

1 **MANAGING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND**
2 **EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL**
3 **READING PROGRAM**

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7 **ABSTRACT**
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Aims: To determine the positive and negative experiences meet by the managers during the implementation and evaluation of the reading program.

Study design: This study used the qualitative method particularly the phenomenological approach.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted in the public elementary and secondary schools in Digos City Division, Davao del Sur, Department of Education (DepEd), Southern Mindanao during the school year 2018-2019.

Methodology: The sample participants were purposive chosen. Seven reading coordinators participated in the focus group discussions. Researcher-made questionnaire was used to obtain information from the participants.

Results: Nine themes surfaced from the data analysis: implementation of the program; appointment of reading coordinator; amelioration of reading teachers; initiative of school administration; availability of reading materials; involvement in SIP/AIP creation; variations on identified challenges; heartening situations; satisfaction with co-workers and DepEd personnel; and recommendations for improvement. Each of these themes were discussed thoroughly.

Conclusion: Findings indicate that generally schools fit the implementation of the reading according to their situations. However, it is not noted that the selection for the reading coordinator is not generally observed. It also indicates that the school heads do not use fair selection and consultation. It reveals that teachers are sent to trainings or conducts re-echoes. It implies that school heads are committed to the professional enhancements of their teachers. However, in the SIP/AIP meetings, not all teachers are involved. In this aspect, incongruence is obvious. Teachers need to be in the SIP/AIP meeting because they are the front liners and have relevant understanding on the needs of the students. Further, it is observed that the participants conduct different initiatives to help the non-readers. It shows that schools are dedicated to serve all students. Unluckily, only few schools obtain reading materials; thus, school heads innovatively support the needs of their schools. This implies that for a program to be successfully implemented, school heads need to be pro-active and dynamic in addressing the needs of their schools. On the other hand, the participants identify various challenges. It indicates that different schools have their own different needs, thus, contextualization is necessary. Interestingly, teachers feel success when they see their learners' improvement. This simply implies that teachers value the influence they shared to their learners. Further, it shows that success of any program depends on the cooperation among the implementers. This implies that unity and understanding among workers is essential to achieve the purpose of any endeavor. However, it is revealed that the participants are greatly dismayed for the lack of support from the Department of Education personnel. This implies that the Department needs to evaluate the performance of their staff and therefore, define in details the role of the Department in any program they implement. Finally, the suggestions of the participants are not general. This implies that although there are challenges the schools need to cope with, they are able to fill in the gaps differently.

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10 *Keywords: Implementation, evaluation of reading program, Digos City, Davao del Sur*

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1. INTRODUCTION

No educational institution is immune from problems that converge with varied factors that work in and out of the school. This identifies challenges need to be addressed not only by teachers but also by school heads, who constantly manage and foresee the school's situation. There are various concerns assailing the educational system, especially in the public school. These include high dropout rate, quality educational service, management and supervision of the holding capacity, and working in the limited resources. In terms of quality education, the ability to read of students remains the greatest obstacle ³⁴. This reading problem affects both developing and developed countries. In a research conducted by ³, reading abilities of Yemeni students continues to increase despite government's program. On the other hand, ⁴⁵ finds that in the United States of America, it is estimated that around 6 million of the 48 million students enrolled have reading problems. As a result, various international organizations initiate intervention programs to address non-reading phenomenon.

In the Philippines, reading problems cut across not only in elementary but also in the secondary level. In the study of ³⁸ he finds that there are some levels of reading comprehensions that were weak with the grade seven students in CARAGA State University, namely interpretative, critical, and application. Moreover, in the Division of Digos City, the presence of learners with reading difficulties remains a problem to all schools. Every school year, numbers of pupils who belong to the non- reader and frustration levels are being reported which lead to the frustration of teachers and school managers. This immense reading issue requires desirable intervention program coming from the top leaders down to the front liners in order to solve the very root cause of the reading problem.

The Department of Education as the focal agency mandated to provide quality education initiated the Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) targeting successful readers by the end of Grade 3 and zeroing the number of non-readers in Grade 4. One of the two attached programs of ECARP is the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI) which is an assessment component utilized by teachers for their learners, and the other one is Reading Recovery Program purposely developed for low literacy achievers' pupils ⁴¹. In addition, reading corners in each school with varied reading materials are established to nourish motivation for learners and back-up the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) time in each class.

The latter aspiring programs and initiatives of the department to address reading problems are infused with management paradigm. The DepEd provided framework for the governance of school programs or projects like the ECARP. This structure leads to the adoption and implementation of SBM – School-Based Management anchored on the decentralization principle (RA 9155 of 2001). SBM describes the empowerment of the department to the school heads, teachers and other stakeholders, as well as the provision on some resources to the school level on the notion that they know better the root and solution to the problem. In relation to the implementation of School Based ECARP program, the program supervisors, school heads, teachers and school reading coordinator work hand in hand in the implementation and governance of the school reading program. Central, Regional and Division offices provide trainings for school heads and reading teachers on the management of reading program (DepEd Order No.18, S.2017). Collaborative efforts were done by the implementers to achieve a successful result on the literacy rate of all learners.

However, even though the efforts of the different levels of the department coming from the top down to the school in governing the reading program properly were massive. It is

64 alarming that for the past years the results of the Phil-IRI still present data with learners who
65 need more assistance in performing reading tasks. It's prevalent from each school that
66 teachers echoed their frustrations on having pupils with difficulty on reading and the
67 complexity of the demand to manage well the program. It can be said that this result maybe
68 an indicator that there are gaps with the management and governance of the reading
69 program. The supervision and monitoring on the implementation and evaluation of the
70 reading program are key factors for the success of the management.

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72 Hence, this study is conducted to explore the factors that caused the existence of the gap of
73 managing the reading program and on how the reading program is managed, implemented,
74 and evaluated.

75 76 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS / EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS / METHODOLOGY**

77 78 **2.1 Research Instrument**

79 This research instrument used in this study was the researchers-made interview guide.
80 These interview guide questions were based on the research questions and the same was
81 subjected to validation of experts. ⁴⁰ aver that validation of questionnaire is essential to
82 determine the reliability and concurrent validity of the questions while ⁵⁵ say it is significant
83 for outcome efficiency. The researchers believe that validation of the interview guides would
84 allow them to modify and re-think for the appropriate questions to be asked to the
85 participants.

86 87 **2.2 Research Design**

88 This study used the qualitative method particularly the phenomenological approach.
89 Qualitative method is used when investigators want to understand the target audiences'
90 range of behavior and perceptions which drive them ²⁶. Moreover, ⁴² mention that its focus is
91 to ascertain the essence of individual's experiences; while ⁸ says qualitative method narrates
92 personal confessions and reflections. Likewise, ⁹ says that in qualitative research a natural
93 setting, multiple inter-active and humanistic methods, emerging of information instead of
94 prefigured, and fundamentally interpretative are considered. ¹⁷ also mentions that qualitative
95 method involves 'non-rigid collection of information'. On the other hand, phenomenological
96 approach focuses on the experience-based design ¹⁷. It describes how an individual orient
97 himself to live his experience ⁵⁴ and it tackles what is and what to know in this world ⁵³. It
98 also answers "what really matters?" ²². Moreover, focus group discussion according to ³⁶ is a
99 better way to put together individuals from similar backgrounds with shared experiences. ⁵⁰,
100 ³³, ³⁹ also stress that focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among
101 interviewees will likely yield the best information, when the interviewees are similar and
102 cooperative with each other, when time to collect the information is limited, and when
103 individuals are hesitant to provide information. In this study, the personal experiences and
104 stories of the participants in managing and evaluating the reading program of their schools
105 were in focus. The information were culled through the focus group using the validated
106 interview guide questions.

107 108 **2.3 Data Collection**

109 The data collection procedures follow three stages. Preliminary Stage. During this stage, the
110 researchers obtained approval to conduct the study through a formal letter from the Digos
111 City Division Superintendent. After the permission was obtained, formal letters of invitations
112 were also sent to the different school reading coordinators for their participation. Attached to
113 the letters were the informed consents and protocols. Data Collection Preparation Stage. At
114 this phase, the researchers validated, revised, and finalized the research questions. After
115 which, the focus group discussion was conducted. In the focus group, the participants were
116 given equal chances to participate in the discussion. The researchers made it sure that there

117 was no manipulation by facilitating the discussion. With permission from the participants, the
 118 researchers recorded the entire interview procedures. Also, notes were taken by the
 119 researchers in order to assist in accuracy and transcription. After the interviews, the
 120 researchers verbatimly transcribed the proceedings. Data Analysis Stage. This phase of the
 121 data collection procedure involved the memoing, coding, and thematic analysis. In memoing,
 122 the data analyst made a vertical analysis of the information. In vertical analysis, reflections
 123 were formed. Together with the diagonal analysis, the data analyst made coding of the
 124 information. Then, patterns of responses were done to make themes and core ideas.
 125 After the recorded interview is transcribed, the same is given to a data analyst. The data
 126 analyst conducts memoing, coding, and thematic analysis. ⁵ mention that memoing is used
 127 to assist in making the conceptual leaps from the raw data. Additionally, ^{32, 57} point out that
 128 memoing is used to make reflections on the data under analysis. On the other hand, coding
 129 of the raw is conducted to facilitate the process of reading to create a storyline; to categorize
 130 the information into codes; and to clarify and interpret the information ⁵¹. Finally, thematic
 131 analysis is used to look for patterns in the responses of the participants ⁷ and identifying
 132 meaning ²⁴. It is also used to make the information more sophisticated ⁶ and rigor ⁴⁷.

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 134 **2.4 Research Participation**

135 The study was conducted in the public elementary and secondary schools in Digos City
 136 Division. Three main public secondary schools namely Ruparan National High School,
 137 Kapatagan National High School and Digos City National High School including its extension
 138 and annexes such as Igpit, Matti, Dawis, Aplaya, Soong, Balabag, Binaton, and Napan.

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 141 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

142 Presented below are the results of the interview conducted among the reading coordinators
 143 of the different schools. In classifying the information obtained, the frequency was
 144 considered *General* if the responses have 50% of more recurrence; *Typical* if there is 21-49
 145 percent reactions specified in the interview; and *Variant* if the reactions' occurrence was 20
 146 percent and below. Moreover, ⁴³ mention that for better understanding and presentation of
 147 the results, a table may be included although the use of it in qualitative method is still
 148 debated.

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 150 Table 1. Themes and Core Ideas on Reading Program

Themes	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Implementation of the program	General	- doing practice reading daily - identifying first the students' reading level
	Variant	- pairing non-reader with reader students - putting reading corner - hiring private reading tutor - classifying differentiated materials - threatening the students
Appointment of reading coordinator	General Typical	- having no choice - lacking of personnel - sending to seminars
Amelioration of reading teachers	General	- participating in reading training
Initiative of school administration	Variant	- involvement mothers - asking donations from PTA - conducting reading after class

		- accommodating students during vacant time
Availability of reading materials	Typical Variant	- sourcing and downloading from the internet - modifying the reading materials
Involvement in SIP/AIP creation	Typical	- relaying to teachers y school heads - letting teachers involved to know the needs
Variations on identified challenges	Variant	- preparing of the materials - late submission of reports - conflicting ideas on the forms
Heartening situations	General	- persevering non-readers - developing love for reading - admittance of students to other schools
Satisfaction with co-workers	General	- providing necessary support materials - loving the learner
Satisfaction with DepEd personnel	General	- dedicating time for learners - unsatisfying and not extending help
Recommendations for improvement	Typical	- implementing no read no pass - undergoing learning difficulty consultation - providing guidelines who should pass

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3.1 Implementation of the program

Generally, the participants conducted a daily reading session with their non-reader students for 20 minutes to one and half-hour at noon time or late in the afternoon when all lessons were done. Moreover, assigned reading teachers accommodated all the non-reading students and see to it that all are present. Some students find the reading session enjoyable. Relevant to this finding, ²⁰ mention that usually schools make extended day session to address the literacy needs of non-readers and teachers find afterschool instructional time more effective because they have focus and control.

Variantly, other participants mention that identifying first the students' reading proficiency is relevant so that appropriate actions may be given. Also, others shared that in their school, they implemented the pair-reading approach where a non-reader was paired with a reader student. By this approach, a good rapport may be developed among students. Other participant also mentioned that they initiated to have reading corner for the students to stay while other teacher shared that some non-reading students hired private reading tutor for help. Further, other participant prepared differentiated reading materials which appropriately address the reading needs of the students.

3.2 Appointment of reading coordinator

Generally, the participants mentioned that the reading coordinator was informally offered to them by their principals. Out of respect, they had no choice but to accept. Other participants revealed that they were surprised by the announcement while others were given explanation that everyone was fully loaded and there was nobody to accept the position. Further, some teachers were lucky to be sent for trainings on readings and after which the reading coordinator was given to them. These findings run contrary to the usual procedures in choosing the right person for the job. Reading focal person may be selected based on qualifications because his or her jobs are to improve reading content area ² ; to make

179 reading assessments ⁴ ; to provide training and supervision ⁵⁶. Thus, how can all these
180 things be materialized if the person assign has little knowledge of his or her job?
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182 **3.3 Amelioration of reading teachers**

183 Enhancement of the reading teachers was generally experience by the participants. They
184 were usually sent to training-seminars or attend the re-echo seminar on the proper conduct
185 of the reading. However, although this was a good development, some teachers raised
186 suggestion that all teachers may be sent to the trainings.
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188 **3.4 Initiative of school administration**

189 The participants relayed different initiatives so that their non-reader students may be
190 catered. In one school, it involved mothers who would let their child read in the intended
191 hour. According to ¹², ¹⁹, ³⁷ reading practitioners and specialist support the need for
192 increasing parents' involvement to the literacy of their children. Further, other school sought
193 the assistance of the Parent-Teacher Association for the construction of a well-structured
194 reading center. Some other conducted reading class after class in the afternoon while other
195 accommodated non-reading students during the vacant period.
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197 **3.4 Availability of reading materials**

198 Availability paraphernalia is very essential in reading task. It revealed that only few schools
199 received the reading materials from the Department of Education. Typically, the participants
200 stated that with the material support provided by the school heads such as laminating
201 machines, they enthusiastically obtained supplemental reading texts from the internet. Few
202 teachers expressed that they spent personal money when doing the downloading of reading
203 materials. To make the materials sturdy and last long, they laminated vocabulary words.
204 Variantly, other teachers mentioned that they modified the reading materials to address the
205 different types of readers. In relation to these findings, ²⁷ stresses that students are
206 encouraged to read when they see abundance of reading materials available and the
207 reading takes place when students have more access to reading materials. On the other
208 hand, ³⁵ points out the significance of availability of instructional and learning materials
209 necessary for the implementation of any program. Thus, we could say that in the absence of
210 essential materials for the reading program, then its implementation may be short-lived and
211 ineffective.
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213 **3.5 Involvement in SIP/AIP creation**

214 Although teachers were considered as implementers of the activities in the school, they were
215 involved in the SIP/AIP. Typically, some participants revealed that their school heads were
216 usually present in the SIP/AIP meeting and the results of the SIP/AIP meeting would be
217 relayed to them. Thus, the teachers suggested that involving the teachers might be
218 considered so that needs would be identified and addressed. ²³ reiterate that teachers'
219 presence in planning is essential because they are the individuals who determine the
220 structure and organization of the reading program. Likewise, ⁵⁹ mentions that teacher's
221 instructional planning decision is significant in authentic reading context.
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223 **3.6 Variations on identified challenges**

224 Interestingly, although the participants had common issue of concern, they identified various
225 challenges. One was in the preparation and production of the reading materials. Some
226 teacher, probably because of tight schedule or bulk of work, didn't show concern. Hence, the
227 reading coordinator could no longer designate someone to re-produce the reading materials.
228 Moreover, some teachers openly expressed blame to the teacher of the lower level why they
229 passed the non-readers. Others showed concern on the late submission of reports while
230 others found confusion on the forms to be filled in. These variations of concerns among
231 teachers from different schools implies that contextualization of the reading program requires

232 adjustment on the part of the implementers. It also indicates that teachers' concerns are not
233 focused on the students' reading difficulties rather on the reading materials and on the
234 decision made. It is worthy to note there is no clinical diagnostic approach to determine the
235 students' difficulties; as a result, the reading program is haphazardly done. ³¹reiterate that
236 teachers must consider the need for explicit, systematic reading instructions for struggling
237 readers while exploring the constructivist approach. ¹⁴ also points if teachers want a change
238 in the reading skills of students, knowing and learning their needs is urgent. The participants
239 in their suggestions which are found on the later part of this paper are somehow correct to
240 suggest that proper diagnosis on students' reading disability must be conducted to address
241 the issue.

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243 **3.7 Heartening situations**

244 All teachers would love to see success of the students they handled, especially the
245 struggling ones. Generally, the participants' most delightful experience was when they
246 witnessed non-readers push themselves to their limits. They become interested to read and
247 eager to learn. Thus, improvement was somehow evident. Some teachers were also happy
248 to know that some of their previous non-readers were able to pass the admission exams
249 which required reading skills. These findings coincide with ¹⁶ who mentioned that teachers
250 feel their effectiveness if they witness their students' engagement in reading. Similarly, ⁵⁸
251 mention that because of students' engagement practices, reading comprehension is
252 achieved. Thus, students' achievement in reading due to their persistent attitude brings
253 affective delight to their mentors.

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255 **3.8 Satisfaction with co-workers**

256 All participants generally agreed that the success of the reading program greatly depend on
257 the cooperation and camaraderie with their colleagues. They all agreed that providing the
258 necessary support materials essentially determined the success of implementation of the
259 program. They also agreed that they needed to show love to their learners and allotting time
260 for them influenced success. This implies that teachers are living the emblem given to them
261 as second parents. ²⁵ say that cooperation among colleagues promotes achievement of
262 common goals; ²⁸ ; ⁴⁹ on the other hand mention that cooperation correlates with teachers'
263 instructional help and resources.

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265 **3.9 Satisfaction with DepEd personnel**

266 Generally, all participants agreed that they were not satisfied with the DepEd personnel for
267 two reasons. First, they had not extended any effort to address the reading problems and
268 second, they demanded reports to be submitted immediately. Thus, teachers felt frustrated.
269 This implies that DepEd personnel lack the initiative and humanitarian considerations among
270 the front liner teachers who implements the DepEd reading program. This may sound ironic
271 and paradoxical that the people who steered a program to be implemented are also those
272 who offer little or no support at all.

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274 **3.10 Recommendations for improvement**

275 Suggestions and comments were important part in any implementation a program. ⁴⁴
276 mentions that suggestions 'could improve the conduct of another program'. Typically, the
277 participants suggested to strictly implement the 'no read no pass policy' to stop the blaming
278 game and domino effect. Moreover, others proposed that non-readers needed to undergo
279 learning difficulty consultation to identify the address properly their needs. Lastly, they
280 requested the Department of Education to set clear criteria on who should be passed and
281 failed. Culling from the recommendations, it is observed that the 'no read no pass' of the
282 Department of Education is not observed by teachers. What makes them not abide the
283 policy remains to be found; thus, a mediocrity of situations.

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4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that all schools conduct their reading programs with variations in time. This is an indication that generally, schools fit the implementation of the reading according to their situations. However, it is not noted that the selection for the reading coordinator is not generally observed. This indicates that the school heads do not use fair selection and consultation. Moreover, it is revealed that teachers are sent to trainings or conducts re-echo. This implies that school heads are committed to the professional enhancements of their teachers. It is observed that the participants conduct different initiatives to help the non-readers. This indicates that schools are dedicated to serve all students. Unluckily, only few schools obtain reading materials, thus, school heads innovatively support the needs of their schools. This implies that for a program to be successfully implemented, school heads need to be pro-active and dynamic in addressing the needs of their schools. Earlier, it is mentioned that teachers are sent to for trainings and seminar, however, in the SIP/AIP meetings, not all of them are involved. In this aspect, incongruence is obvious. Teachers need to be in the SIP/AIP meeting because they are the front liners and have relevant understanding on the needs of the students. On the other hand, the participants identify various challenges. This only indicates that different schools have their own different needs, thus, contextualization is necessary. It is also showed that teachers feel success when they see their learners' improvement. This simply implies that teachers value the influence they shared to their learners. Further, it shows that success of any program depends on the cooperation among the implementers. This implies that unity and understanding among workers is essential to achieve the purpose of any endeavor. However, it is revealed that the participants are greatly dismayed for the lack of support from the Department of Education personnel. This implies that the Department needs to evaluate the performance of their staff and therefore, define in details the role of the Department in any program they implement. Finally, the suggestions of the participants are not general. This implies that although there are challenges the schools need to cope with, they are able to fill in the gaps.

The challenge to make non-readers succeed remains a big hurdle not only for the Department of Education and school heads but also to all teachers. The findings of this study implicate that a thorough, well-thought, well-funded, and sufficient time prepared reading program may be conceptualized before it is implemented; so that a smooth and successful reading program may be attained. The Department of Education may find appropriate time when the reading program can be implemented. Moreover, the department may hire reading specialist, say dyslexia experts to diagnose each the reading difficulties of each students. Conducting pre-tests and post-tests may not specifically pin point the problem with the non-reader students. On the other hand, school heads need to follow the protocol in selecting a reading coordinator. Further, school heads may formulate other reading programs in context with their schools' needs. They may propose to have a reading contest for non-readers, which will not only aim to improve the reading proficiency but also the confidence of the students. Likewise, they may also seek the help of private establishments to help in their programs. Lastly, the burden of making the students to become a successful reader may not be solely given to the teachers' hands. Parents may also be involved in the implementations of the reading programs because reading does not only involve the students reading capabilities but also their behavioral and emotional aspects which are known to the parents. Thus, hand and hand collaboration between home and school may be considered.

334 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

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336 The was no competing interest exist in the conduct of this study.

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339 **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

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341 To address the research ethics, the researchers conducted protocols to handle the
342 confidentiality of the participants' identity and the information gathered. Consent letters were
343 given to the participants to seek for their permissions before the conduct of the interviews.
344 Moreover, the aim and objectives, length of the interviews, and withdrawal clause were also
345 presented. Further, in-depth interviews were conducted in a conducive place to provide
346 ample privacy, little distractions, and comfortable environment to the participants. Also, the
347 participants were assured that the recorded interviews were kept by the researchers for
348 safe-keeping and would be destroyed after two years. The information obtained were used
349 for research purposes only.

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