. This success reflects the effectiveness of the CBT program in shaping the character of students who are not only academically superior but also have strong moral and social values. The CBT program has proven to be an effective way of shaping student character and creating individuals with integrity and social responsibility. The results of this study align with the results of research, which concluded that the implementation of understanding religious moderation allows students to confidently demonstrate the behavior of tolerance, anti-violence, acceptance of tradition, and national commitment, which are indicators of religious moderation. (Fadhilah et al., 2024). These observations indicate that character education can significantly and positively impact students' lives with the right approach, preparing them to become quality future leaders.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Implementation of Character Building Training in the Framework of Cultivating an Attitude of Religious Moderation in Student at IAIN Palopo is implemented with an implementation cycle including CBT socialization, capacity building, and institutionalization involving leaders, lecturers, and students with a nurturing, learning, mentoring, and guided discovery approach. At the same time, the content includes attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and moderate integrative insights, as well as strengthening tolerant, open, critical, caring, creative behavior, respecting differences, and behaving politely and commendably and Sipakatau: Respecting Each Other, Sipakalebbi: Treating People Well, Sipakainge: Reminding Each Other. CBT has reinforced religious, disciplined, polite, environmentally conscious, and patriotic characters. The greatest and most dominant reinforcement is found in religious and patriotic characters. This study has limitations because it was conducted in a limited locus. The researcher suggests that further research be continued on a broader scale to have complete recommendations for the sustainability of character education, which is very important for a nation.

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