

THE INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER COMPETENCE ON GRADUATE QUALITY MODERATED BY LEARNING ORGANIZATION CULTURE AT PESANTREN AL-AMIEN JEMBER

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Abstract

Graduate quality serves as the primary indicator of an educational institution's success, including Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), which have a dual orientation: developing students' academic competence and spirituality. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of spiritual leadership, teacher competence, and learning organization culture on graduate quality, as well as to examine the moderating role of learning organization culture in these relationships. This study employs a quantitative explanatory approach using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) method. The research population includes teachers, school principals, and students from four formal educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren Al Amien Jember, which consist of MTs Al Amien, SMP Al Amien, MA Al Amien, and SMK Al Amien. The results reveal that: (1) spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on graduate quality (P-Value = 0.000); (2) teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on graduate quality (P-Value = 0.000); (3) learning organization culture has a positive and significant effect on graduate quality (P-Value = 0.018); (4) learning organization culture moderates the effect of spiritual leadership on graduate quality (P-Value = 0.010); and (5) learning organization culture also moderates the effect of teacher competence on graduate quality (P-Value = 0.032). These findings affirm that visionary spiritual leadership, excellent teacher competence, and an adaptive, collaborative learning organization culture play crucial roles in enhancing the quality of *pesantren* graduates. Practically, the results recommend the development of a sustainable learning culture within *pesantren* environments to produce graduates who are of strong character, globally competitive, and capable of contributing positively to society.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) as distinctive Islamic educational institutions hold a dual mandate: to educate students (*santri*) academically while also shaping their character and spirituality. With the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren, these institutions in Indonesia have gained formal legitimacy to administer structured education while being required to ensure that graduate quality is on par with that of general educational institutions (Panut et al., 2021). Graduate quality has thus become a strategic indicator, encompassing not only academic achievement but also character formation, social adaptability, and spiritual values.

However, in reality, many formal *pesantren* face challenges such as suboptimal academic outcomes, inconsistent character formation, weak social adaptability of graduates, and uneven internalization of spiritual values. Various factors are believed to influence these issues, including leadership style, learning organization culture, and teacher competence.

In the context of leadership, spiritual leadership has increasingly attracted attention in educational literature. For example, *The Influence of Leadership Spirituality to Improving the Quality of Higher Education in Indonesia* confirmed that spiritual leadership contributes to improving educational quality through the integration of religious ethics in leadership practices (Karsono et al., 2022). Another academic study found that lecturers' perceptions of spiritual leadership were generally high in terms of the vision dimension, while aspects such as altruistic love, membership, and calling required deeper exploration (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). Moreover, Azzuhri (2024) suggested that the practice of spiritual leadership in Indonesia needs to be re-contextualized to align with local cultural values (Azzuhri et al., 2024).

Teacher competence has also remained a central issue in Islamic education literature over the past five years. Numerous studies indicate that *pesantren* face challenges in maintaining professional and pedagogical competence due to the dual demands of teaching both religious and general subjects and the limited availability of formal training. For instance, the study *Influence of Managerial Competence toward Teacher Performance* found that improving teacher competence through internal training and mentoring positively impacts instructional quality (Wibowo et al., 2025).

Regarding the learning organization culture, although it is not always explicitly referred to using Senge's terminology, many institutional studies in recent years have adopted the concept of the "learning organization." Nasrullah's study, *Strategi Membangun Organizational Pembelajaran dalam Meningkatkan Mutu dan Daya Saing Lulusan*, reported that schools implementing collective reflection, systemic problem-solving, and a culture of experimentation were better able to enhance graduate quality (Nasrullah, 2024). In the context of *madrasah* or *pesantren*, Hera Suzana's (2023) thesis on *Learning Organization in Madrasah Aliyah* found emerging practices of systems thinking, shared vision, and mental models in instructional planning, though implementation remained partial (Hera Suzana, 2023). Similarly, other *pesantren* studies have noted that the adoption of learning organization culture within Islamic boarding schools is still fragmented and unsystematic.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated that spiritual leadership and teacher competence positively influence the improvement of graduate quality, most research still focuses on direct relationships among variables without considering contextual factors that may strengthen or weaken these effects. In practice, however, the implementation of spiritual values in leadership within formal Islamic boarding school-based institutions tends to remain symbolic and has not yet been systematically integrated into institutional management, decision-making, and teacher development. Furthermore, modern *pesantren* face challenges in integrating the national curriculum with Islamic values, while many teachers still lack sufficient pedagogical and professional competence to manage integrative learning that incorporates both technology and spiritual dimensions. This condition reveals a gap between teachers' capacities and the demands of 21st-century learning expected from formal education institutions under

pesantren management. Meanwhile, the learning organization culture has not fully matured due to limited collaboration, reflection, and collective learning within *pesantren*. Consequently, although graduates of formal pesantren schools meet national academic standards, they have not yet fully demonstrated excellence in character, spirituality, and readiness to face global challenges, indicating a discrepancy between the spiritual orientation of pesantren education and the expected learning outcomes of modern formal education systems.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to construct an empirical model that examines the influence of spiritual leadership and teacher competence on graduate quality, with learning organization culture as a moderating variable. The goal is to generate policy recommendations relevant to improving graduate quality grounded in both values and systems. The research focuses on Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember, one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Jember Regency, founded by KH. Masduqi Musthofa in 1948. The institution has since evolved from a traditional *salaf* system into a modern *pesantren* that integrates formal education with strong Islamic values and religious traditions.

This study proposes five hypotheses: (1) there is a significant influence of spiritual leadership on graduate quality at the formal educational institutions of Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember; (2) there is a significant influence of teacher competence on graduate quality; (3) there is a significant influence of learning organization culture on graduate quality; (4) learning organization culture moderates the relationship between spiritual leadership and graduate quality; and (5) learning organization culture moderates the relationship between teacher competence and graduate quality at Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design aimed at examining the causal relationships among spiritual leadership, teacher competence, and learning organization culture toward graduate quality in the formal educational institutions of Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember. This approach was chosen because it enables the generation of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to test the formulated hypotheses. The research design adopts an explanatory survey method, with data collected through standardized questionnaires developed based on the indicators of each research variable. This design allows the findings to provide empirical insights into the direct and moderating effects among the variables within the context of modern *pesantren* education.

The study was conducted across four formal educational institutions under the supervision of Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember, namely SMP Plus Al-Amien, MTs Al-Amien, MA Al-Amien, and SMK Al-Amien. The research population consisted of all principals, teachers, and students, totaling 1,840 individuals as follows:

Table 1. Research Population

No	Institution	Population (N)
1	Students of MTs Al-Amien	913
2	Students of SMP Plus Al-Amien	248
3	Students of MA Al-Amien	510
4	Students of SMK Al-Amien	99
5	Teachers of SMP Plus Al-Amien	12
6	Teachers of MTs Al-Amien	29
7	Teachers of SMK Al-Amien	11
8	Teachers of MA Al-Amien	14
9	Principal	4
	Total	1.840

The sampling technique employed was Proportional Stratified Random Sampling using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 329 respondents proportionally distributed across the institutions. The data comprised both primary data, collected through Google Form-based questionnaires, and secondary data, obtained from school documents, academic reports, and scholarly references relevant to the research variables.

The research instrument was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire covering four main variables: 1) spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003), defined as a leadership style grounded in ethical and spiritual values that integrate vision, hope or faith, altruistic love, calling, and membership; 2) teacher competence (Perdirjen GTK No. 2626/B/HK.04.01/2023), which includes pedagogical, personal, professional, and social abilities in performing educational duties effectively; 3) learning organization culture (Senge, 1990), referring to shared values and practices that promote continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptability through personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking; 4) graduate quality (Sagala, 2013; Astin, 1985), which reflects the achievement of competencies across academic, character, social adaptation, and spiritual dimensions.

Data collection techniques included closed-ended questionnaires and documentation studies to deepen the contextual understanding of the research. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software, which involved testing for construct validity and reliability (measurement model) as well as analyzing the relationships among latent variables (structural model). This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the contributions of spiritual leadership and teacher competence to graduate quality, with learning organization culture serving as a moderating variable within the environment of Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember.

Result and Discussions

Respondent Description

The characteristics of respondents in this study comprise all teaching and administrative staff, school/madrasah principals, and students from the formal educational institutions under Pesantren Al-Amien Jember. The detailed distribution of respondents' characteristics is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Respondent Description

No	Institution	M	F	N	%M	%F	%N
1	SMP Plus Al-Amien	26	22	48	16,05	13,17	14,58
2	MTs Al-Amien	87	78	165	53,7	46,71	50,15
3	SMK Al-Amien	12	10	22	7,41	5,99	6,69
4	MA Al-Amien	37	57	94	22,84	34,13	28,58
Total		162	167	329	100%	100%	100%

This distribution indicates that the participation of respondents from each institution is relatively proportional, with the largest representation coming from the MTs level. This is because MTs Al-Amien has the highest number of teachers and students compared to the other institutions.

Measurement Model Testing

The validity and *reliability* tests of the research instrument indicate that all questionnaire items demonstrate a high level of adequacy. The results show that the Aiken's V value is greater than 0.75, signifying that all indicators were judged valid by experts. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 and the Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70 confirm that each construct is reliable and consistent in measuring its respective variable dimensions. In addition, the outerloading results show that all indicators have values above 0.60, indicating good convergent validity. The results of the discriminant validity tests using the Fornell-Larcker criterion

and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) also reveal values below 0.90, confirming that each variable is clearly distinct and that no overlap occurs among the constructs. These results can be illustrated in the following figure:

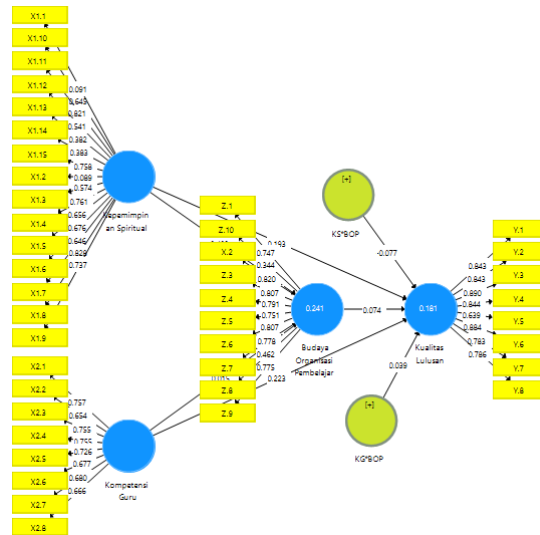


Figure 1. Outer Loading Values

Construct Reliability and Validity

Matrix	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extract...
BOP*KG	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Budaya Organisasi Pem...	0.947	0.951	0.954	0.657
KS*KG	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Kepemimpinan Spiritua...	0.949	0.958	0.955	0.604
Kompetensi Guru	0.932	0.938	0.942	0.597
Kualitas Lulusan	0.950	0.954	0.959	0.770

Figure 2. Results of Construct Reliability and Validity Test

Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criter...	Cross Loadings	Heterotrait-Monotrait ...	Heterotrait-Monotrait			
	Budaya ...	KG*BOP	KS*BOP	Kepemim...	Kompete...	Kualitas L...
Budaya Organisasi Pe...	0.725					
KG*BOP	-0.091	1.000				
KS*BOP	-0.138	0.710	1.000			
Kepemimpinan Spirit...	0.491	-0.158	-0.253	0.617		
Kompetensi Guru	0.311	-0.153	-0.170	0.614	0.710	
Kualitas Lulusan	0.244	-0.085	-0.145	0.379	0.371	0.817

Figure 3. Results of Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test

Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criter... Cross Loadings Heterotrait-Monotrait ... Heterotrait-Monotrait ... Co

	Budaya ...	KG*BOP	KS*BOP	Kepemim...	Kompete...	Kualitas L...
Budaya O...						
KG*BOP	0.097					
KS*BOP	0.136	0.710				
Kepemim...	0.514	0.204	0.280			
Kompete...	0.337	0.165	0.176	0.701		
Kualitas L...	0.249	0.089	0.147	0.409	0.402	

Figure 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test Using HTMT

Structural Model Testing

The inner model or structural model testing was conducted to assess the relationships among latent variables and to evaluate the predictive power of the research model toward the endogenous variables. This analysis includes the examination of R-Square (R^2), Q-Square (Q^2), and f-Square (f^2) values, as well as hypothesis testing using t -statistics and p -values through the SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results of these analyses are presented as follows:

R Square

Matrix R Square R Square Adjusted

	R Square	R Square ...
Kualitas L...	0.785	0.782

Figure 5. Results of R-Square Test

Construct Crossvalidated Redundancy

Total Case1 Case2 Case3 Case4 Case5 Case6

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Budaya Organisasi Pembelajaran	1645.000	1645.000	
KG*BOP	329.000	329.000	
KS*BOP	329.000	329.000	
Kepemimpinan Spiritual	1316.000	1316.000	
Kompetensi Guru	1645.000	1645.000	
Kualitas Lulusan	1316.000	883.389	0.329

Figure 6. Results of Q-Square Test

f Square

Matrix f Square Copy to Clipboard:

	Budaya ...	KG*BOP	KS*BOP	Kepemim...	Kompete...	Kualitas L...
Budaya Organisasi Pembelajaran						0.033
KG*BOP						0.025
KS*BOP						0.032
Kepemimpinan Spiritual						0.371
Kompetensi Guru						0.162
Kualitas Lulusan						

Figure 7. Results of f-Square Test

Path Coefficients

	Original ...	Sample ...	Standard ...	T Statistic...	P Values
Budaya Organisasi Pembelajaran -> Kualitas Lulusan	0.135	0.142	0.057	2.384	0.018
KG*BOP -> Kualitas Lulusan	-0.119	-0.107	0.055	2.146	0.032
KS*BOP -> Kualitas Lulusan	0.134	0.124	0.052	2.580	0.010
Kepemimpinan Spiritual -> Kualitas Lulusan	0.501	0.505	0.065	7.654	0.000
Kompetensi Guru -> Kualitas Lulusan	0.327	0.323	0.064	5.078	0.000

Figure 8. Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of the structural model analysis show that the endogenous variable *Graduate Quality* has an R^2 value of 0.785 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.782, indicating that 78.5% of the variance in graduate quality is explained by *Spiritual Leadership*, *Teacher Competence*, and *Learning Organization Culture* (including their moderating effects). According to Chin (1998), an R^2 value greater than 0.67 is categorized as high, signifying that the model possesses strong predictive power. Thus, the quality of graduates at Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Jember is highly influenced by these three variables.

The Q^2 value of 0.329 further indicates that the model has good predictive relevance and is suitable for generalizing to new datasets. The f^2 analysis shows that *Spiritual Leadership* has a large effect on *Graduate Quality* (0.371), followed by *Teacher Competence* (0.162), while *Learning Organization Culture* exerts a small effect (0.033). The moderating effects of learning organization culture on the relationships between *Spiritual Leadership* and *Teacher Competence* with *Graduate Quality* are also classified as small (0.025 and 0.032, respectively). This finding suggests that the direct influences of spiritual leadership and teacher competence are more dominant than their indirect effects through the moderating variable.

Hypothesis testing results demonstrate that all relationships within the model are significant ($t > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). *Spiritual Leadership* significantly affects *Graduate Quality* ($t = 7.654$; $p = 0.000$), as do *Teacher Competence* ($t = 5.078$; $p = 0.000$) and *Learning Organization Culture* ($t = 2.384$; $p = 0.018$). Furthermore, the moderating effect of *Learning Organization Culture* is significant for both the *Spiritual Leadership–Graduate Quality* relationship ($t = 2.580$; $p = 0.010$) and the *Teacher Competence–Graduate Quality* relationship ($t = 2.146$; $p = 0.032$). Therefore, all research hypotheses are accepted and confirmed to have positive and significant relationships.

The findings indicate that *Spiritual Leadership* significantly influences *Graduate Quality* (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05). This demonstrates that the spiritual values practiced by leaders at Pesantren Al-Amien Jember successfully foster motivation, exemplary behavior, and a work ethic grounded in worship, all of which contribute to improving graduate quality. Spiritual leadership at Pesantren Al-Amien Jember has been proven to foster values of love, faith, and hope in God, which serve as the foundation for shaping students' character. Moreover, the leader's exemplary attitude, behavior, and educational policies are aligned with the institution's objectives, resulting in a tangible impact on both the strengthening of moral values and the improvement of graduates' overall quality.

These findings align with Syarif Maulidin's research at SMK Islam Al Fadhila Demak, which revealed that religious activities such as congregational prayers and Qur'an recitation positively affect students' character and learning quality (Maulidin, 2024). Similarly, Dalle et al. found that Islamic spiritual leadership has a significant impact on educational quality ($t = 2.476$; $p = 0.014$) (Amboâ et al., 2025). Suhari et al. also reported that schools with strong spiritual leadership exhibit graduation rates 20% higher than those without (Suhari et al., 2025). Supporting this, Bela

Elqaweliya's study at Pesantren Suryalaya showed that spiritual practices such as *dhikr* and *manaqiban* strengthen teacher development and positively shape students' character (Elqaweliya, 2022).

Furthermore, *Teacher Competence* was found to significantly influence *Graduate Quality* (P-value = 0.000). This confirms that the higher the teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies, the better the learning outcomes and character formation of the graduates. Teachers at Pesantren Al-Amien serve not only as educators but also as moral and spiritual role models, consistent with the *pesantren's* principle of integrating knowledge and faith. The respondents' feedback indicates that teachers at Pesantren Al-Amien Jember possess a high level of competence. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher the teachers' competence, the better the quality of graduates produced by the pesantren.

This finding aligns with the study by Sri Haryati et al. at MTs Darusalam Wanaraja, which reported a *t*-value of 3.8858 greater than the *t*-table value of 2.0096, with a 24.84% contribution to graduate quality (Haryati et al., 2024). Similarly, Maharani's research found a *t*-value of 4.229 and a significance level of 0.000, confirming the positive influence of teacher competence on graduate quality (Maharani, 2023). In line with this, Ismail and Anwar argued that teachers with high competence are better equipped to address educational challenges and produce graduates who are not only academically excellent but also moral, religious, and balanced in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Ismail & Anwar, 2021). Meanwhile, Munawir's research revealed that teacher competence affects graduate quality, with a SmartPLS coefficient value of 0.240 and *t*-statistic of 0.240, though the influence was smaller compared to other factors in the model (Munawir, 2024).

In addition, *Learning Organization Culture* was also found to have a significant effect on *Graduate Quality* (P-value = 0.018). This culture is reflected in the implementation of diverse and collaborative learning methods, although respondents noted that the aspect of providing motivating learning experiences still requires improvement. At Pesantren Al-Amien Jember, the implementation of a learning organization culture is reflected in various regular programs involving both teachers and students. Teachers participate in monthly collaborative learning sessions, as well as professional training and discussion forums held in designated rooms, while students are provided with library facilities to enhance their literacy and independence. In addition, the concept of *team learning* is applied to foster the understanding that success can be achieved through collaboration and togetherness. Through these activities, teachers and students share knowledge and solve problems collectively, creating a sustainable learning culture that supports the continuous improvement of graduate quality.

This result is consistent with Masrukhin's findings at SMA NU Hasyim Asy'ari Kudus, which showed that a learning organization culture enhances graduate quality and competitiveness through the internalization of school values in daily activities (Masrukhin, 2016). Similarly, Pahing et al. found that organizational culture plays an important role in improving school quality, contributing up to 43% (Pahing, 2025). Rokim et al. further emphasized that developing a quality culture in educational institutions depends on leaders' ability to foster a positive culture oriented toward continuous improvement, as it shapes teacher behavior and ultimately affects instructional effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Fathih & Muhlis, 2024). In agreement, Prasetyo argued that the *learning organization* concept ensures educational quality and institutional sustainability because it engages both internal work units and external stakeholders through the application of Senge's five disciplines of organizational learning (Prasetyo & Salabi, 2022).

Moreover, spiritual leadership at Pesantren Al Amien serves not only as a moral compass but also as the foundation for cultivating an organizational culture that encourages all members to continuously learn and grow. The spiritual values internalized by the leaders create a collaborative environment that is open to learning and oriented toward collective improvement. This study reinforces that perspective, revealing that the Learning Organization Culture functions as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Graduate

Quality (P -value = 0.010). The stronger the learning culture within the pesantren, the greater and more sustainable the positive impact of spiritual leadership on graduate quality.

Similarly, the Learning Organization Culture also moderates the relationship between Teacher Competence and Graduate Quality (P -value = 0.032), suggesting that competent teachers effectively embody and transmit learning culture values through their teaching and mentoring activities with students (santri). This interpretation aligns with respondents' perceptions that the learning organization culture in pesantren becomes effective only when teachers possess adequate competence encompassing pedagogical, professional, social, and personal dimensions. Competent teachers are able to translate the values of a learning organization into practical classroom actions, such as providing consistent guidance, aligning learning experiences with students' needs, and exemplifying moral integrity through daily teaching practices.

Furthermore, teachers with strong competence are better able to adapt instructional methods to current educational developments, apply relevant pedagogical approaches, and maintain healthy communication with students, parents, colleagues, and the surrounding community. These conditions create a productive and collaborative learning atmosphere, ensuring that the values of the learning organization culture are not merely conceptual but are lived out in everyday educational activities. Therefore, a strong learning organization culture acts as a reinforcing mechanism that amplifies the influence of both spiritual leadership and teacher competence on improving the quality of graduates at Pesantren Al Amien Jember.

CONCLUSION

The formal educational institutions under the auspices of Pesantren Al-Amien Jember in producing high-quality graduates cannot be separated from the synergy among spiritual leadership, teacher competence, and a strong learning organizational culture.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Spiritual Leadership has a significant influence on Graduate Quality, with a T -Statistic value of 7.654 and a P -Value of 0.000, thus H_1 is accepted. Teacher Competence also has a significant effect on Graduate Quality, as indicated by a T -Statistic value of 5.078 and a P -Value of 0.000, therefore H_2 is accepted. Furthermore, the Learning Organization Culture significantly influences Graduate Quality, with a T -Statistic value of 2.384 and a P -Value of 0.018, leading to the acceptance of H_3 .

The results of the moderation test indicate that the Learning Organization Culture strengthens the relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Graduate Quality (T -Statistic = 2.580, P -Value = 0.010), hence H_4 is accepted. In addition, the Learning Organization Culture also reinforces the relationship between Teacher Competence and Graduate Quality (T -Statistic = 2.146, P -Value = 0.032), resulting in the acceptance of H_5 .

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