



Internalization of Religious Character Values through Reading and Writing Literacy of the Qur'an in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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The goal of strengthening religious character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah education is often overshadowed by a focus on cognitive and technical skills. Qur'anic literacy, encompassing reading and writing, holds significant potential for internalizing religious values, but studies on this process are limited. This qualitative case study analyzes how Qur'anic literacy helps internalize religious character values in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, focusing on grades IV, V, and VI. Data was collected from teachers, students, and madrasah heads through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings show that Qur'anic literacy goes beyond technical skills and serves as a medium for instilling values like discipline, responsibility, dedication to learning, and respect for the Qur'an. The internalization process is facilitated through teacher role models, habit formation, and value reinforcement integrated into literacy activities. This research suggests practical ways to enhance religious character education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah by optimizing Qur'anic literacy.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious character education is one of the fundamental goals of Islamic education, especially at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level (Fatmasari et al., 2025; Mustafazada, 2024; Najiah & Baharun, 2025). Basic education is seen as a crucial phase in the formation of students' personalities because at this stage basic values begin to be instilled and habituated. In the context of Islamic education, religious character is not only understood as knowledge of religious teachings, but also as religious attitudes, customs, and responsibilities that are reflected in students' daily behavior (Herlina et al., 2023; Nasution et al., 2023; Yusnarti et al., 2023). Therefore, religious education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is required not only to transmit Islamic knowledge, but also to ensure the internalization of religious

values in a sustainable manner (Fahrurrozi & Aziz, 2021; Ma'arif, 2022).

From an educational management perspective, achieving these goals requires systematic planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluation. Effective learning management is an important factor in ensuring that the educational process is not only oriented to cognitive aspects, but also able to integrate affective and psychomotor dimensions in the formation of students' character (Darim, 2020; Habib et al., 2023; Sihan et al., 2024; Winarto et al., 2023). Therefore, the management of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in madrasas needs to be strategically designed to be able to internalize religious values in a structured and sustainable manner.

However, various studies show that the learning practice of Islamic Religious Education in madrasas still faces serious challenges. PAI learning is often oriented towards academic achievement and material mastery, while the affective dimension and character formation have not been fully systematically integrated in the learning process (Hakim & Supriyanto, 2020; Zaini & Hidayah, 2023). This condition shows weaknesses in the managerial aspect of learning, especially in strategy planning, method implementation, and character-based learning evaluation. The implication of this condition is the weak internalization of religious values in students' lives, where religious values often stop at the cognitive level and have not been fully realized in real attitudes and behaviors.

One of the approaches that has great potential in bridging this gap is literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an. At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, Qur'an literacy is generally positioned as a basic learning activity that aims to improve students' technical ability to read and write verses of the Qur'an in accordance with the rules of tajweed and correct writing (Junaedi et al., 2023; Rozi & Paputungan, 2023). A number of studies prove that Qur'an literacy activities contribute positively to improving students' Qur'an reading and writing skills as well as strengthening religious culture in madrasah environments (Suryadi & Rahman, 2021; Rohman et al., 2022).

From the perspective of education management, Qur'an literacy needs to be managed as a strategic program for madrasas, not just a routine learning activity (Fachri et al., 2023; Rozi & Faizin NR, 2023; Rozi & Paputungan, 2023). This includes planning literacy programs that are integrated into the curriculum, organizing resources (teachers, time, and media), implementing contextual and reflective activities, and evaluations that not only measure technical skills, but also the development of students' religious character. With good management, Qur'an literacy can be an effective instrument in supporting the achievement of religious character education goals.

However, literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an actually does not only have a technical dimension, but also a pedagogical dimension and values. In the

perspective of religious literacy, the activity of reading and writing sacred texts is understood as a process that allows students to interact with the values of religious teachings in a more profound way (Munif et al., 2023; Nur Efendi & Muh Ibn Sholeh, 2023; Rozi & Paputungan, 2023). Qur'anic literacy that is managed in a reflective and contextual manner can be an effective means of instilling religious character values, such as discipline, seriousness, religious responsibility, and respect for the Qur'an (Kusnadi & Wahyuni, 2021; Hasanah, 2023). Thus, Qur'an literacy not only serves as a learning routine, but also as a meaningful value education practice.

In the context of character education, the internalization of values is a key process that determines the success of student character formation (Arliman, 2021; Herlina et al., 2023; Rika Widianita, 2023; Rozi, Hasanah, et al., 2025). Internalization of values does not occur instantly, but through stages that include the introduction of values, understanding meaning, habituation, and reinforcement that are carried out consistently in the educational environment (Lickona, 2021; Ma'arif & Rusydi, 2022). From a management perspective, this process requires continuous supervision and evaluation so that the values instilled are truly internalized in the students. At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, the process of internalizing values is greatly influenced by the role of teachers as role models and learning facilitators. Teachers not only deliver material, but also display religious attitudes, guide habituation, and provide value reinforcement through daily interactions with students.

Various studies on religious character education affirm that the success of value internalization is highly dependent on the integration of values in concrete and meaningful learning activities. Character education that is delivered verbally or normatively without direct experience tends to be less effective in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors (Hakim et al., 2021; Nurhayati & Salim, 2023). Therefore, a learning strategy is needed that is managed systematically and allows students to experience and practice religious values in real terms, one of which is through literacy activities to read and write the Qur'an which is integrated with the purpose of character formation.

A number of previous studies have examined Qur'an literacy in madrasas, but most of these studies still focus on improving students' technical ability to read and write the Qur'an. On the other hand, studies on religious character education highlight more aspects of habituation and example in general without specifically associating it with the practice of Qur'an literacy as a pedagogical instrument (Hakim & Supriyanto, 2020; Zaini & Hidayah, 2023). In addition, the management aspect in managing Qur'an literacy as a character education program has also not received much attention. Studies that integrate literacy of reading and writing the Qur'an with the process of internalizing the value of

religious character in a deep and systematic manner are still relatively limited, especially at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

The limitations of previous research show that there is a research gap that needs to be filled. A study is needed that not only describes the implementation of Qur'anic literacy, but also analyzes how the literacy practice is managed and plays a role in the process of internalizing the values of students' religious character. The qualitative approach is seen as relevant to explore the process, experience, and meaning of teachers and students towards Qur'an reading and writing literacy in the context of religious character formation (Creswell & Poth, 2021). Through this approach, Qur'an literacy can be understood as a pedagogical practice that is loaded with value and meaning, as well as part of the education management system in madrasahs

This research was carried out at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Raudhatul Ulum, Probolinggo Regency with a focus on students in grades IV, V, and VI. The choice of focus on the upper class of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is based on the consideration that at this stage students have basic ability to read and write the Qur'an and begin to show the development of more complex religious attitudes and responsibilities. Thus, the process of internalizing the value of religious character through Qur'an literacy can be observed and analyzed more comprehensively, including from the aspect of its management in the madrasah education system.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the process of internalizing religious character values through literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, as well as examining how these literacy activities are managed within the educational system. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education studies, especially related to the integration of Qur'an literacy, religious character education, and educational management, as well as provide practical implications for teachers and madrasahs in designing Qur'anic literacy practices that are more meaningful, systematic, and oriented towards the formation of students' character.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literacy of Reading and Writing the Qur'an in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Education

Literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an is a fundamental part of Islamic education at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. Qur'an literacy is not only interpreted as the technical ability to read and write verses of the Qur'an according to the rules of tajweed and Arabic writing, but also as a pedagogical process that shapes students' religious habits, attitudes, and awareness (Kusnadi

& Wahyuni, 2021; Hasanah, 2023). In the context of Islamic basic education, Qur'an literacy serves as an initial entrance for students to get to know the values of Islamic teachings more deeply.

Several studies show that the practice of Qur'an literacy in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is generally carried out through routine activities of reading the Qur'an, writing short verses, and habituating manners to the Qur'an mushaf. This practice has proven to be effective in improving students' Qur'an reading and writing skills, as well as building a religious atmosphere in the madrasah environment (Suryadi & Rahman, 2021; Rohman et al., 2022). However, the effectiveness of Qur'an literacy as a means of character formation depends on how these activities are integrated with the purpose of value education, not just made into an administrative routine.

In the perspective of contemporary literacy, religious literacy is understood as the ability of individuals to understand, interpret, and internalize religious messages in daily life. Qur'anic literacy, thus, does not stop at cognitive and psychomotor aspects, but includes affective and spiritual dimensions that contribute to the formation of students' religious character (Ma'arif, 2022; Nurhayati & Salim, 2023).

The Concept of Religious Character in Islamic Education

Religious character is one of the main dimensions in Islamic character education. Religious character refers to individual attitudes and behaviors that reflect obedience to religious teachings, awareness of worship, and religious responsibility embodied in daily life (Fahrurrozi & Aziz, 2021). At the elementary education level, religious character is the foundation for the formation of students' personality as a whole.

Religious character education is not only oriented to knowledge of religious values, but to habituation of attitudes and behaviors consistent with those values. Relevant religious character values developed at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah include worship discipline, religious responsibility, seriousness in religious learning, honesty, and respect for the Qur'an and Islamic teachings (Hakim et al., 2021; Zaini & Hidayah, 2023).

In the context of PAI learning, strengthening religious character often faces challenges due to the dominance of cognitive and evaluative approaches. Several studies confirm that without contextual integration of values in learning activities, character education tends to be normative and has less impact on changing students' attitudes (Hakim & Supriyanto, 2020; Hasanah, 2023). Therefore, a learning strategy is needed that allows students to experience, practice, and reflect on religious values firsthand.

The Process of Internalizing Values in Learning

Value internalization is a process of instilling value that takes place gradually and continuously until the value becomes part of an individual's attitude and behavior. In education, value internalization includes the stages of recognizing values, understanding meaning, habituation, and reinforcement that are carried out consistently in the learning environment (Lickona, 2021; Ma'arif & Rusydi, 2022).

At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, the process of internalizing values is greatly influenced by the role of teachers and the school environment. Teachers not only function as material presenters, but also as role models that show the implementation of religious values in daily attitudes and actions. Teacher example, habituation of religious activities, and reinforcement through advice and reflection are key factors for the success of internalizing students' religious character values (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Nurhayati & Salim, 2023).

In Qur'an-literacy-based learning, the internalization of values can occur when the activity of reading and writing the Qur'an is directed not only to technical accuracy, but also to the meaning of the values contained in it. This process allows students to understand the relationship between literacy activities and their religious responsibilities, so that religious values are not only understood, but also lived and practiced.

Qur'an Literacy as a Means of Internalizing Religious Character

The integration of reading and writing literacy of the Qur'an with religious character education is a relevant pedagogical approach in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Qur'an literacy provides a learning space rich in values, while allowing for the habituation and reflection of religious values in a contextual manner. Several studies have shown that Qur'anic literacy activities that are managed in a targeted manner can strengthen students' discipline, responsibility, and religious awareness (Kusnadi & Wahyuni, 2021; Rohman et al., 2022).

Through the practice of Qur'an literacy, students not only learn to read and write verses of the Qur'an, but are also accustomed to be solemn, responsible for religious duties, and respect the Qur'an as a source of Islamic teachings. Thus, Qur'an literacy plays a role as an effective pedagogical instrument in the process of internalizing the value of religious character, especially in basic Islamic education.

This theoretical framework is the basis of analysis in the research to understand how the practice of reading and writing the Qur'an literacy contributes to the process of internalizing the value of religious character in

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, both from the perspective of teachers and students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the aim of deeply understanding the process of internalizing religious character values through literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on revealing the processes, meanings, and experiences of research subjects in a natural context, rather than on measuring the relationship between variables quantitatively. With this approach, literacy of reading and writing the Qur'an is understood as a pedagogical practice that is full of value and meaning in the formation of students' religious character.

The research design used was an instrumental case study. This design was chosen because the research seeks to explore in depth a certain phenomenon, namely the internalization of the value of religious character through the practice of Qur'anic literacy, by making case units as a means to understand a broader phenomenon. Instrumental case studies allow researchers to examine the practice of Qur'an literacy in a contextual and comprehensive manner, so that a complete understanding of the process of internalizing values in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah environment can be obtained.

The research was carried out at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Raudhatul Ulum which is located in Sumber Katimoho Village, Krejengan District, Probolinggo Regency. The focus of the research is directed at students in grades IV, V, and VI with the consideration that at the upper grade level of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, students have basic skills to read and write the Qur'an and begin to show the development of more complex religious attitudes and responsibilities. Thus, the process of internalizing the value of religious character through Qur'an literacy can be observed more clearly and deeply.

The research subjects were determined purposively by considering direct involvement in the implementation of literacy reading and writing the Qur'an. The main informants of the study include Islamic Religious Education teachers and homeroom teachers who are involved in learning and habituating Qur'an literacy. In addition, students in grades IV, V, and VI were selected as supporting informants to explore their experiences and meanings of Qur'an literacy activities. The head of the madrasah is also involved as an additional informant to obtain an overview of policies and institutional support for the

implementation of Qur'an literacy and the strengthening of religious character in madrasas.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore the understanding, experience, and views of teachers and students related to the implementation of reading and writing literacy of the Qur'an as well as the process of internalizing religious character values. Participatory observation was carried out to directly observe the practice of Qur'an literacy, teacher-student interaction, and student behavior that reflects the value of religious character in learning and habituation activities. The documentation study was carried out by examining various supporting documents, such as the schedule of literacy activities, learning tools, students' Qur'an textbooks, and madrasah rules, in order to strengthen and complement the data from interviews and observations.

Data analysis was carried out thematically with an inductive approach. The analysis process begins with data reduction, which is sorting and simplifying data that is relevant to the focus of the research. Next, the data is encoded to identify initial themes that emerge from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. These themes are then categorized and interpreted to find patterns, relationships, and meanings related to the process of internalizing the value of religious character through literacy in reading and writing the Qur'an. Analysis is carried out repeatedly and reflectively until a deep and consistent understanding of the phenomenon being studied is obtained.

The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data obtained from teachers, students, and madrasah heads, while technical triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checks are carried out by confirming provisional findings to the main informant to ensure the compatibility between the results of the researcher's interpretation and the experience of the research subject. With these steps, the research data is expected to have an adequate level of credibility and trust.

Through these approaches, designs, and research procedures, this study is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of how reading and writing literacy of the Qur'an plays a role in the process of internalizing the value of religious character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Literacy Practice of Reading and Writing the Qur'an at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

The results of the study show that literacy of reading and writing the Qur'an at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Raudhatul Ulum is carried out regularly and integrated with Islamic Religious Education learning activities and daily habits of madrasahs. Qur'an reading literacy activities are generally carried out before learning begins, while Qur'an writing literacy is carried out through the assignment of copying short verses, hijaiyah writing exercises, and strengthening the rules of Qur'an writing. This literacy practice does not stand as an additional activity alone, but becomes part of a religious learning culture that is built consistently.

Teachers view reading and writing literacy of the Qur'an as an important foundation in PAI learning. However, the results of observations and interviews show that the practice of literacy is not only directed at the achievement of technical skills, but is also used as a means of habituating religious attitudes. Teachers consciously insert values such as order, patience, and seriousness in every literacy implementation. For example, students are accustomed to maintaining manners towards the Qur'an, reading with a solemn attitude, and completing the task of writing the Qur'an responsibly.

These findings show that Qur'an literacy is practiced as a pedagogical activity that has a value dimension. Literacy is not interpreted narrowly as literacy skills, but as a learning space that allows the habituation of religious values. This is in line with the view of religious literacy which places the activity of reading and writing sacred texts as a means of forming students' religious awareness and attitudes.

Internalized Values of Religious Character

The results of the study identified a number of religious character values that were internalized through the practice of reading and writing Qur'an literacy. The most prominent values are discipline, religious responsibility, earnestness in religious learning, and respect for the Qur'an. The value of discipline can be seen from the habits of students participating in literacy activities in an orderly and timely manner. The teacher emphasized that consistency of time and rules in literacy activities is an effective means of training student discipline in a religious context.

The value of religious responsibility is reflected in the students' awareness to complete the task of reading and writing the Qur'an without coercion. Some students show initiative to improve their reading and writing when they find mistakes, which indicates an internal awareness of religious obligations. In addition, the attitude of respect for the Qur'an can be seen in the way students treat mushaf, such as maintaining cleanliness, not placing the Qur'an carelessly, and reading with a polite attitude.

These values do not appear instantly, but through a repetitive habituation process. The teacher emphasized that the internalization of religious character values takes time and consistency, and must be supported by a conducive learning environment. These findings reinforce the view that religious character is formed through direct experience and habituation, not simply through verbal delivery of values.

Teachers' Strategies in the Process of Internalizing Values

Teacher strategies play a key role in the process of internalizing the value of religious character through Qur'anic literacy. The results of the study showed that teachers used several main strategies, namely example, habituation, and value reinforcement. The example of teachers can be seen from the attitude of teachers in reading the Qur'an with tartil, showing seriousness, and maintaining manners towards the Qur'an. This attitude indirectly becomes a model for students in imitating religious behavior.

Habituation is carried out through the implementation of Qur'an literacy in a consistent and structured manner. The teacher not only directs students to read and write, but also guides them to understand the importance of these activities in religious life. Strengthening grades is carried out through brief advice, reflection, and appreciation for students' positive behavior. Teachers give praise or recognition to students who show discipline and responsibility in literacy activities, so that students are motivated to maintain these behaviors.

This strategy shows that the internalization of religious character values takes place through a holistic pedagogical approach. Teachers do not separate skill learning and value learning, but integrate them in a unified learning practice. These findings confirm the importance of the role of teachers as agents of internalizing values in Islamic education.

Students' Experience and Meaning of Qur'an Literacy

The results of interviews with students show that they interpret literacy activities of reading and writing the Qur'an not only as a school assignment, but

also as part of religious obligations. Some students stated that literacy activities made them more accustomed to reading the Qur'an and felt responsible for improving their reading and writing. This meaning shows that religious values are beginning to be internalized at the level of student consciousness.

Students also revealed that the teacher's example and religious atmosphere in the classroom influenced their attitude towards Qur'an literacy. When teachers show seriousness and provide explanations about the meaning of literacy activities, students feel more motivated to take the activity seriously. This shows that students' interpretation of Qur'an literacy is influenced by the pedagogical interaction they experience.

The results of the study show that the main supporting factors for the process of internalizing religious character values through Qur'an literacy include teacher commitment, madrasah religious culture, and school policy support. Teachers' consistency in implementing Qur'an literacy and providing value reinforcement is a key factor in the success of value internalization. In addition, the madrasah environment that supports religious practices also strengthens the process of habituating values.

On the other hand, there are several inhibiting factors that affect the process of internalizing values. The difference in reading and writing ability of the Qur'an between students is a challenge for teachers in managing literacy activities. Limited learning time is also an obstacle in providing optimal assistance to all students. Nevertheless, teachers strive to overcome these obstacles through a differentiation approach and gradual coaching.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that literacy of reading and writing the Qur'an plays a significant role as a means of internalizing the value of religious character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. Qur'an literacy not only functions as a technical learning activity, but also as a pedagogical practice that allows for habituation, example, and the strengthening of religious values in a sustainable manner. These results are in line with the theory of internalization of values that emphasizes the importance of direct experience, habituation, and reinforcement in the process of character formation (Lickona, 2021; Ma'arif & Rusydi, 2022). Thus, the practice of Qur'an literacy that is carried out regularly and in a targeted manner has been proven to be able to encourage students to not only understand religious teachings cognitively, but also to implement them in daily behavior.

When compared to previous research, these findings strengthen the results of studies that state that Qur'an literacy contributes to improving literacy skills and the formation of religious culture in madrassas (Suryadi & Rahman, 2021; Rohman et al., 2022). However, this study shows a deeper development, namely Qur'an literacy not only has an impact on the skill aspect, but also functions as a medium for systematically internalizing religious character values. This is different from the findings of Hakim & Supriyanto (2020) and Zaini & Hidayah (2023) which highlight that PAI learning tends to still be oriented towards cognitive aspects. This research actually shows that when Qur'an literacy is managed contextually and reflectively, the gap between cognitive and affective aspects can be minimized (Rozi & Papatungan, 2023).

Furthermore, the results of this study reinforce the view that religious character education will be more effective when these values are integrated into concrete and meaningful learning activities (Hakim et al., 2021; Nurhayati & Salim, 2023). Qur'an literacy provides an authentic context that allows students to experience firsthand values such as discipline, responsibility, seriousness, and respect for the Qur'an. Compared to learning approaches that are verbal or normative, this literacy practice provides a real experience that accelerates the process of internalizing values. Thus, these findings confirm that experiential learning strategies have higher effectiveness in shaping students' religious character at the primary education level.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the development of the concept of Qur'an literacy as an integrative value education practice between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Qur'an literacy is no longer understood narrowly as a technical skill of reading and writing, but as a pedagogical instrument that has a dimension of value and character. In addition, this research also enriches the study of Islamic education by showing that the internalization of religious values can be optimized through the management of learning activities that are contextual and oriented to students' learning experiences. Thus, this study expands the conceptual framework regarding the integration of religious literacy and character education in the context of madrasahs.

Practically, the findings of this study imply the need for teachers and madrasahs to design and manage Qur'an literacy activities in a systematic and integrated manner with the goal of forming religious character. Teachers not only play the role of teachers, but also role models and facilitators in the process of internalizing values. Madrasahs need to develop Qur'anic literacy programs that

not only focus on technical achievements, but also include habituation, reflection, and evaluation of students' character development (Mahmud & Ramli, 2025; Rozi, Baharun, et al., 2025). With this approach, Qur'an literacy can contribute optimally to forming students who are not only able to read and write the Qur'an well, but also have a strong, consistent, and responsible religious character in daily life.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the strategic role of Qur'anic literacy in internalizing religious character values in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. Beyond technical skill mastery, it serves as a meaningful pedagogical practice for shaping religious attitudes and behaviors. Through consistent and integrated implementation, values like discipline, religious responsibility, seriousness in religious learning, and respect for the Qur'an are instilled gradually. This process occurs through teacher examples, habituation of literacy activities, and contextual reinforcement in learning interactions. Teachers play a pivotal role in integrating Qur'anic literacy with character formation through effective strategies and a supportive learning environment. Students' experiences of Qur'anic literacy foster religious awareness and responsibility, transforming these activities into a religious obligation rather than a mere academic task. However, challenges like varying student abilities and limited learning time require adaptive strategies. Theoretically, the study confirms that Qur'anic literacy is a crucial tool in religious character education, while practically urging teachers and madrasas to optimize its integration with character development to produce students with strong religious values and responsibility.

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