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Development Strategy for Destination Branding of Ponorogo Regency

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ABSTRACT

The importance of destination branding is becoming more evident in the competition among places that serve as tourist, business, and even residential locations. The image or perception formed is vital as it shapes the identity of a destination. Essentially, destination branding is an effort to build individual perceptions of a destination by promoting its potential and strengths, ultimately forming a unique identity for that place. Ponorogo known for its strong cultural heritage, has not yet attracted much attention from the general public as a tourist destination. This study aims to identify the factors influencing tourist visits through demand analysis and to analyze the mapping of tourism potential by inventorying human resources, natural resources, supporting infrastructure, local community lifestyle patterns, and the support of the local government of Ponorogo Regency in developing a destination branding strategy. The methodology in this research destination strategy. Data collection techniques involve observation, documentation and literature review, as well as interviews with government officials, tourists or visitors. The collected data will be analyzed to create a mind map used in the concept of destination branding strategy design. The result of this research on the strategy for developing destination branding for Ponorogo Regency is a brand guideline book, complete with examples of its implementation in various promotional media., offering recommendations to the local government of Ponorogo Regency to increase tourist visits.

KEYWORDS

Destination Branding City Image Tourism Culture

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INTRODUCTION

The reformulation of Nawa Darma Nyata by the elected Regent and Vice Regent of Ponorogo Regency aims to realize the vision of medium-term development for Ponorogo Regency for the period of 2021-2026. One of the key aspects of Nawa Darma Nyata is improving the regional economy through tourism. Ponorogo Regency has various potential in the creative economy sector, including tourism, culinary arts, culture, and more. The existing tourism ecosystem in Ponorogo Regency can enhance regional revenue by being further developed through a destination branding strategy.

The importance of destination branding has become more pronounced in the competition among places that serve as tourist, business, and residential destinations. The image or perception formed is vital as it shapes the identity of a destination. A brand is something broader and more fundamental than a logo. In the book *Graphic Design Solutions* by Robin Landa, it is explained that many people

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believe a brand acts as the name of a product, service, or group. However, a brand is the sum of all characteristics and assets that differentiate it from the competition, including the public's perception of the brand (Lemuela & Chandra, 2023). According to Lynch, as cited in Yurisma, public perception of environmental quality and its values is influenced by the image and identity of the area or environment (Yurisma, 2021). Leveraging the creative economy to enhance a region's image also has a close relationship with various sectors, including tourism. Thus, through the creative economy, a region can become a desirable tourist destination (Sugianti, 2017). Creative economy tourism not only strengthens a country's economy but also fosters love and pride for the homeland, thereby reinforcing a sense of unity and national solidarity (Sutriani et al., 2023).

As much as 46.15% of respondents believe that developing quality and innovative tourism destinations plays a key role in the future growth of the tourism sector. However, there are still other factors that influence the growth of the tourism sector in Indonesia (Kemenparekraf, 2023). The development of creative economy tourism can also stimulate growth in the creative industries sector and increase the added value of local products, thus creating jobs and improving the welfare of the local community (Hasan, 2018). Therefore, the development of creative economy tourism must receive attention as part of efforts to strengthen national economic resilience.

Along with the development of globalization and technology, branding has become a key element in marketing tourist destinations, including tourist villages, to potential tourists (Perguna et al., 2020). Tourism stakeholders struggle to identify the uniqueness and value of their offerings, often hindered by limited access to effective branding information. This lack of insight complicates the efforts to create a strong brand image. Therefore, tourism stakeholders need to enhance their understanding and develop effective branding and promotion strategies to strengthen brand image and increase business appeal.

In today's tourism environment, destination branding becomes a crucial effort for regions seeking to stand out in competitive market (Kowaas et al., 2023). Essentially, destination branding is an effort to build individual perceptions of a destination by promoting its potential and advantages, thereby creating a unique identity for that place. According to Ritchie and Ritchie, destination branding is a name, symbol, logo, wordmark, or image that identifies and distinguishes a destination. Adiditionally, destination branding communicates the promise of an unforgettable travel experience and provides a unique association with the destination (Simatupang et al., 2021). According to Toding et al. in (Faradita et al., 2023) the main elements of brand identity are the logo, brand name, brand color, typography (font), slogan or tagline, graphics or special designs, brand values, and personality. It is explained by Safanayong in (Gunalan et al., 2022) that the presence of a logo in a product or event has a significant influence on the process of attracting consumers in the community. It also serves to consolidate and strengthen pleasant memories of the destination (Blain et al., 2005).

Thus, the aim of this research is to develop a destination branding design by exploring the potentials present in Ponorogo Regency, understanding its positioning, and subsequently planning the branding strategy. The next step is to implement the strategy with a visually engaging presentation, allowing the intended image to influence public perception through identity and mascot design. According to Keller in (Anggrianto et al., 2018) Developing identity is choosen because it is the key phase in image formation, involving the eshtablishment and maintenance of a distinct set of associations conveyed through the elements. While mascot have been recognized as valuable assets for promoting tourism development (Yamamura, 2015).

METHOD

This research falls within the constructive paradigm, viewing real-life occurrences in the social realm as complex, dynamic, meaningful, holistic, and interactive. It employs a qualitative research method aimed at gathering scattered and random data, which is then reconstructed into a coherent concept that is meaningful and easy to understand. In the qualitative approach, researchers are required to master the theory comprehensively, and during field observations, they must adopt an emic perspective, where data is obtained based on what participants experience, feel, and think as the primary data source, rather than from the researcher's own views (Yurisma, 2021).

With the presence of destination branding, each tourist destination can establish a reputable

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name that is trusted by tourists and potential visitors. Through this perspective, the presence of a brand for a tourist destination can strengthen the connection with existing tourists, thus benefiting tourism managers and increasing tourist loyalty, encouraging repeat visits to the destination. Destinaton branding has an effect to tourist loyalty (Rodrigues et al., 2024), which thourist can give the recommendation about having positive experience on the destination to other colleagues (Harjadi et al., 2023)

There are five stages in the destination branding development strategy used in this study: market investigation, analysis, and strategic recommendations, brand identity development, brand launch and introduction: Communicating the vision, brand implementation, monitoring, evaluating, and review (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The design of this strategy is expected to offer solutions for enhancing branding and marketing capabilities in developing destination branding strategies. Additionally, the research of Boom and Bitner incorporates the 7P model (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence) for creative economy tourism destination branding. The use of the 7P approach helps the researcher comprehensively understand the aspects that need attention. As a result, the research can provide more specific and targeted recommendations to enhance tourist experiences and increase the appeal of creative economy tourism as a unique and sustainable destination.

Data analysis is conducted using data triangulation with three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data reduction process is carried out by the researcher and research assistants by filtering important and useful data for the branding process. Then, data presentation is conducted to ensure that the data aligns with the research goals, followed by drawing conclusions. The conclusions derived from the data will serve as the foundation for creating SWOT to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are used to generate various alternative strategies; STP to determine positioning in market and segmentation accuratelly, and also USP to analyze differentiation from competitors and build a strong brand identity. In the next step, a mind mapping process will be used to summarize a concept that will guide the destination branding design.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ponorogo Regency is one of the regions currently developing its creative economy sector, with a focus on tourism. These attractions represent the diverse tourism potential in Ponorogo Regency, from cultural and religious sites to natural wonders and unique local culinary experiences. Through the development of destination branding and enhanced infrastructure, Ponorogo aims to strengthen its position as a competitive and appealing tourist destination. Based on survey results, Ponorogo has several leading tourist attractions:

- 1. Religious Tourisms are The tomb of Batoro Katong; Astana Srandil Tomb; Goa Maria Sendang Tirto Waluyojati; and Ki Ageng Muhammad Besari Tegalsari Mosque.
- 2. Nature Tourisms are Telaga Ngebel and Tirto Husodo Hot Spring
- 3. Man-Made Tourisms are Tirto Menggolo Swimming Pool and Soeharto Hill
- 4. Culinary Tourisms are Sate Ayam Gang Sate (H. Tukri Sobikun) and Dawet Jabung

Mr. Daniel as the Head of the Tourism Destination Division of Ponorogo Regency provides insights into the strategies and development plans for tourism destinations in the region. Ponorogo is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in East Java, offering a combination of rich culture and beautiful natural scenery.

1. **Key Tourist Destinations:** Ponorogo has several key tourist destinations that are highly popular among visitors. **Reog**, a traditional art form unique to Ponorogo, is one of the most iconic attractions. Reog is not only a dance but also a symbol of the culture and identity of the Ponorogo community. In addition to Reog, **Sendang Bulus** is another notable destination. Sendang Bulus is a pond with a historical narrative and is home to soft-shelled turtles. Visitors can enjoy the natural beauty and the unique presence of these turtles. **Telaga Ngebel** is also a major attraction in Ponorogo. It is renowned for the traditional **Larungan Telaga Ngebel** ceremony, an annual cultural event. This ceremony beautifully showcases the culture and religious traditions of the Ponorogo people.

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- 2. Challenges in Tourism Development: Despite the abundant tourism potential, the development of tourism destinations in Ponorogo faces several challenges. One major challenge is the lack of infrastructure. Poor road access and inadequate facilities pose significant hurdles for tourists seeking to visit Ponorogo's attractions. Additionally, limited funding for tourism promotion is another obstacle. However, local authorities are working to reduce costs and maximize tourism promotion through creative approaches.
- 3. Tourism Development Strategy: The strategy for developing tourism destinations in Ponorogo involves several systematic steps are Enhancing tourism assets through various innovations. Local authorities are working to improve public facilities and introduce new attractions that appeal to tourists; Preserving traditional culture, which serves as the basis for annual tourism events. Traditional ceremonies like Larungan Telaga Ngebel are not only tourism events but also efforts to preserve the cultural and religious traditions of the Ponorogo community; The implementation of the "fantasticponorogo" tourism year program. This brand was chosen to define the atmosphere of the 2019 Tourism Year, highlighting the large number of events, participants, exhibition materials, and the scale of events that promise a compelling and remarkable visitor experience. This branding is expected to increase public and tourist awareness of Ponorogo's tourism potential.
- 4. **Increasing Tourist Visits:** To increase tourist visits to Ponorogo, local authorities are working to enhance tourism promotion through social media and tourism events. They also strive to maximize tourism promotion activities with creativity and effective use of resources. Additionally, improving public facilities and accessibility is crucial for increasing tourist visits. This will make it easier and more comfortable for visitors to access and explore Ponorogo's attractions.
- 5. Long-Term Plans: The long-term plans for tourism development in Ponorogo include several strategic steps; Improving infrastructure and public facilities. Local authorities are focused on improving road access and enhancing the quality of public amenities such as accommodations, restaurants, and other recreational facilities; Developing sustainable village tourism programs. These programs aim to enhance the welfare of local communities through the sustainable development of the tourism sector; Raising public awareness of the importance of preserving traditional culture. Local authorities are working to increase community awareness of the significance of maintaining Ponorogo's cultural and religious heritage. By doing so, traditional culture can continue to be preserved and developed for future generations.

With these systematic and strategic long-term plans, it is expected that Ponorogo can improve the welfare and prosperity of its community through the development of the tourism sector.

Market Investigation, Analysis, and Strategic Recommendations Using the 7Ps of Marketing

By applying this 7Ps approach, Ponorogo can enhance its city image, attract more visitors, and provide a satisfying experience for both tourists and residents. The first investigation, analysis and strategic recommendation is product as the primary products of Ponorogo include traditional arts such as Reog Ponorogo, cultural festivals, and local handicrafts. The second is implementation that promote annual events like the Reog Ponorogo festival, local art galleries, and Ponorogo's distinctive handicrafts. Develop tourism packages that integrate various cultural and artistic experiences. The third is price that involves costs related to visiting, such as admission fees for events, accommodation, and dining. The fourth is implementation that offer affordable pricing for cultural event tickets and discounts for groups or students. Promote tourism packages that provide added value for visitors. The fifth is place where Ponorogo's strategic location and infrastructure that supports accessibility. The implementation is to improve transportation access to and within Ponorogo, such as upgrading public transportation and providing clear information at tourist spots. The sixth is promotion strategies to attract visitors and highlight events and attractions. Implementation: Launch promotional campaigns through social media, official websites, and local advertising. Organize a grand opening event and collaborate with influencers to gain attention. The seventh is about people by engaging the local community in creating a positive visitor experience. Implementation: Involve https://dx.doi.org/10.24114/gr.v13i2.63501 Available online: https://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/gorga

local residents in cultural events, such as providing training for tour guides and ensuring friendly staff. Encourage residents to participate in promoting the region. The eighth is the process by tourism packages offered through collaborations with both online and offline travel agents. Implementation: Develop an application to help tourists easily access Ponorogo's tourist destinations. And the last is physical evidence which physical elements that support Ponorogo's image, such as signage, public facilities, and promotional materials. Implementation: Invest in attractive and informative city signage, and design public spaces that reflect Ponorogo's cultural identity. Create high-quality promotional materials showcasing the city's uniqueness.

1. Brand Identity Development

After launching the city branding "Ponorogo Ethnic Art of Java" in 2015, the government has continuously developed its application. However, in 2019, under the leadership of the Regent of Ponorogo, Ipong Muchlissoni, the government reintroduced city branding with a focus on year branding to support the 2019 Tourism Year Program in Ponorogo. The branding "Fantastic Ponorogo," introduced by the local government, was used in events throughout 2019. The government also created a dedicated Instagram account, @fantastic.ponorogo, managed by a creative team to promote the branding and various events. After this year-brand initiative in 2019, the government developed the slogan "Ayo ke Ponorogo" (Let's Go to Ponorogo) to further simplify tourism promotion. This slogan was integrated into every event publication and destination promotion to invite people from outside to visit and enjoy Ponorogo's tourism. According to Davison in (Justin et al., 2022), elements of visual identity are closely related to the use of beauty. Aesthetics cannot be separated from culture, economy, and commodities. Visual identity becomes an important point in the interaction of these fields.

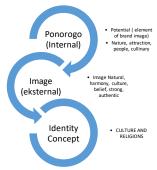


Figure 1. Mind Mapping

Concept: Religious and Culture presents a belief system that, when translated into a communication concept, integrates cultural and religious values into tourism destination development. For instance, hosting local cultural festivals that also have religious elements can enhance consumer trust. The next step in the process is the creation of alternative visual identity designs from this concept. The following are several alternative designs that have been developed.



Figure 2. Logo Skecth

The alternative visual identity designs were initially created in black and white to emphasize contrast and present the simplest version of a visual identity. A total of 14 alternative designs were developed, incorporating elements related to both religious and cultural aspects that represent various aspects of tourism in Ponorogo. These elements include symbols such as the gateway (gapura),

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waterfalls, hills, the sun, tigers, Reog costumes, and peacocks. These elements were selected because they effectively depict the diversity of tourism offerings in Ponorogo.

From the initial 14 visual identity designs, a selection of options will be refined and further developed using colors according to the color moodboard created. The color moodboard was developed through the process of selecting several photos that represent various religious and cultural aspects (beliefs) of Ponorogo. The colors most frequently appearing in these photos were then identified. More than 30 base colors were initially considered, which were subsequently narrowed down to 6 primary colors. Each of these 6 colors will represent a different type of tourism in Ponorogo.

The following is the color moodboard along with the 6 primary colors selected for use in the visual identity:

- a. Gateway (Gapura) Represents the cultural and historical significance of Ponorogo.
- b. Waterfalls Symbolizes natural beauty and serenity.
- c. Hills Reflects the geographical and ecological aspects.
- d. Sun Depicts the vibrancy and energy of Ponorogo.
- e. Tigers Illustrates the wildlife and cultural heritage.
- f. **Reog Costumes and Peacocks** Represent traditional arts and the cultural richness of the region. This approach ensures that the visual identity is both visually appealing and culturally meaningful, effectively representing the diverse tourism offerings in Ponorogo.

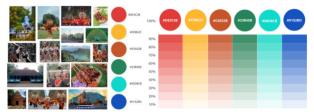


Figure 3. Color Moodboard

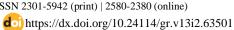
The six selected colors were then used to create color gradients ranging from 10% to 90%. These color gradients can be utilized as background colors, gradients, and various other visual elements that will be applied across both digital and print media. In addition to serving as the visual identity colors, these six colors and their gradients are also employed in the design of mascots and other promotional materials. Below are the six selected colors along with their gradients that can be used. These gradients provide flexibility in design, allowing for a range of visual applications that maintain consistency with the visual identity of Ponorogo.



Figure 5. mascot design alternative

The mascot design was selected as one of the media strategies because a tourism mascot can create an interactive experience and entertain visitors. Tourists can interact with the mascot during their visit and take photos together, creating a fun experience and helping to build an emotional connection between the tourists and the destination. Besides being present in costume form, the mascot can also serve as an effective promotional tool through social media and online platforms, positively impacting visitor numbers, which in turn can increase local revenue and create more job opportunities.

An appealing mascot design should appear friendly while aligning with the religious and cultural (beliefs) concepts of Ponorogo. Therefore, several design alternatives were created, incorporating the visual elements of Reog and combining them with other visual elements to ensure the mascot appears





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approachable to tourists of all ages and backgrounds.

2. Brand Launch And Introduction: Communicating The Vision.

Kusrianto in (Saputra et al., 2022) explains that message delivery in visual communication media is determined by concepts or ideas defined by the designer, such as typography, color, and layout, so that the message in visual communication media can be easily conveyed and understood.

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No	Brand Stage	Brand Activity	Media	Timeline	Goals
1.	Awareness Campaign: Ponorogo Regency has two main potentials to become a primary tourism destination: religious and cultural potentials.	Event grebeg suro,bersih desa,pagelaran pusaka, ziarah akbar	 Poster Billboard Event Transportation Banner 	Yearly	To introduce the audience to the annual cultural events held in Ponorogo Regency, which can serve as a key aspect of showcasing its tourism potential.
		Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)	 Video Youtube Website Media Sosial Merchandise Billboard	Once in yearmonthlyweekly	To communicate the events taking place in Ponorogo Regency and simultaneously attract the audience.
2.	Positioning, creating brand image	Brand identity across every corner of the region.	• EGD : WayFinding Sign system Supergrafis	3 Years	As a component in shaping the brand image that can be perceived by the audience, thus embedding it in their minds.
		Creating an Annual Cultural and Historical Festival in Ponorogo	 Transportation Event festival Agen travel Merchandise Poster Event Billboard Media Social 	Once a year	To attract the audience and introduce them to the culture present in Ponorogo. 40 mini
3.	Reminder	Social Media	instagramtiktokyoutube	Weekly	To instill brand trust in the minds of the public.

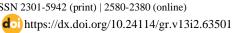
3. Brand Implementation.



Figure 6. Logo Design

The Ponorogo logo serves as a visual representation of the city's cultural identity and tourism potential.

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- Symbolism of Dhadak Merak: The logo prominently features the Reog mask, a central symbol of Ponorogo's traditional dance. This mask is iconic and represents the cultural heritage of Ponorogo. Reog Ponorogo is a traditional dance known for its vibrant performances and elaborate costumes, making it a key element of the region's identity.
- Cultural Elements: The design often incorporates other cultural motifs that reflect Ponorogo's rich traditions. These may include elements like traditional patterns or local symbols that convey the region's heritage.
- Color Scheme: Traditional Colors, The colors used in the logo are typically drawn from traditional Indonesian colors, which may include vibrant reds, golds, and greens. These colors are chosen to evoke a sense of festivity and cultural richness, aligning with the lively and colorful nature of the Reog dance and other local festivals,
- **Modern Touches** The color scheme is designed to be both traditional and modern, appealing to a broad audience while maintaining cultural authenticity.
- **Typography: Font Style,** The text in the logo is carefully selected to complement the visual elements. Fonts used might be serif or custom-designed to reflect the traditional and cultural aspects of Ponorogo. The font style is chosen to be legible and to convey a sense of elegance and heritage.
- Text Content, The logo typically includes the name "Ponorogo" in a prominent and readable font. The inclusion of the city's name helps in reinforcing the brand identity and making it easily recognizable.
- Design Aesthetics: Balance and Harmony, The design of the logo aims to balance traditional and modern aesthetics. It is crafted to be visually appealing while staying true to Ponorogo's cultural values. Versatility logo is designed to be versatile, suitable for various applications such as promotional materials, official documents, and digital platforms. Its design ensures that it maintains its effectiveness and recognition across different media.
- Cultural Representation: Cultural Heritage, by incorporating symbols like the Reog mask and traditional colors, the logo effectively represents Ponorogo's cultural heritage. It helps in communicating the city's unique cultural attributes and tourism potential to a global audience.
- i. Tourism Promotion: The logo plays a crucial role in promoting tourism by visually encapsulating the essence of Ponorogo. It aims to attract tourists by highlighting the city's rich cultural offerings and vibrant traditions. In summary, the Ponorogo logo is a thoughtfully designed emblem that reflects the city's cultural richness and tourism potential. It combines traditional elements with modern design principles to create a distinctive and recognizable brand identity.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and review

a. Evaluation Results

- 1) Brand Consistency
- a) Strengths: The branding efforts have successfully enhanced public awareness of Ponorogo's tourism potential. The logo effectively represents the diversity of Ponorogo, facilitating brand recognition.
- b) Weaknesses: However, the evaluation indicates a need for stronger consistency in brand identity, messaging, and customer experience across all communication channels. For example, ensuring uniform use of the logo in all promotional materials and tourism events.
- 2) Brand Awareness
- a) Strengths: The branding initiatives have made it easier for tourists to recognize and remember Ponorogo as an attractive tourism destination.
- b) Weaknesses: There is still room for further improvement in brand awareness. More innovative and diverse promotional strategies could help increase brand visibility among local and international tourists.
- 3) Brand Equity
- Strengths: The branding has successfully enhanced the brand value by positioning Ponorogo as a unique and appealing tourism destination, which has boosted customer trust in the brand.
- Weaknesses: The evaluation reveals potential for further enhancement of brand equity by

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reinforcing the brand's uniqueness and core values. For instance, developing modern and engaging variations of the Reog dance could be beneficial.

- 4) Emotional Connection
- a) Strengths: The branding efforts have established a strong emotional connection with the public. Tourists feel more connected to Ponorogo's culture and natural beauty through memorable tourism experiences.
- b) Weaknesses: There is still potential to deepen emotional engagement. More emotionally driven promotional strategies could enhance tourist experiences and strengthen their trust in the brand.

b. Recommendations

- 1) Brand Consistency
 - Recommendation: Ensure consistent use of the logo and brand identity across all promotional materials and tourism events. This will help reinforce the brand image and increase brand awareness.
- 2) Brand Awareness
 - Recommendation: Implement more innovative and varied promotional strategies, such as leveraging social media, organizing tourism events, and collaborating with major companies to promote Ponorogo as a tourism destination.
- 3) Brand Equity
 - Recommendation: Develop more modern and engaging variations of the Reog dance, and enhance brand uniqueness and values through intensified educational and promotional programs.
- 4) Emotional Connection
 - Recommendation: Adopt promotional strategies that are more emotionally engaging, such as creating compelling stories about Ponorogo's culture and natural beauty. This approach will enhance tourist experiences and foster greater trust in the brand.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, while Ponorogo's branding efforts have laid a solid foundation for promoting its tourism potential, there are clear opportunities for further development. By enhancing brand consistency, adopting innovative promotional strategies, strengthening brand equity, and deepening emotional engagement. Ponorogo can better position itself as a top travel destination, ultimately driving increased visitor interest and economic benefits.

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