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**Transformation of Islamic Education in Responding to Moral Degradation: Addressing the Distortion of Islamic Core Values at SMP PSM Tanen Rejotangan Tulungagung**

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**ABSTRACT :**

This research is motivated by the recent decline in student morality, which has been evident, including social deviations and other negative behaviors. This phenomenon indicates moral degradation due to the distortion of core Islamic values, where religious teachings are understood superficially and have not been internalized in everyday life. This research focuses on the transformation of Islamic education in response to moral degradation, particularly in addressing the distortion of Islamic values. This study aims to identify the forms, causal factors, and strategies for overcoming moral degradation. The method used is descriptive qualitative with field research. The techniques used are in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The results show that forms of moral degradation include a decline in discipline, manners, and religious values. Causal factors include disharmonious families, unfiltered social interactions, and technology or mass media. The strategy for transforming Islamic education is carried out through strengthening religious values, collaboration between internal and external parties, the application of educational sanctions, contextual learning innovations, and synergy between schools and families. Islamic Religious Education teachers act as moral role models and spiritual guides in shaping students' character. This research emphasizes the importance of reconstructing the paradigm of Islamic education that not only emphasizes cognitive aspects, but also fosters affective and moral dimensions to build a generation with noble character in the modern era.

**Key words:** *Islamic Religious Education, Moral Degradation, Distortion of Islamic Values, Student Character*

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping the personality and character of students, enabling them to become individuals with noble morals. In this context, Islamic education plays a crucial role, emphasizing not only cognitive aspects but also instilling spiritual, moral, and social values derived from the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. However, the implementation of Islamic education in schools often faces various challenges, particularly in maintaining the relevance of its teachings to the dynamic changes of the times.<sup>1</sup> The development of the modern and digital era has impacted various aspects of human life, including the education and moral values of the younger generation. Advances in information technology, social media, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Amalia Rizki Lailatul Khilwa and others, 'Revitalisasi Semangat Pembelajaran Nabawi: Metode Adaptasi Mengajar Kontemporer Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits Riwayat Imam Bukhari', *SIBATIK: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Sosial, Ekonomi, Budaya, Teknologi, Dan Pendidikan*, 4.8 (2025), doi:<https://doi.org/10.54443/sibatik.v4i8.2875>.

influence of globalization have transformed the way people think and behave. On the one hand, these advances offer significant opportunities to improve the quality of education, but on the other, they also pose serious challenges in the form of moral decline and changes in core Islamic values among students.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon is seen from the low level of respect for teachers, lack of discipline, increasing consumer habits, and excessive individualistic attitudes, all of which indicate moral decline.

The main problem currently being felt is the impact of increasingly advanced and sophisticated scientific and technological developments. This has led to the loss of Islamic educational values in the eyes of young people. They face various conflicts and diverse moral experiences, leaving them confused about what is right and what is wrong. This is particularly evident among teenagers, especially those living in large cities who are trying to improve their quality of life towards a seemingly modern and developed lifestyle. In such situations, foreign cultural influences enter easily, seemingly without proper filtering. This foreign cultural influence is further amplified through various media and direct interactions with foreigners, who bring with them a variety of different attitudes and behaviors. Moral decline usually occurs in conjunction with a distance from religion. Values not based on religious education will constantly change according to time, place, and circumstances. These changes in values also cause instability because they leave people living without a clear foundation.<sup>3</sup>

Indonesians are generally known as a friendly and civilized society. However, incidents such as riots, student brawls, corruption, robbery, mutilation, promiscuity, drug use, murder, and various other incidents continue to occur, tarnishing the nation's reputation. While problems in life are inevitable, these incidents illustrate the decline or degradation of morals within society. This moral decline occurs at various levels, including among teenagers. The younger generation plays a crucial role in a nation. The nation's future depends on them, but in reality, many teenagers no longer exhibit moral behavior and are far from the ideals of the nation's founders.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), degradation means a decline in a person's quality, morals, or behavior. Degradation can also be interpreted as a decrease in rank, degree, or status.<sup>5</sup> In addition, degradation also refers to changes that cause damage to the

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<sup>2</sup> A Hidayat, *Pendidikan Moral Dan Tantangan Globalisasi* (Rajawali Pres, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Jumriyah, 'Pendidikan Islam Dan Dekadensi Moral', *AL-Ulum: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 2.01 (2024), pp. 59–70, doi:10.63216/alulum.v2i01.266.

<sup>4</sup> Irmawati Musa, 'Studi Literatur : Degradasi Moral Di Kalangan Remaja', *Erza Science Bulletin*, 1.2 (2023), p. 224, doi:https://doi.org/10.58526/ezrasciencebulletin.v1i2.31.

<sup>5</sup> Hafis Muaddab and Khudrotun Nafisah, 'Kepemimpinan Moral Dalam Perpektif The Model For Interpersonal Teacher Behavior', *Jurnal Mediasosian: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Administrasi Negara*, 7.1 (2023), pp. 162–82, doi:10.30737/mediasosian.v7i1.4460.

earth's environment.<sup>6</sup> In Widjaja's view, morality is the teaching about the good and bad of human actions and behavior. Morality can be associated with good or bad values that generally apply in actions, behavior, and ethics.<sup>7</sup> According to Ahmadi and Sholeh, moral degradation is a situation or ability within an individual who is unable to act well according to expected values. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that moral degradation is the decline in an individual's morals in behaving according to expectations, *value*, teachings, and rules. Therefore, based on this explanation, it can be concluded that moral degradation is a decline in an individual's ethical system or deviation due to not following one's conscience due to a lack of awareness of an individual's obligations, norms, and morals.<sup>8</sup>

Regarding moral decline in Indonesia, based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), there were 2,355 cases of child protection violations recorded as of August 2023. These cases consisted of 487 cases of sexual violence, 236 cases of physical and psychological violence, 87 cases of bullying, 27 cases of inadequate educational facilities, and 24 cases of educational policies detrimental to children. During 2023, KPAI received a total of 3,883 reports related to violations of children's rights and protection, consisting of 2,036 cases of fulfilling children's rights and 1,866 cases of special child protection. Furthermore, according to a literature review, the juvenile delinquency rate in Indonesia reached approximately 23.46% in 2021. This indicates that moral decline in Indonesia continues to increase.<sup>9</sup>

Moral degradation is a problem that affects almost all levels of society, both the educated and the uneducated.<sup>10</sup> Currently, moral degradation is becoming a serious issue in the world of education, where violations committed by students are increasing day by day, ranging from minor to major violations.<sup>11</sup> Teenagers are the individuals who are most easily influenced by negative things, which can exacerbate moral decline.<sup>12</sup> Moral decline in individuals occurs due to a lack of understanding of religious values instilled in society, instability in social, economic, and political conditions, a lack of moral education in families and communities,

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Ahsan Hidayat and others, 'Urgensi Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menghadapi Degradasi Moral', *Academia: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7.1 (2023), doi:<https://doi.org/10.22515/academica.v7i1.7417>.

<sup>7</sup> Winda Siti Jahroh and Nana Sutarna, 'Pendidikan Karakter Sebagai Upaya Mengatasi Degradasi Moral', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Inovasi Pendidikan*, 2016, pp. 395–402 <<https://jurnal.fkip.uns.ac.id/index.php/snip/article/view/8955>>.

<sup>8</sup> Musa, 'Studi Literatur : Degradasi Moral Di Kalangan Remaja'.

<sup>9</sup> Noor Khalilati, Roly Marwan Mathuridy, and Mesti Nurjayanti, 'Hubungan Fungsi Sosialisasi Keluarga Dengan Perilaku Menyimpang Remaja Di SMAN 1 Kapuas Tengah', *Journal of Nursing Invention*, 5.2 (2024), doi:<https://doi.org/10.33859/jni.v5i2.582>.

<sup>10</sup> Hidayat and others, 'Urgensi Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menghadapi Degradasi Moral'.

<sup>11</sup> Rafika Khoirina and Fandi Akhmad, 'Pendidikan Karakter Sebagai Upaya Mengatasi Degradasi Moral Remaja Di Era Globalisasi', *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Hasil Pelaksanaan Program Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan*, 2.1 (2022) <<https://seminar.uad.ac.id/index.php/semhasmengajar/article/viewFile/7116/1943>>.

<sup>12</sup> Gunawan Santoso and others, 'Hubungan Lingkungan Sekolah Dengan Karakter Sopan Santun Siswa', *Jupetra: Jurnal Pendidikan Transformatif*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 91–99, doi:<https://doi.org/10.9000/jupetra.v2i1.131>.

disharmonious household conditions, the prevalence of drugs, and the presence of various forms of media such as writing, images, broadcasts, and art that do not pay attention to moral aspects. Furthermore, limited guidance in filling free time in positive ways also contributes to poor moral development. This factor is also caused by the lack of guidance and counseling places for adolescents and individuals, which leads to poor moral development.<sup>13</sup>

Some argue that the decline in adolescent morality is driven by several underlying factors. First, family problems. The family is considered the most important and significant influence and cause in shaping the principles of a person's moral growth. Second, uncontrolled social interactions. Numerous cases today demonstrate that unhealthy environmental influences can lead to immoral behavior in society.<sup>14</sup> Third, mass media also plays a significant role, particularly through print and electronic media. Fourth, selfishness and an over-emphasis on material things also have a significant impact, as evidenced by adolescents' desire for personal gain and their view of money as more important than anything else.<sup>15</sup> Fifth, information and communication technology is developing very rapidly, but due to the lack of filtering and transparency of information, people can access various types of information, including teenagers and children.<sup>16</sup>

The distortion of core Islamic values in education occurs when values such as honesty, responsibility, justice, and modesty are no longer applied in daily life. Many students only understand Islamic teachings theoretically, without truly understanding their moral and social meaning. This problem is further exacerbated by the influence of global culture and digital media, which often portray lifestyles that contradict Islamic principles. All religions are, in fact, a guide for their followers.<sup>17</sup> Religious teachings encompass all aspects of life, aiming to shape individuals with good morals and the proper practice of worship. However, in the real world, deviations from religious teachings often occur. These deviations can take the form of misunderstandings, limited understanding, or even the use of demands for specific purposes. The result is a worrying moral decline. Therefore, education plays a crucial role in spreading

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<sup>13</sup> Hidayat and others, 'Urgensi Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menghadapi Degradasi Moral'.

<sup>14</sup> Musa, 'Studi Literatur : Degradasi Moral Di Kalangan Remaja'.

<sup>15</sup> Citra Imelda Usman, 'Urgensi Moral Remaja Dan Upaya Orang Tua Dalam Mengatasinya', *Educational Guidance and Counseling Development Journal*, 2.2 (2019), p. 55, doi:<https://doi.org/10.24014/egcdj.v2i2.8262>.

<sup>16</sup> Nurbaiti Marufah, Hayatul Khairul Rahmat, and I Dewa Ketut Kerta Widana, 'Degradasi Moral Sebagai Dampak Kejahatan Siber Pada Generasi Millennial Di Indonesia', *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, 7.1 (2020), doi:<https://doi.org/10.31604/jips.v7i1.2020.191-201>.

<sup>17</sup> Marufah, Rahmat, and Widana, 'Degradasi Moral Sebagai Dampak Kejahatan Siber Pada Generasi Millennial Di Indonesia'.

religion and developing a person's moral ethics.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, moral values must exist within an individual, because values will determine how the individual behaves.

Moral and ethical values are typically acquired within the family. Parents are role models and the first school for students. Within the family, students must demonstrate and practice moral values, as some children tend to imitate their parents' actions. Religious values are inherently ingrained, as they are absolute and eternal, independent of place, time, or circumstance.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, someone who has strong religious beliefs can maintain the values of that religion in real life, and is not easily influenced by developments in the times that can cause a decline in morals, which often occurs in today's society, especially among the younger generation.

Transformation in Islamic education is essential to address today's challenges and return to its role as a vehicle for the formation of national morals and character. Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as an integral part of the national education system, plays a crucial role in addressing the current moral decline. Islamic education goes beyond teaching religious knowledge; it also shapes students' character, spirituality, and morals, fostering good morals and Islamic personalities.<sup>20</sup> However, the old paradigm of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which relies on memorization and dogma, needs to be transformed into a more contextual and transformative model. This means that PAI must be able to adapt to students' social and cultural dynamics without losing fundamental Islamic values.

Islamic Education (PAI) should be an effort to shape and develop students to continue to understand Islamic teachings comprehensively and deeply and internalize its goals, so that they will later be able to apply and internalize Islam as a way of life.<sup>21</sup> However, on the other hand, many phenomena have emerged in various news reports, demonstrating immoral behavior, particularly among today's youth. Various media reports depict immoral acts such as bullying, theft, brawls, murder, assault, and much more. If this moral decline is allowed to continue or even considered normal, it will create disorder that could lead to the disintegration of the nation, state, and religion. This incident presents an obstacle that must be immediately addressed by institutions, especially within the Islamic education sector.<sup>22</sup> To overcome this problem, the

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<sup>18</sup> Veronica Rebecca Suryandri, Nayya Agasta Eka Putri, and Zaskia Mahaputri Setianingrum, 'Distorsi Ajaran Keagamaan Dan Krisis Moral Dalam Perspektif Agama Islam', *Moderasi: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer*, 2.1 (2025) <<https://journal.forikami.com/index.php/moderasi/article/view/881>>.

<sup>19</sup> Jumriana, 'Pendidikan Islam Dan Dekadensi Moral'.

<sup>20</sup> Muhaimin, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam: Upaya Mengefektifkan Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah* (Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021).

<sup>21</sup> Z Darajat, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Bumi Aksara, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Muhaimin, *Nuansa Baru Pendidikan Islam Mengenai Benang Kusut Dunia Pendidikan* (Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006).

author conducted a study of several literature and research results related to Islamic Religious Education in overcoming moral degradation resulting from the distortion of core Islamic values.

Several studies show that students' moral degradation has received serious attention and has been included in various empirical studies, for example research by Revalina, Moeis & Indrawadi (2023) which found forms of moral decline such as weak religious, humanitarian, and student unity values at SMP Negeri 30 Muaro Jambi and the causal factors including the influence of gadgets or social media.<sup>23</sup> In addition, research by Purwasih (2023) in his literature review emphasized that technological advances and easy access to negative content are one of the main triggers of moral degradation in elementary school students in the digital era, with recommendations for the need for integrated character education interventions.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, research by Zahraini & Hajaroh (2024) examined moral distortion due to social media and concluded that Islamic religious education in schools must be optimized as a preventive effort through the instillation of religious values.<sup>25</sup>

At SMP PSM Tanen Rejotangan Tulungagung, the phenomenon of moral degradation of students is also beginning to appear, which mostly consists of a decline in discipline and a decline in ethics or manners that occur among students, such as low participation in religious activities, the emergence of impolite behavior, and a decline in enthusiasm for learning. To respond to this, Islamic Religious Education teachers together with the school are trying to transform in various aspects, starting from updating learning methods, implementing a values-based approach, to strengthening religious culture through habituation activities such as congregational prayer, tadarus, yasinan, and character building to raise a generation with moral awareness.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that moral degradation and distortion of Islamic values among students constitute a serious challenge for the world of education, especially for Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which plays a crucial role in the formation of morals and character. Phenomena such as declining discipline, manners, and religious fervor indicate the need for a more contextual transformation of Islamic education and one oriented toward the internalization of moral values. The researcher's interest arose from concern over the condition of students at SMP PSM Tanen Rejotangan Tulungagung who showed symptoms of moral decline, with the hope that this research can contribute to

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<sup>23</sup> Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis, and Junaidi Indrawadi, 'Degradasi Moral Siswa-Siswi Dalam Penerapan Nilai Pancasila Ditinjau Dari Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Sebagai Pendidikan Karakter', *Jurnal Moral Kemasyarakatan*, 8.1 (2023), doi:<https://doi.org/10.21067/jmk.v8i1.8278>.

<sup>24</sup> Yunita Purwasih, 'Faktor Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Degradasi Moral Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar Di Era Digital', *Jupe2: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 1.2 (2023), pp. 161–71, doi:<https://doi.org/10.54832/jupe2.v1i2.151>.

<sup>25</sup> Zahraini and Siti Hajaroh, 'Upaya Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Mengatasi Distorsi Moral Siswa Akibat Media Sosial', *SEMESTA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 2.3 (2024), pp. 149–57, doi:<https://doi.org/10.70115/semesta.v2i3.174>.

strengthening character education based on Islamic values. The main objective of this research is to analyze the forms, causal factors, and strategies for transforming Islamic education in addressing the moral degradation of students in schools.

## **Methods**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a field research type (*field research*). This research aims to describe and explain a situation or phenomenon that is currently occurring based on facts and information obtained directly from the field.<sup>26</sup> The location of this research is SMP PSM Tanen Rejotongan Tulungagung, located on Jl. Raya Kandung, Purwodadi Kidul Village, Tanen Village, Rejotongan District, Tulungagung Regency. The data collection instrument in this research is the researcher herself. When collecting data, the researcher is supported by interview guidelines and indirect observation. Some of the techniques used by the researcher in collecting data in the field are: participant observation by collecting data by directly observing the research object in the field, in-depth interviews conducted by digging for information through direct interviews to obtain answers to research questions, as well as documentation related to books, texts, literature or other archives related to the research. Meanwhile, data analysis in this research uses the Miles Huberman data analysis approach which consists of three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.<sup>27</sup> The research subjects included the Principal, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Guidance and Counseling Teacher, and students at PSM Tanen Rejotongan Middle School.

## **Result**

### **Forms of Moral Degradation that Arise as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Educational Values**

From the results of an interview with Mrs. Siti Fatimah, as the principal of SMP PSM Tanen Rejotongan, it was found that the most prominent form of moral degradation of students is a decline in the attitude of *tawadhu* (humility and politeness) and discipline in carrying out religious activities and studying. Many students are starting to lose the initiative to worship without being told. For example, in performing the *dhuha* prayer, most ninth-grade students still wait for instructions from the teacher to begin praying. In contrast, seventh-grade students are relatively easier to direct and more obedient to teacher commands. The principal also explained that there is actually an Islamic value-based character program introduced during the School

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<sup>26</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Alfabeta, 2015).

<sup>27</sup> Huberman Miles and Saldana, *Quantitative Data Analysis* (SAGE Publications, 2014).

Environment Introduction Period (MPLS), namely "7 Habits of Great Children". However, the implementation of these values has not been fully embedded in students' daily behavior. Values such as discipline, politeness, and responsibility still depend on teacher supervision.

According to Mr. Septian Rendra Wicaksono, the vice principal for student affairs and guidance counselor, the most common form of social deviation is a lack of discipline and a decline in polite language (*unggah-ungguh*) toward teachers and fellow students. One concrete example is students speaking in everyday language to teachers without using *krama* language, which should show respect, especially in the Javanese cultural context. The decline in discipline is also evident in behavior such as arriving late, not bringing learning supplies, and an attitude of indifference to school activities.

According to Ms. Bintang Sunny Hakimah, an Islamic Religious Education teacher, the most prominent symptoms of moral degradation can be seen in two ways: verbal and behavioral. Verbally, students have a habit of using harsh words during the learning process. In terms of behavior, students sometimes make impolite gestures such as sticking up their middle fingers or disrespecting teachers. Furthermore, in terms of religious observance, there has been a decline in discipline in performing congregational *Dhuha* and *Dhuhur* prayers. Students will only perform prayers when instructed, and some even choose not to participate at all.

Interviews with several students at Tanen Rejotangan PSM Middle School revealed that the behaviors they frequently engage in unknowingly fall into the category of mild moral decline, such as arriving late to school, skipping class, using rude language, and disrespecting teachers. Interestingly, they acknowledged and acknowledged that their actions were inappropriate, but considered them normal because many of their peers did so. Students also admitted that they were more devout in their worship when a teacher was supervising. This suggests that their religious awareness is still external (controlled from outside), not yet an internal moral awareness.

### **Factors Causing Moral Degradation that Emerges as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Educational Values**

According to Siti Fatinah, the principal, family factors are the primary cause of moral degradation among students. Many parents work abroad as Indonesian migrant workers (TKI), reducing supervision and attention to their children. Children who should receive role models and reinforcement of values instead grow up emotionally unstable due to the loss of their primary caregiver. Statements from Bintang Sunny Hakimah, a religious education teacher, and Septian Rendra Wicaksono, the vice principal for student affairs, also emphasized that *familybroken home* Or, broken families can trigger negative behaviors such as truancy, rude

language, and lack of discipline in religious practices. Children from such families often seek attention at school through deviant behavior.

Interviews with Mr. Septian Rendra Wicaksono, the vice principal for student affairs and guidance counselor, revealed that the friendships around home and school contribute to students' moral decline. Several students admitted to frequently skipping school due to friends' invitations, and some even missed school without a clear reason. The social factor arises when students are less selective in choosing friends. They tend to join groups that offer social recognition without considering moral values.

According to Ms. Bintang Sunny Hakimah, an Islamic Education teacher, social media is the most dominant external factor triggering moral degradation in students. Although the school has implemented a policy prohibiting cell phones, the teacher acknowledged that social media use remains unregulated. Many students use social media outside of school hours without parental supervision. The Islamic Education teacher also stated that social media often becomes a place for students to seek self-validation, especially those from dysfunctional families.

### **School Strategies and Policies in Addressing Moral Degradation that Emerges as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Values**

Interviews with teachers indicate that SMP PSM Tanen Rejotangan has implemented various structured religious programs as an effort to prevent moral degradation of students. Ms. Siti Fatimah, the principal, explained that activities such as congregational Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers, Yasin and Tahlil recitations every Friday, yellow book recitations with the school committee, and routine istighotsah activities are part of the religious habituation agenda in the school environment. In addition to these routine activities, the school also holds a "Friday Legi Keliling Desa" activity, where students and teachers perform Yasinan and Tahlil recitations at mosques or prayer rooms around the school. The principal also emphasized that all these forms of habituation are part of the strategy to internalize Islamic Religious Education values so that students' religious behavior is not only limited to knowledge, but also becomes part of their lifestyle habits.

Based on the explanation of Mr. Septian Rendra Wicaksono as the vice principal for student affairs, the school also collaborates with external parties such as the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and the Public Health Center (Puskesmas) to screen students who smoke or are indicated to have deviant behavior, as well as provide socialization about the dangers of cigarettes and alcohol.

The statement by Ms. Bintang Sunny Hakimah as an Islamic Religious Education teacher and Mr. Septian Rendra Wicaksno who also serves as a guidance and counseling teacher stated that the school implemented educational sanctions as a form of guidance. Ms. Siti Fatinah as the principal also explained the same thing that if there are moral violations such as speaking rudely, skipping school, or not being disciplined in worship, then students will be punished by reading or writing the Yasin and Al-Fatihah surahs. Meanwhile, Ms. Bintang Sunny Hakimah as an Islamic Religious Education teacher added that the teacher gave sanctions in the form of additional rakaats of the sunnah dhuha prayer or prayers before and after dhuhur. The Islamic Religious Education teacher emphasized that this punishment was not intended to scare, but rather to build moral awareness through the habit of worship. The teacher also collaborated with the Vice Principal for Student Affairs, BK, homeroom teachers, and Civics teachers to create a discipline system based on religious values. These results show that Islamic Religious Education values in schools are not only taught in a cognitive context (knowledge), but are also implemented in real actions through spiritual discipline.

Islamic Religious Education teachers are also striving to update their learning approaches so that Islamic values are not only taught verbally but also brought to life through contextual learning methods. Based on the interview results, Islamic Religious Education teachers also link inspirational stories and reflective approaches in the learning process, in addition to using lecture methods. Islamic Religious Education teachers plan to develop motivational classes in the future, which focus on strengthening students' values and spiritual enthusiasm. Ms. Siti Fatinah, the principal, explained that the school also synergizes by collaborating with parents to foster students' morals by instilling moral values within the family environment as a strategy to overcome moral degradation resulting from the distortion of core Islamic values. Ms. Siti Fatinah also explained that of the several strategies that have been implemented to address moral decline, some students are already aware of some of the morally degenerate behaviors they have engaged in.

## **Discussion**

### **Forms of Moral Degradation that Arise as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Educational Values**

#### **1. Decline in Discipline**

Interviews revealed that the most visible form of student moral degradation is a decline in discipline in religious and learning activities, manifested in clear behavioral changes. Many students have begun to lose the initiative to worship without being instructed by their teachers. For example, during the Dhuha prayer, most ninth-grade students still wait

for instructions from their teachers to begin. In contrast, seventh-grade students are relatively easier to direct and more obedient to their teachers' instructions. According to Nurhabibi, values such as discipline, manners, and responsibility still depend on teacher supervision. This decline in discipline is also evident in behaviors such as arriving late, not bringing learning materials, and an indifference to school activities.<sup>28</sup> This shows that students have not implemented their morals well, they still have low moral awareness.

Furthermore, from another aspect of worship, there has been a decline in discipline in carrying out religious activities such as the Yasin and Tahlil recitations held by schools and other routine activities. Students will only carry out religious activities or other routine activities when instructed, and some even choose not to participate at all. Islamic Religious Education teachers stated that student morality "fluctuates" depending on the intensity of teacher supervision and control. In line with the opinion of Hidayat & Subando, they explained that students' moral awareness tends to be external, dependent on supervision from teachers and parents, rather than emerging from a strong internal awareness. The character education that has been implemented so far has not been able to form an autonomous moral awareness in students.<sup>29</sup> From this, it can be seen that character education implemented through religious programs has not been able to form awareness in students.

## 2. Decline in Ethics or Polite Attitudes (Tawadhu')

Interviews revealed that the most prominent form of moral degradation in students is a lack of politeness, ethics, and humility, as evidenced by a decline in polite language (*unggah-ungguh*) toward teachers and peers. One concrete example is students speaking to teachers in everyday language without using the *krama* language that should demonstrate respect, particularly in the Javanese cultural context. These symptoms of moral degradation among students began to emerge after the pandemic. According to Zulia Ningsih, the moral degradation of manners is influenced by changes in learning patterns due to the pandemic, weak moral supervision, and a lack of role models. The concept of ethics and praiseworthy morals in Islam needs to be implemented through instilling polite attitudes in local culture from an early age.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to instill strong morals to overcome the almost fading moral values of students which occur due to several influences.

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<sup>28</sup> M Nurhabibi, A Rahman, and P Sari, 'Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Hadis Dalam Pendidikan Digital Untuk Mengatasi Degradasi Karakter Pelajar', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 15.1 (2025), pp. 78–92.

<sup>29</sup> R Hidayat and J Subando, 'Strategi Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Karakter Dalam Mengatasi Degradasi Moral Siswa Di Era Digital', *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 12.1 (2024), pp. 45–48.

<sup>30</sup> N Zulia Ningsih, U Hasanah, and D Putri, 'Problema Degradasi Budaya Sopan Santun Siswa Sekolah Dasar. Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 8.1 (2025), pp. 112–25.

The most prominent symptoms of moral degradation can be seen from two perspectives: verbal and behavioral. Verbally, students tend to use abusive language during the learning process. Behaviorally, students sometimes engage in impolite gestures, such as sticking up their middle finger or disrespecting teachers. According to Sofyana & Haryanto, moral degradation in the digital age is characterized by a decline in polite language and disrespectful behavior. Social media and uncontrolled exposure to digital content are key factors. Indications include deviations from religious norms, a decline in communication ethics, and a decline in respect.<sup>31</sup> From this, the occurrence of moral degradation in this digital era is often found to be due to existing digitalization and globalization factors.

## **Factors Causing Moral Degradation that Emerges as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Educational Values**

### **1. Family Factors**

Based on interviews, the lack of attention and moral upbringing is a major cause of moral degradation among students. Many parents work abroad as Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI), reducing supervision and attention to their children. Students who should receive role models and reinforcement of their values instead grow up in emotionally unstable situations due to the loss of their primary caregivers. *broken home* An incomplete or disharmonious family can trigger negative behaviors such as truancy, rude language, and lack of discipline in worship. Students from such families often seek attention at school through deviant behavior, resulting in moral decline. Tianingrum stated that children from such families *broken home* experiencing a significant decline in learning motivation due to a lack of encouragement and attention from parents. *broken home* causing children to experience changes in behavioral patterns and difficulty adjusting to the school environment.<sup>32</sup> From this, it can be seen that the family has a very large role or contribution in shaping student behavior, especially regarding morals.

In the context of Islamic education, the family is the first madrasah for children. When the educational function of the family weakens, schools must bear the additional burden of reinstilling moral and religious values. Purnomowati also emphasized that parents play a role in instilling moral support in students, learning support, and emotional presence, which also significantly influence the reduction of deviant behavior. Even if the family structure is

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<sup>31</sup> L. Sofyana and S Haryanto, 'Degradasi Moral Remaja Di Era Digital: Analisis Dampak Media Sosial Terhadap Kesopanan Berbahasa', *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media*, 9.2 (2023), pp. 167–80.

<sup>32</sup> R Tianingrum, W Saputra, and D Walandari, 'Dampak Keluarga Broken Home Terhadap Aktivitas Belajar Siswa: Studi Fenomenologi', *Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, 11.1 (2023), pp. 89–103.

suboptimal, the quality of the parent-child relationship can be a buffer against the negative effects of household disharmony.<sup>33</sup> From this, it can be seen directly that parents not only play a role as providers of basic needs but also as motivators, disciplinarians, and guides, especially regarding children's morals.

## 2. Social Factors

Interviews revealed that peer influence on social behavior indicates that friendships at home and at school contribute to students' moral degradation. Several students admitted to frequently skipping school due to friends' invitations, and some even missed school without a clear reason. Purnomowati states that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of the behavior of others (peers, the environment). When students see their friends frequently skipping school, using rude language, or receiving social recognition from the group, they may imitate these behaviors because they see the "social benefits" or acceptance their friends receive.<sup>34</sup> In this context, peer influence (*peer influence*) has a significant impact on the formation of adolescent social behavior.

Social factors also arise when students are less selective in choosing friends. They tend to join groups that offer social recognition without considering moral values. While the impact is not significant for all students, behaviors such as truancy or swearing have the potential to spread to other students and affect the school climate. According to Syawaludin, peer conformity is a significant factor in shaping social behavior. Group norms that support negative behavior can influence adolescents to engage in such behaviors to gain social recognition.<sup>35</sup> From this, it can be seen that factors in selecting friends have a very big impact on the formation of students' morals.

## 3. Technology or Mass Media Factors

Social media is the most dominant external factor triggering moral degradation in students. Although schools have implemented a ban on cell phones, teachers acknowledge that social media use remains uncontrolled. Many students use social media outside of school hours without parental supervision. This leads to exposure to negative content such as hate speech, consumer behavior, and hedonistic culture that contradict Islamic values. According to Liah, social media has a significant negative influence on the moral degradation of adolescents. Teenagers' frequent interaction with gadgets and the virtual

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<sup>33</sup> S Purnomowati, 'Peran Orang Tua Dalam Meminimalisir Dampak Negatif Broken Home Terhadap Perkembangan Anak', *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Psikologi*, 10.2 (2024), pp. 234–48.

<sup>34</sup> Xueqiao Feng, Ziwen Han, and Siyuan Zheng, 'Peer Influence on Prosocial Behavior in Adolescence', *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8 (2023), pp. 1879–85, doi:10.54097/ehss.v8i.4604.

<sup>35</sup> A Syawaludin, H Pratiwi, and B Nugroho, 'Pengaruh Iklim Sekolah Dan Konformitas Teman Sebaya Terhadap Sikap Remaja SMP Tentang Perundungan', *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan*, 14.1 (2025), pp. 67–82.

world influences their behavior. Gadgets can effectively influence the social interactions of the younger generation. Social media is often a place for students to seek self-validation, especially those from dysfunctional families.<sup>36</sup> This situation has led to a distortion of core Islamic values, where the values of manners, politeness, and responsibility are slowly fading. Teachers also attempt to provide advice and digital education to students regarding social media ethics, but these efforts are limited to the classroom, preventing teachers from directly supervising social media use, which, if not properly filtered, can have negative impacts. Saputra also emphasized that the impact of social media on juvenile delinquency includes cyberbullying, the spread of negative content, hoaxes, hate speech, and online exploitation. Several data indicate high rates of violence experienced and perpetrated by adolescents in digital spaces.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the use of social media by students needs to be supervised so that it does not cause any impact from its use.

## **School Strategies and Policies in Addressing Moral Degradation that Emerges as a Result of the Distortion of Islamic Values**

### **1. Efforts to Strengthen Religious Values through School Programs**

Interview results indicate that SMP PSM Tanen Rejotangan has implemented various structured religious programs as an effort to prevent moral degradation of students. Religious activities such as congregational dhuha and dhuhur prayers, Yasin and Tahlil recitation every Friday, yellow book recitations carried out by the school committee, and routine istighotsah activities are part of the agenda for religious habits in the school environment. In addition to these routine activities, the school also holds a "Friday Legi Keliling Desa" activity, where students and teachers perform yasinan and tahlilan at mosques or prayer rooms around the school in Tanen village. According to Maulida, there are four mechanisms for internalizing values: strengthening values in the classroom, habituating religious rituals, daily moral habits, and strengthening cross-contexts between school, home, and community.<sup>38</sup> In line with this, Mashluchah also stated that the internalization of moral education values through the study of the book *Bidayatul Hidayah* involves three stages: value transformation (lectures, stories), value transactions (habituation

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<sup>36</sup> S Liah, A Wibowo, and U Suherman, 'Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Degradasi Moral Generasi Z', *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Masyarakat*, 8.2 (2023), pp. 178–92.

<sup>37</sup> D Saputra, K Wala, and I Muliawan, 'Dampak Media Sosial Terhadap Perilaku Kenakalan Remaja Di Era Digital', *Jurnal Sosiologi Kontemporer*, 13.1 (2025), pp. 45–61.

<sup>38</sup> Ifa Maulida, Benny Prasetya, and Muhammad Faizal A Ghanib, 'Integrating Islamic Moral Values into Holistic Education: A Systematic Character Development Model in Indonesian Junior High School', *Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 6.4 (2025), doi:<https://doi.org/10.35719/jier.v6i4.525>.

and punishment), and trans-internalization when values become part of students' morals.<sup>39</sup> This religious activity certainly has deep social and spiritual meaning, not only strengthening religious values, but also fostering a sense of social concern and togetherness.

All of these forms of habituation are part of the strategy for internalizing Islamic Religious Education values so that students' religious behavior is not merely knowledge, but also becomes part of their lifestyle habits that can shape their character. In line with the opinion of Destatil Maghfiroh & Nur Aisyah, in the context of school religious culture, it shows that the process of internalizing Islamic values through habituation and continuous religious practice can shape students' character holistically.<sup>40</sup> The study by Jazilur Rahman & Ainil Yaqinah also stated that the internalization of Islamic values in the formation of students' holistic character found strategies such as habituation, role models (*uswatun hasanah*), and cross-contextual strengthening (school-home-community).<sup>41</sup> From this, the implementation in the form of habituation aims to form the character of students as a whole to avoid moral degradation.

## 2. Collaboration with External Parties in Addressing Moral Degradation

Based on the interview results, strategies for addressing moral degradation not only focus on internal activities but also build collaboration with external parties, such as community health centers (Puskesmas), the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), and local religious leaders. Schools collaborate with Puskesmas to screen students for smoking or other deviant behavior, as well as provide outreach on the dangers of smoking and alcohol. According to Hidayat, socialization is the process by which an individual or student learns to instill norms or values in their lives.<sup>42</sup> This activity demonstrates the synergy between formal education and community institutions, where moral education efforts extend beyond the classroom to include social elements outside of school. Syam also emphasized that collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is a key concept in education, known as the tri-center approach, effectively building student character.<sup>43</sup> So that forms of cooperation and collaboration are really needed to reach a solution or main way to overcome the moral degradation of students.

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<sup>39</sup> Luluk Mashluchah, Achmad Faisol, and Malinda Azizah, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Akhlak Melalui Pengajian Kitab Bidayatul Hidayah', *Al-Asbr: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar*, 8.2 (2023), pp. 97–104, doi:10.56013/alasbr.v8i2.2656.

<sup>40</sup> Destatil Maghfiroh and Nur Aisyah, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Melalui Budaya Religius', *Global Education Journal*, 1.2 (2023), pp. 304–18, doi:10.59525/gej.v1i2.265.

<sup>41</sup> Jazilur Rahman and Ainil Yaqinah, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Holistik Siswa', *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10.2 (2025), doi:https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i02.27524.

<sup>42</sup> Hidayat, *Pendidikan Moral Dan Tantangan Globalisasi*.

<sup>43</sup> Putri Syam and others, 'Kolaborasi Pendidik Dan Orang Tua: Kunci Sukses Membangun Karakter Peserta Didik', *Indonesian Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education*, 2024, pp. 58–67, doi:10.58835/ijtte.v4i2.374.

### 3. Implementation of Islamic Values through Educational Sanctions

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators implement educational sanctions as a form of guidance, not merely punishment. Interviews revealed that if moral violations such as rude speech, truancy, or lack of discipline in worship occur, students are punished by reading or writing Surah Yasin and Al-Fatihah. Meanwhile, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers impose sanctions in the form of additional rak'ahs for the Dhuha prayer, or prayers before and after Dhuhr. In her research, Jamilah stated that sanctions/rewards aimed at cultivating values (e.g., reflection assignments, memorization, and writing) have been shown to positively influence student behavior.<sup>44</sup> The Islamic Religious Education teacher emphasized that this punishment/sanction is not intended to intimidate, but rather to build moral awareness through the habit of worship. This approach is called *punishment as habituation*, where sanctions are aimed at forming good habits that eventually become internal awareness. This approach is far from the practice of physical punishment, which can potentially cause trauma.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also collaborated with the Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Guidance and Counseling, Homeroom Teachers, and Civics teachers to create a discipline system based on religious values. These results indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values in schools are not only taught through positive habits such as religious activities but also applied in a cognitive context (knowledge), but also implemented in concrete actions through spiritual discipline. According to Eva Maela, positive habits (habit formation) are more effective than harsh punishment approaches in fostering disciplined character.<sup>45</sup> From this, the collaboration carried out by teachers takes the form of a disciplinary system based on religious values with the aim of providing order in the form of religious, social and behavioral norms to students.

### 4. Implementation of Varied and Inspirational Learning Methods

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are also striving to update their learning approaches so that Islamic values are not only taught verbally but also brought to life through contextual learning methods. Based on interviews, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers use inspirational stories to address moral degradation (*storytelling*) and a reflective approach to the learning process, in addition to the traditional lecture method.

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<sup>44</sup> Jamilah Jamilah and others, 'Reward And Punishment; Implementasi Dalam Membentuk Karakter Sikap Sopan Santun Siswa Di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri', *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6.3 (2024), pp. 2885–94, doi:10.31004/edukatif.v6i3.6509.

<sup>45</sup> Eva Maela and others, 'Metode Pembiasaan Baik Untuk Meningkatkan Karakter Disiplin Peserta Didik Siswa Sekolah Dasar', *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 9.2 (2023), pp. 931–37, doi:10.31949/educatio.v9i2.4820.

Aimah also stated that a PAI curriculum that integrates moral values into every lesson can improve students' ethics and morals, not just cognitive aspects.<sup>46</sup> By implementing this method, it can certainly improve the morals and ethics of students in the learning process.

Teachers plan to develop motivational classes in the future, focusing on strengthening students' values and spiritual spirit. This varied method is considered more relevant for today's generation living in the digital age, where students' attention is easily distracted. The application of experiential learning (*experiential learning*) also enables students to understand religious values in an applicable way in everyday life. Sofwan Jamil stated that Islamic Religious Education learning with innovative and varied methods (*digital, project-based, storytelling, interactive*) increase student activity and understanding of religious values.<sup>47</sup> By implementing innovative and varied learning methods, it is hoped that moral values can be fostered in students through the use of exemplary stories and applications in everyday life.

## 5. Moral Formation through School and Family Synergy

Interviews revealed that most parents still play an active role in guiding their children to maintain religious practices, such as reciting the Quran and praying at home. However, teachers noted that not all families share this commitment, especially for students whose parents work abroad. Therefore, synergy between schools and families is crucial in maintaining the continuity of moral education. Syam also emphasized that collaboration between educators and parents is key to successfully building students' character.<sup>48</sup> From this, synergy and forms of cooperation with parents are very necessary in maintaining the continuity of students' moral education.

Schools also play a role as agents of value reinforcement, while families act as moral guardians at home. If the two don't work together, the Islamic Religious Education values instilled in schools can easily fade when children return to their social environments. Abdul Aziz, in his research, stated that family and community environments play a significant role in strengthening students' moral values in the digital age.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, it is necessary for families and schools to play a role in synergizing to build students' morals.

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<sup>46</sup> Choirul Anwar and others, 'Implementasi Keterampilan 6C Dalam Pendidikan Karakter Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah', *Primary Education Journals (Jurnal Ke-SD-An)*, 5.2 (2025), pp. 892–904, doi:10.36636/primed.v5i2.7325.

<sup>47</sup> Sofwan Jamil, 'Metode Pembelajaran Inovatif Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam: Studi Kasus Di Sekolah Menengah', *Wistara: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 4.1 (2023), pp. 102–06, doi:10.23969/wistara.v4i1.11241.

<sup>48</sup> Syam and others, 'Kolaborasi Pendidik Dan Orang Tua: Kunci Sukses Membangun Karakter Peserta Didik'.

<sup>49</sup> Abdul Aziz Muslimin, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Sosial Melalui Pendidikan Islam: Studi Sosiologi Pendidikan Pada Generasi Z Muslim', *Pilar: Jurnal Perspektif Ilmu-Ilmu Agama Islam Kontemporer*, 16.1 (2025), doi:<https://doi.org/10.26618/j4w5gw89>.

## **Conclusion**

Based on research findings at Tanen Rejotangan Tulungagung Junior High School (SMP PSM), it can be concluded that student moral degradation is a real and complex phenomenon, characterized by a decline in discipline, manners, and spiritual awareness in practicing Islamic teachings. These symptoms appear in behaviors such as arriving late, speaking rudely, disrespecting teachers, and a lack of initiative in praying without instructions. This phenomenon indicates a distortion of Islamic educational values, where religious understanding remains limited to cognitive levels and has not been internalized in daily attitudes and actions. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this condition by weakening social control and the habit of communal worship, resulting in students losing the spiritual routines that shape their moral character. Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, and student affairs officials play a crucial role in restoring this moral balance through habituation, supervision, and role modeling.

The main causes of moral degradation in students stem from the family environment, social interactions, and social media. Many students come from broken families or parents who work abroad, resulting in minimal moral supervision and emotional attention for their children. This situation is exacerbated by the influence of negative social interactions at home and at school, where students often imitate the undisciplined behavior of their peers. Furthermore, uncontrolled exposure to social media accelerates the distortion of values, particularly in aspects of manners, communication ethics, and social responsibility. In this context, Islamic education is required to transform by presenting learning that not only instills religious knowledge but also builds moral awareness and digital ethics through a contextual and reflective approach. Therefore, synergy between schools, families, and communities is a crucial element in building a sustainable moral education system that is adaptive to the challenges of the times.

To address this moral degradation, Tanen Rejotangan PSM Middle School has implemented various strategies for religious and character development based on Islamic values. Programs such as congregational Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers, regular Friday recitations of the yellow book, Yasin and tahlil (Islamic recitation) every Friday, and the "Jumat Legi Keliling Desa" (Village Tour) activity have proven effective in fostering religious habits and strengthening students' spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, the school's collaboration with external institutions such as the Community Health Center (Puskesmas) and the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) has become a concrete step in providing social and moral health education to students. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers also implement spiritually valuable educational sanctions such as reciting Surah Yasin or adding more rakaats to the Dhuha prayer as a form of character development, rather than physical punishment. A varied and inspiring learning approach through

exemplary stories and reflections on Islamic values is expected to strengthen students' internal moral awareness. Thus, the transformation of Islamic education carried out at this school into a holistic character development model that combines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, while emphasizing the central role of Islamic education in maintaining the moral integrity of the younger generation in the digital and globalization era.

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