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Relationship between Competency and Self-Efficacy among Islamic Education Students (IES) during Teaching Practicum

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the relationship between student competency and self-efficacy during teaching practicum. Five-point scale questionnaires employing a quantitative research design were distributed to 93 Bachelor of Islamic Education students (IES), Kulliyyah of Education (KOED) International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), ages 21 to 30, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson correlation by utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V. 27. The study indicates that the majority of IES are competent and have high self-efficacy during teaching practicum. The results also revealed that the IES competency in content knowledge is high, with a mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.70, and competency in instructional strategies is also high, with a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.65. The IIUM IES students' self-efficacy in teaching is high, with a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.73. Their self-efficacies in classroom assessment are high, with a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.65. The study also indicates a positive and relatively strong statistically meaningful relationship between scores of competencies and self-efficacy among IES. This study impacted comprehensive improvements in teacher education programs and teaching quality.

Keywords

Competency, Self-Efficacy, Relationship, Teaching Practicum, Islamic Education Students

1. Introduction

The Education Transformation Development Plan 2013-2025 states that enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through programs and activities elevates the teaching profession. A comprehensive strategy is necessary to execute the program and meet the desired objectives. One area of emphasis is 21st-century instructional characteristics (MOE, 2012).

The Bachelor of Islamic Education program offered by KOED, IIUM, is purposed to produce quality graduates to serve at secondary schools to meet the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) needs. In addition, this program aims to produce graduates with high potential who can serve as role models to students and surrounding communities. Besides developing teaching skills, the program also equips students with research knowledge and skills, preparing them for postgraduate studies or a career as a researcher (IIUM, 2022).

The program structure includes a four-year duration. The first year is the necessary foundation of education and knowledge in teaching. In the second year, students are expected to gradually strengthen the content of Islamic Education and be exposed to the teaching and learning process in the classroom (IIUM, 2022). Students can experience hands-on research, planning, preparing, and teaching in the third year in a mock classroom. Students will also learn to develop, conduct, interpret and report assessments of students' performance. In Practicum I (School Orientation Program), students are placed in the school setting to familiarise them with the school's management, organisation, culture, and classroom teaching. In the fourth year, after completing the remaining courses, students will again be placed in a school (Practicum II) where they will do a teaching practicum supervised by experienced teachers, school administrators, and university supervisors (IIUM, 2022).

Teachers' readiness to confront challenges and fulfil their duties is intertwined with their perceptions of competence, as suggested by various studies (Casey, 2011; Coady et al., 2011). This belief in one's capability, known as self-efficacy, has been extensively studied in the educational context (Bandura, 1993; Rosas & West, 2009). It indirectly impacts the classroom dynamics and the educational landscape by shaping teachers' approaches to their roles and responsibilities. Self-efficacy influences how teachers set goals, motivate students, and handle difficult situations in the classroom. Understanding and fostering teachers' self-efficacy can thus have significant implications for student outcomes and the overall educational environment. For instance, teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to use innovative teaching methods, persevere in the face of challenges, and engage in continuous professional development, all of which contribute to a positive learning environment and improved student achievement.

The report's findings by Jaafar et al. (2016) underscore the perpetual potential for advancement within Islamic Education. While the collective self-efficacy of Islamic Education Teachers (IET) appears commendable across domains such as student engagement, classroom governance, pedagogical strategies, academic mentorship, and interpersonal attributes, further enhancement remains imperative.

The evaluation indicates a notable gap between anticipated and realized performance levels, particularly in scholastic assistance and individual development. Consequently, it becomes incumbent upon Islamic education instructors to acknowledge their deficiencies and proactively embark on remedial measures introspectively. Educators can fortify their professional competencies through a concerted commitment to ongoing self-improvement initiatives, fostering an enriched educational milieu conducive to holistic student growth and academic excellence.

Teaching practicum is essential to the training and development process of students. During this period, students could apply their knowledge and skills in an actual classroom setting (Arifin et al., 2020). This experience allows students to gain confidence in their abilities and develop their teaching skills. It is crucial to assess the self-efficacy of IES during their teaching practicum to understand their confidence in their abilities to teach Islamic education effectively. The self-efficacy of IES refers to their belief in their capabilities to successfully perform the tasks and responsibilities associated with teaching Islamic education. Previous research has shown that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the teaching effectiveness of educators. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to use effective teaching strategies, engage students in learning, and promote positive classroom outcomes (Al-Alwan & Mahasneh, 2014).

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the generally high levels of self-efficacy among IET in areas such as student participation, classroom management, teaching strategies, academic guidance, and personality, there are still areas that could be improved. The study conducted by Jaafar et al. (2016) indicates that while scores in these areas are high, they have not yet reached their optimal level, particularly in academic guidance and personal development. Consequently, IET must actively identify these areas for improvement and take concrete steps to enhance their self-efficacy. This proactive approach can lead to even more effective teaching practices and better outcomes for their students (Jaafar et al., 2016).

Based on a descriptive analysis of research findings, the average mean score of IET's competency in Malaysian secondary schools is 3.44. Thus, initiatives to strengthen instructors' practice of what they teach should be the main emphasis of efforts to increase students' proficiency in Islamic education (Mohd Aderi et al., 2013). Given the length of time this study has been done, it is necessary to identify the most recent information regarding the relationship between student competency and self-efficacy throughout teaching practice.

3. Literature Review

Prior studies have addressed challenges and barriers related to practicums. Jusoh (2011) investigated pre-service teacher issues at Malaysia's University of Sultan Zainal Abidin. The findings demonstrated that pre-service teachers had encountered various difficulties, some of which were student-related personal difficulties. Thus, captivating activities that give students a realistic teaching experience

should be a part of university-level teacher education study programs.

According to a study by Zulfahmi et al. (2020), prospective teachers are expected to advance their professional and pedagogical competencies to fulfill their educator obligations. Prospective teachers are encouraged to actively participate in training and teaching simulations regarding teacher competency to enhance their competence further. According to research by Smith & Greene (2013), pre-service teachers can use technology to enhance their visual interpretation, lesson planning, and execution.

A study by Mohd Aderi et al. (2013) showed the importance of teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession and the high teaching competency to nurture a generation of high-quality students. Attitude and teaching competency of IETs are very helpful in determining students' learning achievement. Meanwhile, Daniels et al. (2013) suggest that creating environments supportive of analytic reflection and collaboration positively influenced teachers' attitudes toward their teaching practice.

Considering that the teacher is directly involved in classroom learning, the role of teachers in raising the quality of instruction positions directly impacts success (Zuhaeriah & Ali, 2020). To raise the calibre of learning, all these positions call for more significant tangible effort and close attention to the demands of the pupils. Islamic religious education teachers work hard to raise the standard of instruction by giving students direction counsel, watching over them, encouraging them, rewarding them, and employing various techniques to keep their students from getting bored in the classroom (Zuhaeriah & Ali, 2020). Student-teacher attitudes towards the teaching profession are positively impacted by teaching practicum. This cannot be accomplished without the assistance and collaboration of field-collaborating instructors.

Faith (*iman*) (Al-Ghazali, 2016; Jaafara et al., 2012) is the terminology that explains the concept of belief in Islam. Faith in the terminology aspect is defined by Al-Ghazali (2016) as permitting some things with heart, confessing verbally or with words, and practicing with actions. An efficacious teacher would attribute student success and failure to the instructional efforts within control. This has been consistently found to be the factor that makes a difference in student learning (Nordin et al., 2017).

The study by Jaafara et al. (2012) found that the role of IETs in educating and molding an individual of academic excellence and character in this world and the hereafter is more challenging than ever. Teachers should carry out this heavy responsibility as *murabba* (educators) by appreciating the concept. Murabbi requires intense mental and physical preparation of teachers. This can only be achieved if IETs have high self-efficacy.

According to Jaafara et al. (2012), the study found that IETs in secondary schools have a very high level of self-efficacy. Nevertheless, not all IETs' (IET) self-efficacy sub-constructs get a high mean score. This is because only a high level of the "academic and personality guidance" sub-construct was attained. The other sub-constructs of the self-efficacy IET also attained a very high degree

of achievement; the sub-construct "pupil involvement" attained the most significant level, followed by the sub-constructs "classroom management" and "teaching strategy."

Based on the discussion above, only a few studies focus on this area. Thus, this study will identify the relationship between competency and self-efficacy among the IES of KOED IIUM during teaching practicum.

4. Methodology

In order to ascertain the relationship between competency and self-efficacy of the IES of KOED IIUM during teaching practice and practicum, this study employs quantitative research methodology. The purpose of the study was to guide the selection of the survey methodology, which involved closed-ended structured questionnaires. According to Creswell (2008), researchers must survey a population sample to characterize that population's attitudes, beliefs, or qualities. This study employed a cross-sectional approach because data is gathered from a sample at a specific point in time (Cooper & Schneider, 2011). Cross-sectional surveys are frequently employed in social science research, according to Hair Jr. et al. (2010).

The participants in this study are students pursuing a Bachelor of Islamic Education at KOED, IIUM, who have fulfilled the prerequisite of completing a school-based teaching practicum as part of their preservice teacher education program. Using the formula presented by Krejcie & Morgan (1970), a random sample of 93 students was chosen from the sampling frame. The sample size was sufficient by utilizing random sampling to provide generalizable estimates and findings within a 10% margin of error at a 95% confidence level.

The questionnaire was adapted from Yüksel (2014), self-efficacy models (Bandura, 1997), and measures (Nordin et al., 2017). It comprises three sections. Section A contains items seeking the respondents' background information. The background characteristics of the respondents were related to their gender, ethnicity, and age. Section B items were associated with perceived teaching competency in content knowledge (five items) and competency in instructional strategies (five items). Section C is related to perceived teaching self-efficacy in teaching (12 items) and Self-Efficacy in Classroom Assessment (5 items). Respondents must indicate their responses to each on a 5-point scale, ranging from (5) Highly Confident to (1) Not Confident at All.

A pilot study with 25 respondents was conducted to measure the questionnaire's validity and reliability (Hassan et al., 2006). For a questionnaire to be valid, its Cronbach's Alpha value should be more than $\alpha > 0.7$. The Cronbach's alpha for the first construct (competency) is 0.921, indicating a high internal consistency level, as shown in Table 1. The second construct (self-efficacy) is 0.950, considered suitable for indicating a high internal consistency level, as shown in Table 2.

To analyze the data, this study used descriptive statistics to see general patterns in the data and summarise the responses in mean scores and standard

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha value for teachers' competency.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.921	0.915	25

Note: Value generated from SPSS.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha value for teachers' self-efficacy.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.950	0.948	25

Note: Value generated from SPSS.

deviations (Creswell, 2008) and Pearson correlation for interpreting correlation coefficients (Taylor's, 1990) guidelines from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. Results and Findings

5.1. Demographic Background of the Respondents

The respondents were 93 students aged between 21 and 30. They comprised 34 males (36.6%) and 59 females (63.4%), suggesting a higher representation of females in the sample (see Table 3).

Most responses (89.2%; n = 83) were from the 21to 25-year-old age group, followed by the 26to 30-year-old age group (10.8%; n = 10). Of the 93, 7.5% (n = 7) are married, and 92.5% are single. All the respondents are citizens of Malaysia and are either Bumiputras or Malay.

Table 3. Sample distribution by gender, age, marital status, nationality and race.

Backgrounds	Variables	N	%
Gender	Male	34	36.6
	Female	59	63.4
Age	21 - 25	83	89.2
	26 - 30	10	10.8
Marital Status	Single	86	92.5
	Married	7	7.5

The Level of IES Competencies and Self–Efficacies during Teaching Practices and Practicum

This section describes the IES competencies and self-efficacies during teaching

practices and practicum for the Islamic Education Program at KOED IIUM. This study adopted a five-point Likert scale as the response category. Considering this, the student's competencies and self-efficacies were measured using the formula by Mustika (2009). In this case, the scores for the competencies and self-efficacies of students are between 1 and 5. With this consideration, the competency of the respondents was categorized in Table 4:

Table 4. The level of ies competencies and self-efficacies during teaching practices and practicum.

Mean Range	Level
1.00 - 2.33	Low
2.34 - 3.66	Moderate
3.67 - 5.00	High

5.2. Competencies in Content Knowledge

Table 5 shows the overall data related to the IIUM IES student's competency in content knowledge. The interpretation is high, with a mean score of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 0.70.

The highest mean score is 4.28(S.D = 0.65) for items "*I collaborate with colleagues to deepen my understanding of my content knowledge*" with high interpretation. Followed by the item "*My content knowledge in Islamic Education subject is always up-to-date and accurate*" with a mean of 3.92 (S.D = 0.63) and "*I can provide an appropriate assessment to identify students*" strengths and weaknesses in Islamic Education subject" with a mean 3.92 (S.D = 0.65), and the interpretation is high.

The lowest item is "*I can incorporate current research and best practices in Islamic Education into my teaching subject area*" with a mean score of 3.71 (S.D = 0.77), and the interpretation is high.

Table 5. Competencies in content knowledge.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
My content knowledge in Islamic Education subject is always up-to-date and accurate.	3.92	0.63	High
I can explain a challenging concept in Islamic Education to students needing help understanding it.	3.76	0.73	High
I can incorporate current research and best practices in Islamic Education into my teaching subject area.	3.71	0.77	High
I can provide an appropriate assessment to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in Islamic Education subject.	3.92	0.74	High

Continued

I collaborate with colleagues to deepen my understanding of my content knowledge.	4.28	0.65	High
Overall	3.92	0.70	

5.3. Competencies in Instructional Strategies

Table 6 shows the overall data on the IIUM IES student's competency in Instructional Strategies. The interpretation is high, with a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

The highest mean score is 4.26 (S.D = 0.61) for items "*I used technology to enhance instruction and engagement variously*". The item follows is "*I always modified my lesson plan to meet the needs of various groups of students*" with a mean of 4.17 (S.D = 0.65) and "*I incorporate student-led learning and discussion into my lessons*" with a mean of 4.17 (S.D = 0.64), and the interpretation is high.

The lowest item is "*I do scaffold instruction to support students struggling with the learning and materials*" with a mean score of 3.88 (S.D = 0.79), and the interpretation is high.

Table 6. Competencies in instructional strategies.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I always ensure that students are engaged and motivated in the learning process.	4.17	0.54	High
I used technology to enhance instruction and engagement variously.	4.26	0.61	High
I do scaffold instruction to support students struggling with the learning and materials.	3.88	0.79	High
I always modified my lesson plan to meet the needs of various groups of students.	4.17	0.65	High
I incorporate student-led learning and discussion into my lessons.	4.17	0.64	High
Overall	4.13	0.65	

The Level of IES Self efficacies during Teaching Practices and Practicum.

5.4. Self-Efficacies in Teaching

Table 7 shows the overall data on the IIUM IES student's self-efficacies in teaching. The interpretation is high, with a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.73.

The highest mean score is 4.42 (S.D = 0.61) for the item "*I am confident in using technology effectively to support student learning in Islamic Education*

subject." The item follows is "*I am confident in collaborating effectively with colleagues and administrators to improve student outcomes*" with a mean of 4.33 (S.D = 0.66) and "*I am confident in creating lesson plans in Islamic Education subjects that engage with my students*" with a mean of 4.19 (S.D = 0.74), and the interpretation is high.

The lowest item is "*I am confident in my ability to handle challenging students*" with a mean score of 3.49 (S.D = 0.90), and the interpretation is moderate.

Table 7. Self-Efficacy in teaching.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I am confident in creating lesson plans in Islamic Education subjects that engage with my students.	4.19	0.74	High
I have the skills and knowledge to teach Islamic Education subject effectively.	4.05	0.67	High
I feel confident in managing my classroom and maintaining students discipline.	3.73	0.90	High
I am confident that my teaching can positively impact my students' academic performance.	4.17	0.75	High
I am confident in my ability to provide effective feedback to my students.	4.05	0.71	High
I am confident that I can motivate my students to learn.	4.04	0.69	High
I am confident in my ability to handle challenging students.	3.49	0.90	Moderate
I am confident in collaborating effectively with colleagues and administrators to improve student outcomes.	4.33	0.66	High
I am confident in my ability to identify and address the diverse learning needs of my students.	4.01	0.71	High
I am confident in using technology effectively to support student learning in Islamic Education subject.	4.42	0.61	High
I am confident in creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	4.14	0.72	High
I am confident in helping my students to think critically.	3.92	0.68	High
Overall	4.05	0.73	

5.5. Self-Efficacy in Classroom Assessment

Table 8 shows the overall data on the IIUM IES student's self-efficacies in classroom assessment. The interpretation is high, with a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

The highest mean score is 4.13 (S.D = 0.59) for the item "*I am confident in seeking professional development opportunities to improve my classroom assessment practices.*" The item follows is "*I am confident using various assessment tools in my teaching, such as multiple-choice tests, short-answer tests, essay tests, etc.*" with a mean of 4.06 (S.D = 0.70) and "*I am confident in reflecting on my classroom assessment practices and identifying areas for improvement*" with a mean of 4.03 (S.D = 0.68), and the interpretation is high.

The lowest item is "*I am confident in using data from classroom assessments to guide my instruction and improve student learning*" with a mean score of 4.00 (S.D = 0.66), and the interpretation is high.

Table 8. Self-efficacy in classroom assessment.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
I am confident using various assessment tools in my teaching, such as multiple-choice tests, short-answer tests, essay tests, etc.	4.06	0.70	High
I am confident in using data from classroom assessments to guide my instruction and improve student learning.	4.00	0.66	High
I am confident in providing students with feedback on their performance on classroom assessments.	4.02	0.61	High
I am confident in reflecting on my classroom assessment practices and identifying areas for improvement.	4.03	0.68	High
I am confident in seeking professional development opportunities to improve my classroom assessment practices.	4.13	0.59	High
Overall	4.05	0.65	

5.6. Relationship between Competency and Self-Efficacy among IES during Teaching Practicum

The relationship between competency and self-efficacy among IES during teaching practicum has been examined. The Pearson correlation coefficient *(r)* is the most common way of measuring a linear correlation. A number between –1 and 1 measures the relationship's strength and direction between two variables. Correlation analysis has determined the relationship between competency and self-efficacy beliefs of TPPU students. The results are given in Table 9.

Table 9. The relationship between competency and self-efficacy among IES.

		Competency	Self Efficacy
Competency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.913**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	93	93
Self Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	0.913**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	93	93

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that there is a positive and relatively strong level of statistically meaningful relationship between scores of competencies and self-efficacy among IES ($r = 0.913$; $p < 0.01$). The standard alphap-value is 0.00, which means the correlation is statistically significant. The correlation value indicates a very high correlation between competencies and self-efficacy. Therefore, it can also be concluded that as students' competency increases, their self-efficacy also increases. Hence, the result obtained from this study supports the result from previous research on teacher self-efficacy beliefs and particular field competency.

Scatter plots are a great way to quickly check the correlation between pairs of continuous data. The scatter plot below displays the competency and self-efficacy among IES during teaching practicum. Each dot on the graph represents an individual student and their combination of competency and self-efficacy.
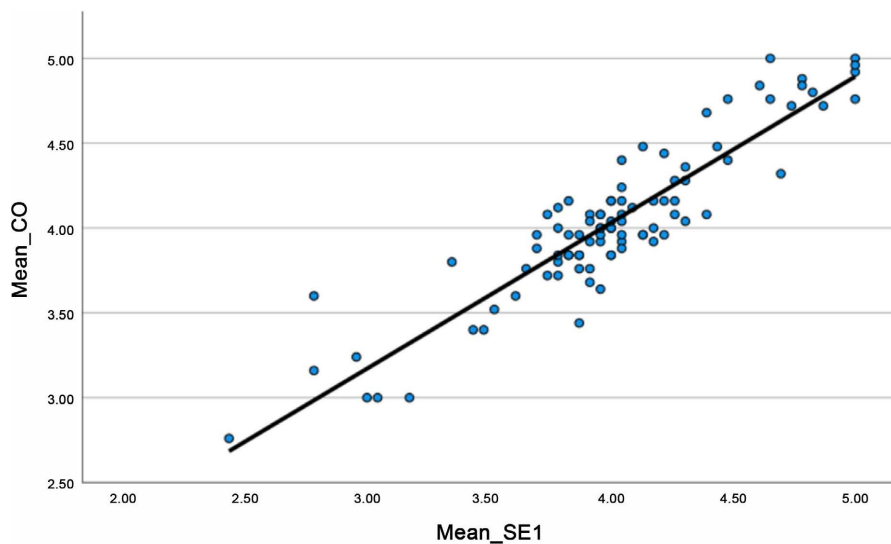
Figure 1. Scatter plot of competency and self efficacy.

Referring to Figure 1, self-efficacy also tends to increase as competency increases. A correlation exists because the general tendency that competency and self-efficacy increase together is unquestionably present.

6. Discussion

The study indicates that most IES are competent in content knowledge and instructional strategies during teaching practicum. Students are competent in collaborating with colleagues to deepen their understanding of their content knowledge. This aligns with Daniels et al. (2013), who suggest that creating environments supportive of analytic reflection and collaboration positively influenced teachers' attitudes toward their teaching practice.

The study also found that students have high self-efficacy in teaching and classroom assessment. This is consistent with research by Jaafar and Halim Tamuri (2013) found that IETs in secondary schools have incredibly high levels of self-efficacy.

However, IES is recommended to improve its content knowledge in Islamic education subjects and incorporate current research and best practices in Islamic education into their teaching subject area. They must also provide scaffold instruction to support students struggling with learning and materials. Therefore, prospective teachers are expected to advance their professional competencies to fulfil their obligations as educators and actively participate in training and teaching simulations regarding teacher competency to enhance their competence further, as Zulfahmi et al. (2020) suggested.

On the other hand, the students must be prepared to handle challenging students confidently. This study underscores pre-service teachers' challenges regarding managing classrooms and maintaining student discipline, aligning with prior research conducted by Rosas & West (2009), which suggests that teacher education programs must emphasize equipping aspiring educators with practical strategies for managing classroom dynamics and handling disruptive behaviors. This study is a valuable tool for identifying the research's accomplishments. It has effectively collected noteworthy information regarding competency and self-efficacy in teaching practice and practicum, addressing a void not previously covered by comparable investigations.

7. Conclusion, Limitations of the Study and Future Research

In conclusion, there is a positive and relatively strong statistically meaningful relationship between scores of competencies and self-efficacy among IES. Therefore, as students' competency increases, their self-efficacy also increases. This study's results support the previous study on teacher self-efficacy and competency. This study impacted comprehensive improvements in teacher education programs and improved teaching quality. Both competent and self-efficacious teachers are likely to deliver higher-quality education, which can lead to better student outcomes. This holistic impact could ultimately enhance students' educational experiences and contribute to developing a more effective and confident teaching workforce.

One of the study's many shortcomings is the limited sample size of responders, which limits the applicability of the findings to the broader population.

Therefore, future researchers should try to get a representative sample of responders from other colleges, including IES. This would improve the findings' generalizability and dependability for a more thorough comprehension of the practical procedures.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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