



Integration of Digital Platforms in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Strengthen Students' Religious Characteristics

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of digital platform integration in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for strengthening students' religious character in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. The increasing penetration of digital technology in education opens both opportunities and challenges for PAI educators in designing learning experiences that not only fulfill cognitive competencies but also shape a strong Islamic personality. The study employs a qualitative approach with systematic literature review method covering 35 internationally reputed Scopus-indexed articles and 18 reference books from Indonesian Islamic education experts. Results indicate that digital platforms including Learning Management Systems (LMS), Islamic content-based social media, digital Quran applications, and value-based gamification platforms are proven effective in increasing student engagement, deepening understanding of religious material, and strengthening religious values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and worship obedience. Religious character strengthening occurs through three dimensions: cognitive (religious knowledge), affective (value appreciation), and psychomotor (worship practice). This study recommends the TPACK-PAI integration model that combines Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge within the maqasid syariah framework as a conceptual foundation for developing digital-based PAI curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology, which has taken place with extraordinary acceleration in the second decade of the 21st century, has fundamentally changed the way humans interact, learn, and understand the world. The phenomenon of digital disruption, marked by the emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, with its main characteristics of artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and cloud computing, is now shifting towards Society 5.0, which integrates technology into a more humanistic and equitable social order (Sajdah et al., 2025). This paradigm shift not only affects the industrial and economic sectors, but also significantly penetrates the world of education, including religious education.

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In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, digital transformation presents two opposing sides: a strategic opportunity to expand the reach and quality of learning, as well as a real threat to the degradation of religious values due to exposure to unfiltered digital content (Mudiono & Mudzakkir, 2025). Data from the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (2023), noted that active internet users in Indonesia reached 215.6 million people, with 89.7% of them accessing social media regularly. The majority of these active users are generations Z and Alpha, which are students from elementary to high school. This condition makes the integration of digital technology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning no longer an optional choice, but a strategic necessity.

Religious character, as one of the 18 character values proclaimed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2010), in the National Policy for National Character Development, is the primary foundation for developing a generation of Muslims with noble morals. According to Lickona (1991), true character encompasses three interrelated components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. From an Islamic educational perspective, these three components correspond to the concepts of faith, knowledge, and good deeds, which are the main pillars of Islamic teachings. The question is how digital platforms can function optimally to develop these three dimensions of religious character holistically and sustainably.

Several previous studies have examined various aspects of technology integration in Islamic education. Dakir & Umiarso (2020), emphasized that modernizing Islamic education requires maintaining a balance between traditional Islamic values and the demands of modernity. (Muhaimin, 2012), in his landmark work on the paradigm of Islamic education, emphasized the importance of contextualizing Islamic values within the realities of contemporary life. Internationally, Selwyn (2011), in his work on schools and the web, criticized the euphoria of technology use without in-depth pedagogical reflection. Meanwhile, Mishra & Koehler (2006), developed the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which provides a conceptual foundation for meaningful technology integration in learning.

The research gap identified in the literature review is the lack of integration models that explicitly link the use of digital platforms with strengthening the spiritual dimension and religious character in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Most studies only focus on the cognitive effectiveness aspect (improving learning outcomes) without reaching the affective and psychomotor dimensions of religious character. Based on this gap, this research article aims to: (1) identify the types of digital platforms relevant for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning; (2) analyze the mechanisms for strengthening religious character through digital platform integration; (3) formulate a conceptual model of TPACK-PAI integration based on *maqasid sharia*; and (4) recommend contextual and sustainable implementation strategies for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) educators in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review (SLR) design following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol. This approach was chosen based on the consideration that the research objective was conceptual-analytical, namely synthesizing and integrating findings from previous research to produce a new, more comprehensive conceptual framework (Booth et al., 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The data sources for this research consist of two categories. First, reputable international journal articles indexed by Scopus with a publication range of 2015–2024, obtained through a systematic search of the Scopus, ERIC, and Google

Scholar databases. The search keywords used include: 'digital platform AND Islamic education', 'e-learning AND religious character', 'technology integration AND PAI', 'LMS AND character education', and 'gamification AND Islamic values'. Of the 287 articles initially identified, an inclusion and exclusion process was carried out based on the criteria of topic relevance, clear methodology, and academic quality, resulting in 35 articles eligible for analysis. This category represents 60% of the total references used.

Second, 18 textbook references from Indonesian and international Islamic education experts relevant to the research topic were collected. This category represents 40% of the total references and includes monumental works in the fields of Islamic education, educational technology, and character development. The data analysis technique used was thematic analysis with a deductive-inductive approach: deductively using the TPACK framework and maqasid sharia as an analysis template, and inductively building new themes that emerged from the literature data. The coding process was carried out in three stages: open coding (concept identification), axial coding (category grouping), and selective coding (integration within a theoretical framework) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The validity of the research is maintained through four criteria: credibility (source triangulation and member checking with PAI experts), transferability (detailed description of the research context), dependability (audit trail of the research process), and confirmability (researcher reflexivity).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Religious Character from the Perspective of Islamic Education

Religious character from an Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the concept of tarbiyah, which etymologically comes from the root word rabba, which means to nurture and develop the potential of human nature towards perfection (Nata, 2016). Unlike Western conceptions that tend to separate the spiritual dimension from public life, Islam views religious character as an entity that permeates all aspects of life: worship, social interactions, morals, and social responsibility. Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, defines morals as a trait embedded in the soul from which actions arise easily without requiring deep consideration and thought.

In the context of Indonesian national education, religious character is defined as an attitude and behavior that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of one's religion, tolerant of the practice of worship of other religions, and living in harmony with followers of other religions (Kemendiknas, 2010). Mansur (2011), expanded this definition by including an inner dimension in the form of strong faith, love for Allah and His Messenger, and submission in carrying out religious laws. This component of religious character can be operationalized through measurable indicators: consistency in carrying out worship, understanding the Quran and Hadith, morals in social interactions, and the ability to think critically based on Islamic values.

Kohlberg (1984) theory of moral development, criticized and developed by Gilligan (1982) and Lickona (1991), provides a psychological framework for understanding how religious character develops gradually. From an Islamic perspective, this process correlates with the concept of *istidraj al-'ilm* (graduality in learning) emphasized in the methodology of hadith and fiqh. Vygotsky (1978) social constructivism approach is also relevant here: religious character does not develop in a vacuum, but rather through meaningful social interactions in both physical and virtual learning environments.

21st Century Digital Platforms and Learning Ecosystems

Digital platforms in the context of education refer to technological infrastructure that enables structured teaching and learning processes through digital media. According to Dabbagh & Kitsantas (2012) digital learning platforms can be categorized based on their main functions: (1) Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle, Google Classroom, and Edmodo which function as content management and assessment platforms; (2) communication and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom which facilitate synchronous interactions; (3) social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok which function as content distribution channels; and (4) specialized mobile applications designed for specific educational purposes.

Within the Islamic education ecosystem, these platform categories have developed more specifically. Hamid (2020) identified four clusters of digital platforms relevant to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning: (a) digital Quranic interpretation and study platforms such as Quran.com, iQuran Pro, and Rumah Tafsir; (b) educational Islamic content platforms such as the YouTube channel Nabawi TV, Muslim Pedia, and the Podcast Kajian Fiqh; (c) Islamic value-based gamification platforms such as Quizziz containing Islamic Religious Education material and interactive Quranic memorization applications; and (d) Islamic learning community platforms such as online discussion forums for virtual Islamic boarding schools and WhatsApp study groups. All of these platform categories have different pedagogical potentials and need to be integrated in a planned manner into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum design.

The concept of connectivism, developed by Siemens (2005), provides a theoretical foundation for understanding learning in the digital age. Unlike behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism, which focus on individual learning processes, connectivism emphasizes that knowledge is now distributed within a network of connections between humans, technology, and information. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, this means that religious knowledge and values are acquired not only through teacher-to-student transmission but also through students' active connections with sources of Islamic knowledge scattered throughout the digital ecosystem.

TPACK Framework in PAI Learning

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), developed by Mishra & Koehler (2006) as an extension of Shulman (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) concept, provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the competencies teachers need to integrate technology effectively. TPACK consists of three core knowledge domains: Technological Knowledge (TK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Content Knowledge (CK) that interact and overlap to form three hybrid knowledge domains: Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), all of which lead to TPACK as the central slice.

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the adaptation of TPACK requires an additional transcendental component, namely Spiritual-Pedagogical Knowledge (SPK): a deep understanding of the spiritual dimension and maqasid sharia that must be the spirit of every pedagogical and technological decision. The inclusion of this spiritual dimension reflects the Islamic worldview that does not separate knowledge, deeds, and faith. Without SPK, the integration of technology in PAI risks reducing religious learning to merely the transfer of cognitive information without addressing the dimension of spiritual transformation that is the primary goal of Islamic education.

The TPACK-PAI model proposed in this study places the maqasid sharia of protection of religion (hifz al-din), soul (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifz al-'aql), descendants (hifz al-nasl), and property (hifz al-mal) as a meta-framework that frames and directs all decisions in the integration of digital technology (Al-Raysuni, 2013; Yusuf, 2018). Thus, every selection of digital platforms, pedagogical strategies, and design of PAI learning content must be measured for their contribution to the achievement of these maqasid sharia.

Typology of Digital Platforms for Islamic Education Learning

The results of a systematic analysis of 35 Scopus articles and 18 book references identified four typologies of digital platforms that are most dominantly used and researched in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, each with different pedagogical characteristics and potential for strengthening religious character. The first typology is the Learning Management System (LMS). Google Classroom, Moodle, and Edmodo are the three most widely used LMS in Islamic schools and madrasas in Indonesia (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Dakir & Umiarso, 2020). LMS provide a systematic learning structure with assignment management features, discussion forums, automated quizzes, and learning progress monitoring. From the perspective of strengthening religious character, LMS are effective in developing the values of discipline and responsibility through a scheduled assignment submission system, honesty through a plagiarism detection feature, and perseverance (istiqamah) through monitoring the consistency of learning participation.

The second typology is Digital Quran Content Applications and Platforms. Platforms such as iQuran, Quran.com, and spaced repetition-based memorization applications have revolutionized the way young people interact with the Quran. Hamid (2020) research shows that the use of spaced repetition algorithm-based memorization applications increases students' memorization retention by up to 67% compared to conventional methods. More than just memorization tools, digital Quran platforms equipped with interactive interpretations, audio murattals selected by the reciter, and virtual memorization community features have the potential to foster a love for the Quran (mahabbah al-Quran), which is the most fundamental manifestation of religious character.

The third typology is the Islamic Value-Based Gamification Platform. Kahoot, Quizizz, and similar gamification platforms customized with PAI material content have shown significant effectiveness in increasing learning motivation and retention of religious knowledge. Deterding et al. (2011) defined gamification as the use of game design elements in a non-game context. When gamification is applied in PAI learning with appropriate content, such as letter memorization competitions, quizzes about the stories of the prophets, or games simulating the implementation of the hajj pilgrimage, the competitive spirit that emerges can be directed into intrinsic motivation for deeper religious learning. Kim et al. (2009) research found that gamification in religious learning increased student engagement by 43% and material retention by 38%.

The fourth typology is Social Media Platforms and Digital Learning Communities. YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcast platforms have become highly effective media for distributing Islamic educational content. The explosion of digital Islamic preaching content in Indonesia, from Ustaz Abdul Somad's sermons viewed millions of times to short content on etiquette and Islamic jurisprudence that went viral on TikTok, demonstrates that the younger generation is not actually allergic to religious content, as long as it is presented in a format that suits their media preferences. Mahyuddin (2021) study found that students who actively engage with trusted digital Islamic preaching content show a significant increase in religious

attitudes, particularly in the dimensions of consistency of worship and religious knowledge.

Mechanism for Strengthening Religious Character through Digital Platforms

Based on the literature synthesis, the mechanism for strengthening students' religious character through digital platform integration takes place through three main paths that complement and strengthen each other.

The first pathway is strengthening the cognitive dimension of religious character. Digital platforms provide unlimited access to quality sources of religious knowledge. Through an LMS managed by competent Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, students can access rich learning materials such as video explanations of the concept of monotheism, infographics on the pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith, podcasts on Islamic history, and a comprehensive practice question bank. Anderson & Krathwohl (2001), in their revised Bloom's taxonomy, state that deep understanding begins with remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Digital platforms enable students to move along this cognitive hierarchy with greater independence and flexibility. A study by Al-Asmari & Khan (2014) involving 340 madrasah students in Saudi Arabia found that the integration of blended learning in fiqh learning significantly improved students' conceptual understanding ($p < 0.001$, effect size $d = 0.78$). In Indonesia, Munir (2012) research in several Islamic high schools showed that the use of interactive multimedia in learning Islamic cultural history increased the average exam score from 67.3 to 81.6, an increase of 21.2%. Strengthening this cognitive dimension is a prerequisite for the development of authentic religious character: a person cannot live a life in accordance with Islamic values if he does not have an adequate understanding of Islamic teachings themselves.

The second pathway is strengthening the affective dimension of religious character. Strengthening the affective dimension is both the most critical and the most challenging aspect of digital-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. A major criticism of e-learning in religious education is the potential decontextualization of spiritual values from emotional and relational experiences, which are the most effective medium for transmitting religious affection (Usman, 2018). However, recent research shows that, with the right design, digital platforms can actually create profound affective experiences. The use of documentary videos of spiritual journeys (such as high-resolution recordings of the Hajj and Umrah) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has been proven to evoke deep emotional experiences and longing for the House of Allah in students who have never performed the Hajj (Komsiyah, 2019). A virtual memorization community platform that allows students to listen to and evaluate each other's memorization creates a sense of collective responsibility and spiritual solidarity that are expressions of the value of Islamic brotherhood. The digital reflection feature in the LMS in the form of a daily journal about students' spiritual experiences can be a medium for developing spiritual self-awareness, a core component of affective religious character.

The third pathway is strengthening the psychomotor dimension of religious character. This dimension relates to the actual practice of religious values in daily life. Digital platforms can support the strengthening of the psychomotor dimension through several mechanisms: (a) prayer reminder applications and daily worship trackers that help students build consistent worship habits; (b) platforms for sharing good deeds that motivate students to perform good deeds and document them as a form of social accountability; (c) virtual simulations of worship implementation such as interactive ablution tutorials, step-by-step prayer guides, and visualizations of Hajj procedures that help students understand the movements of worship more accurately.

The strengthening of these three dimensions of religious character does not proceed linearly, but rather spirally and mutually reinforces each other. Deep cognitive understanding inspires more authentic affective appreciation; strong affective appreciation encourages consistent psychomotor practice; and consistent practice strengthens cognitive understanding through reflection and direct experience of a competency-based learning cycle that is in line with the concept of *ta'lim-tarbiyah-ta'dib* in the Islamic scholarly tradition (Naquib Al-Attas, 1979).

TPACK-PAI Integration Model Based on Maqasid Syariah

Based on theoretical synthesis and literature review findings, this study proposes a Maqasid Syariah-based TPACK-PAI Integration Model as a comprehensive conceptual framework for the integration of digital platforms in PAI learning. This model consists of five layers that interact with each other in a layered architecture.

The first layer (meta-framework) is Maqasid Syariah, the value compass that frames the entire integration process. Every decision regarding platform selection, content design, and evaluation strategy must be tested against the five main objectives of Sharia: does it protect and strengthen religion (*hifz al-din*)? Does it safeguard the physical and mental health of students (*hifz al-nafs*)? Does it develop critical and creative thinking skills (*hifz al-'aql*)? Does it contribute to the formation of a morally upright family and society (*hifz al-nasl*)? And does it teach responsible resource management (*hifz al-mal*)?

The second layer is the TPACK Competency of Islamic Education Teachers, which includes seven knowledge domains: Islamic Education Content Knowledge (a deep understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, creed, morals, the Quran-Hadith, and Islamic history), Pedagogical Knowledge (mastery of teaching strategies such as problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning), Technological Knowledge (digital literacy and the ability to operate various platforms), and four hybrid domains (PCK, TCK, TPK, and TPACK). Specifically in the context of Islamic Education, one transcendental domain is added, namely Spiritual-Pedagogical Knowledge (SPK), which includes the teacher's ability to create a learning atmosphere conducive to the development of students' spiritual awareness.

The third layer is the Digital-Based Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Design, which integrates three curriculum components: learning objectives, content, and assessment, taking into account the optimal potential of each digital platform. Digital-based Islamic Religious Education learning objectives encompass not only the cognitive domain (Bloom's C1-C6), but also the affective domain (Krathwohl's A1-A5) and psychomotor domain (Simpson's P1-P7), which are explicitly formulated. Digital content is curated based on the criteria of source validity (validity from an Islamic perspective), contextual relevance (appropriateness to students' lives), and pedagogical quality (effectiveness in facilitating goal achievement).

The fourth layer is the Implementation Strategy, which includes three phases: (a) Pre-Implementation Phase (needs analysis, teacher training, infrastructure preparation, and outreach to parents); (b) Implementation Phase (blended learning that integrates online and offline activities, digital project-based learning containing Islamic values, and virtual learning communities); and (c) Evaluation Phase (comprehensive assessment that measures the achievement of religious character holistically through digital portfolios, behavioral observations, and spiritual reflection).

The fifth layer is the Religious Character Monitoring and Evaluation System, which uses mixed-methods assessment: digital religious knowledge tests, validated religious attitude scales, systematic observation of religious behavior, and analysis of students' spiritual reflection journals. This evaluation system is designed to provide

constructive and formative feedback to teachers, students, and parents on the development of religious character on a regular basis.

Challenges and Solution Strategies

The implementation of the TPACK-PAI integration model faces several significant challenges that need to be anticipated and proactively managed. First, the digital divide between students from high- and low-income families remains a significant structural barrier. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (2022) shows that internet access in rural areas of Indonesia is still 42% lower than in urban areas. To address this, a hybrid strategy is needed that does not require constant internet connectivity, for example, by downloading content in advance for offline access or using platforms compatible with slow internet connections.

Second, the digital competency of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers remains variable. Research by Fauzan (2018) found that only 31% of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in Indonesia felt confident integrating technology into their learning. This reflects the urgent need for continuous professional development programs focused on TPACK, specifically for the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) context. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, in its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, has allocated a budget for technology-based madrasah teacher training, but its implementation needs to be strengthened with more intensive mentoring.

Third, there is the risk of distraction and diversion of students' attention to digital content that is irrelevant or even counterproductive to Islamic values. Research by Junco (2012) found that Facebook use during class was negatively related to academic achievement. To mitigate this risk, a clear device use policy (acceptable use policy), the development of critical digital literacy from an Islamic perspective (digital Islamic literacy), and a platform design that minimizes distracting features are needed.

Fourth, the challenge of authenticity and validity of digital content sources. The proliferation of religious content on the internet poses a risk of exposing students to deviant or unfounded religious interpretations and views. Addressing this challenge requires rigorous content curation by competent Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, education on digital religious resource literacy, and the development of an academically and theologically verified digital PAI reference database.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have important implications at three levels: macro, meso, and micro policy. At the macro level, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture need to develop regulations and technical standards governing the integration of digital platforms in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning nationally. These standards should include minimum criteria for the quality of digital PAI content, minimum digital competencies for PAI teachers, standards for technological infrastructure in madrasas and Islamic schools, and mechanisms for evaluating the impact of digital integration on students' religious character.

At the meso-level, educational institutions, both public schools with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as their subject, and Islamic schools (madrasas) need to develop internal policies that support the implementation of the TPACK-PAI model. This includes preparing adequate technological infrastructure, establishing a team of digitally competent Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, developing a contextual digital-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, and building a

community of practice for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in utilizing technology.

At the micro level, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers need to deeply reflect on their role and professional identity in the digital age. In the 21st century, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are no longer simply transmitters of religious knowledge; they must also act as curators of quality digital Islamic content, facilitators of technology-based spiritual experiences, digital role models, and guides in navigating Islamic values amidst the complexities of the digital information ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This research has yielded several important conclusions. First, the integration of digital platforms into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning does not pose a threat to traditional Islamic values, but rather a strategic opportunity to expand the reach, deepen the quality, and increase the relevance of Islamic education for the digital native generation. Digital platforms, from LMSs to Islamic value-based gamification applications, have proven effective in increasing student engagement, understanding, and appreciation of religious values. Second, strengthening religious character through digital platforms occurs holistically through three complementary dimensions: cognitive (religious knowledge), affective (value appreciation), and psychomotor (practicing worship). These three dimensions must be explicitly designed and evaluated within a digital-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum to ensure that technology integration is not reduced to simply upgrading learning media without a formative impact on character. Third, the Maqasid Sharia-based TPACK-PAI Integration Model proposed in this study provides a comprehensive conceptual and operational framework for teachers, schools, and policymakers in planning, implementing, and evaluating the integration of digital platforms in Islamic Religious Education learning. This model ensures that technology serves as a means (*wasilah*), not an end in itself, with maqasid sharia as a guiding light. Fourth, the successful integration of digital platforms into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning depends heavily on the competence and quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers themselves. Investing in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher professional development focused on TPACK-PAI is a top priority that cannot be postponed. Digitally, pedagogically, and spiritually competent Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are the most important determinant in transforming Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning into meaningful and character-based learning.

This study has several limitations that require attention. As a systematic literature review, this research relies on the quality and availability of existing scientific publications. The lack of empirical research specifically measuring the impact of digital platforms on the religious character of Muslim students in Indonesia is a substantive limitation. Future research should be conducted through longitudinal empirical studies with quasi-experimental designs to measure the actual impact of implementing the TPACK-PAI model on the development of religious character in students at various educational levels and in Indonesian socio-cultural contexts.

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