

Inclusive Education Perspectives On Open And Distance Learners' Article Publications

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Abstract

Universitas Terbuka learners, as primary participants in open and distance education, are required to publish scientific articles as a graduation prerequisite. Nevertheless, the diversity of UT learners' backgrounds affects their readiness for publication. This study examines the factors that influence the success of UT learners in publishing scientific articles through the lens of inclusive education. This research employed a mixed-methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential design. The findings indicate that the success of UT learners' scientific article publications is notably impacted by the various services and facilities offered by UT, viewed from an inclusive perspective that encompasses access to UT's inclusive services, effective systems, and supportive social factors. These research findings serve as a reference for the ongoing development of pedagogical support, which will better equip UT learners with the knowledge and experience necessary to enhance their skills and facilitate their participation in the research community. Implementing tailored interventions and strengthening inclusive policies will further empower UT learners, thereby enhancing publication outcomes and supporting equitable academic achievement.

Keywords:

Article publication,
Inclusive education,
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education

1. Introduction

One important aspect of UT learners' academic development is their contribution to advancing knowledge through the publication of scientific articles. This effort aims to inform the global community about the results of their research while also establishing a strong academic reputation (Raitskaya & Tikhonova, 2020). Additionally, publishing scientific articles is not only viewed as an academic achievement for UT learners but also serves as a means to develop and expand professional networks (Schuller, 2017). In this context, UT learners have significant opportunities and a broad range of options to play a vital role in the progress of scientific knowledge.

The diverse characteristics of UT learners significantly affect their readiness to publish scientific articles. For many UT learners, publishing articles as a graduation requirement presents a particularly intriguing challenge. Previous research indicates that the obstacles learners encounter stem from their lack of preparedness and insufficient skills related to the publishing process (Dunn, 2021; Mason & Atkin, 2021). Additionally, they struggle with a lack of publication experience, a limited understanding of article composition, stringent journal criteria, and inadequate support from tutors during the learning process or tutorials (Shamsi & Osam, 2022). Therefore, UT learners are navigating complex academic demands often lacking the guidance, confidence, or resources essential for their success.

Moreover, UT learners face difficulties due to limited access to accredited journals, which are a requirement for publication, as well as constraints in receiving academic guidance. They encounter challenges related to their limited understanding of publication procedures and requirements. While

various UT services are available to assist learners with the article publishing process, such as Independent Study Courses, Scientific Workshops, and the Online Thesis Guidance Application for Master's Programs at the Graduate School, many UT learners often feel they lack adequate support to navigate these challenges. This is particularly true given the limited opportunities for direct interaction with tutors or journal editors, which hinders their understanding of the steps needed, from writing to submitting scientific articles for publication in the targeted accredited journals.

Currently, diversity and equality are significant issues in the field of education. The concept of inclusive education embodies a commitment that reflects a shared belief in the potential of every learner, and provides opportunities for participation in a fair educational process. UNESCO outlines the concept of IE in three primary categories: (1) system inclusivity, which appreciates cultural, social, and individual differences through an education system tailored to meet learners' expectations and needs; (2) access inclusivity, which ensures equal access to quality education for all; and (3) social inclusivity, which promotes close coordination with other social policies that address the expectations of various social actors and stakeholders (UNESCO, 2009). Moreover, IE is described as the development of an interactive, affirming, and dynamic learning community that empowers all members, irrespective of identity differences, by eliminating barriers to the creation of policies and practices grounded in established and democratic approaches aimed at social justice. This framework seeks to create, develop, and sustain inquiry-based learning communities that are free from bias (Done & Knowler, 2023; Stambekova et al., 2022). Importantly, the concept of IE is not restricted to individuals with disabilities; it applies to all learners, promoting access to quality education that fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance without barriers.

The application of the IE concept in Open and Distance Education has been documented in previous studies, revealing positive outcomes (Croft & Brown, 2020a; Nigmatov & Nasibulov, 2015; Soydan Oktay, 2023). IE aims to provide equitable and high-quality education, enabling learners to become lifelong learners through ODE (Iniesto et al., 2021). Additionally, ODE fosters fairness in learning via open education, which has the potential to enhance equity and promote shared knowledge among learners by embracing inclusion and diversity (Croft & Brown, 2020a). Inclusion serves as a fundamental principle that should be prioritized in the design of ODE programs (Lapum et al., 2022). Moreover, it has been suggested that IE represents a novel approach to teaching and organizing ODE, emphasizing not only the inclusion of learners with disabilities within the standard education framework but also their integration into social life at all levels (Nikčević et al., 2021). Collectively, these perspectives underscore the potential of IE to meet the needs of ODE learners from diverse backgrounds, transforming diversity from a challenge into an asset.

The publication of scientific articles is a graduation requirement, and given the diverse characteristics of UT learners, who are the primary participants in ODE, there is a need for pedagogical support. This support should equip UT learners with the knowledge and experience necessary to enhance their skills and prepare them for roles within the research community. A navigation system must be developed to assist UT learners in the scientific article publication process, offering step-by-step guidance and access to essential resources. Guidance is particularly important for them as they work to publish scientific articles based on their final research projects. This study seeks to explore the factors influencing the success of UT learners in publishing scientific articles from the perspective of inclusive education. Following this exploration, the researcher will conduct a needs analysis and develop a publication guide for scientific articles that integrates an inclusive approach within the context of ODE.

2. Method

The research design employed is descriptive qualitative, utilizing a questionnaire for data collection. This questionnaire is based on the concept of IE (UNESCO, 2009), ODE (Jung, 2019), and article publication process (Ali & Watson, 2016; Iskander et al., 2018). Additionally, 30 UT learners voluntarily participated in this research as respondents. Table 1 presents the data collected from the respondents.

This study employs questionnaires as tools for comprehensive data collection and analysis. Questionnaires consist of a series of written questions designed to gather information from specific individuals or groups (Slattery et al., 2011). The questionnaires utilized in this study will focus on collecting data regarding students' knowledge, experiences, and perceptions of journal publication (Creswell, 2012). This instrument comprises sections on demographics, insights from learners about

article publication support, and the perspectives of UT learners regarding services and facilities that significantly influence the publishing of scientific articles.

Responses will be analyzed using a Likert scale, while open-ended questions will undergo thematic analysis to provide a more profound understanding of learners' knowledge concerning the factors that affect the success of UT learners in publishing scientific articles, particularly through the lens of inclusive education. The procedures involved in qualitative data analysis encompass data organization and familiarization, followed by pattern recognition and theme development (Akinyode, 2018). The subsequent stages involve coding, developing categories, and formulating themes. Codes are defined as words or phrases that denote a singular concept, whereas categories comprise groups of such codes (Williams & Moser, 2019). Themes, in contrast, comprise broader or more comprehensive ideas. Moreover, Member checking corroborates qualitative data by providing transcripts, summaries, or interpretations to participants for verification, correction, or clarification, thereby ensuring that findings accurately represent their experiences, ultimately enhancing credibility, minimizing researcher bias, and promoting a more comprehensive understanding (Soysal & Türkmen, 2024).

Table 1
Demographic Information

Description	Results (%)	
Gender	Male	40
	Female	60
Age	≤ 30 yo	20
	31 – 40 yo	20
	41 – 50 yo	47
	≥ 50 yo	13
UT regional office	Bandung	10
	Banjarmasin	3.33
	Batam	30
	Jakarta	7
	Jambi	3.33
	Kupang	3.33
	Malang	3.33
	Medan	30
	Surabaya	3.33
	Surakarta	3.33
Yogyakarta	3.33	
Estimated distance from one residence to the UT region	5–10 km	26.67
	11–25 km	13.33
	26-50 km	16.67
	51-100 km	13.33
	More than 100 km	30
Internet network quality at home	Stable but limited speed	30
	The speed is adequate and often stable, but occasionally intermittent.	3.33
	Often slow or disconnected	3.33
	Stable and fast	63.33

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Table 2 presents the research results and outlines learners' insights regarding support for article publication. It emphasizes the most supportive learning environments during the process of publishing scientific articles, as well as the learning partners who assist in this endeavor. According to the findings, 66.7% of respondents identified guidance from tutors acting as thesis advisors as the most supportive learning environment for publishing scientific articles. Additionally, 56.7% of respondents indicated that their classmates are the primary learning partners who assist them in the article publishing process, in comparison to supervising lecturers.

Table 2
Learners' Insights on Article Publication Supports

Description		Results (%)
The most supportive learning environment in the process of publishing scientific articles	UT service centres (SALUT)	10
	UT regional offices	40
	UT library	30
	Study group	23.3
	Guidance from tutors/advisors	66.7
	Access to UT digital learning resources (OER, LMS, etc.)	40
	No supportive learning environment	0
Learning partners who assist you in the process of publishing scientific articles	Classmate	56.7
	Study group partner	16.7
	Senior students	3.3
	UT alumni	20
	Online academic community	13.3
	No one help	16.7
	Supervising lecturer	9
	Others	0

The responses from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed thematically through the IE lens. This analysis reveals that the views of UT learners regarding services and facilities significantly impact scientific article publishing. The findings are presented from the perspectives of system, access, and social factors, which serve as the IE indicators outlined in Table 3.

Table 3
UT learners' views of services and facilities have the greatest impact on scientific article publishing

Dimensions	Indicators	Excerpt
System	Supervisory lecturer's guidance procedure	It was straightforward to contact my supervisor, who occasionally reached out to me via WhatsApp and phone calls . She provided numerous resources that were useful for writing the article, which I found very helpful. I believe this approach contributed to the successful publication of my article. I had a supervisor who provided me with constructive

	<p>feedback, which positively influenced my ability to publish articles. As a result, the process of writing and publishing articles became quicker than I had initially expected.</p> <p>My supervisor fostered a positive environment for communication and discussion. She meticulously reviewed the draft of my article. Additionally, she assisted me by suggesting various alternative journals to consider, as well as providing access to numerous e-books that were beneficial in the writing process.</p>
Training/workshop on writing a scientific article	<p>As a UT learner, I need access to training and workshops on scientific writing and publication in addition to the various facilities and learning resources that UT currently offers.</p> <p>When I was asked to write an article based on my thesis, I encountered confusion and difficulties. Fortunately, my supervisor provided guidance. The most challenging aspect was selecting a journal that offered quick publication times and a straightforward submission process. Learners will greatly benefit from the UT workshop on scientific article writing and publication.</p>
Service for article publication clinic	<p>UT should provide consultation services and a specialised clinic for the publication and writing of scientific articles. These resources should be readily accessible and have flexible hours and arrangements that are customised to meet the needs of learners.</p> <p>Complications associated with article publication also have an impact on my mental health and motivation, resulting in anxiety, tension, dread, fatigue, and other side effects. In addition to article publication, it is possible that UT could establish a consultation clinic that prioritizes the development of learners' psychological readiness.</p>
Accredited UT's internal journal	<p>As a learner, I encountered challenges while searching for accredited national journals that meet UT's requirements. I believe my peers and I would greatly benefit from having access to accredited national journals at UT, which could serve as target publications for student articles.</p> <p>Students would greatly benefit if UT offered journals for publication. Identifying suitable journals that align with UT's requirements is challenging due to associated costs, a lengthy process, and the unpredictable timeline for publication.</p>
Supervisory mapping, BIMON, and other application systems.	<p>The study program directly assigns supervisors, so we are unable to select specific lecturers. Moreover, UT has developed a system for communicating with academic advisors through the BIMON application; however, during guidance sessions, I prefer to communicate via WhatsApp messages because my supervisors provide faster responses.</p> <p>The study program has appropriately mapped out the supervisors. The supervision process is carried out not only until the thesis is completed but also until the articles are prepared. The supervisors understand my difficulties as a student very well, so their contributions, especially in the article publication process, are very useful.</p>

<p>Access</p>	<p>UT digital library & e-journal</p>	<p>UT offers a range of learning resources that assist me in writing and publishing articles, including access to references from various national and international journals. The availability of a digital library is one of UT's key strengths, enabling me to access references from the past five years, as required by the journal I am targeting. The UT digital library offers a range of e-books and access to numerous national and international journals that assist me in writing articles. However, the poor internet connection in my location poses a significant obstacle.</p> <p>I obtained numerous references from the UT digital library, particularly benefiting from free access to international journals. The UT digital library facilitated my access to various references necessary for writing articles. During the publication process, the journal manager requested that I include the latest references, which I sourced from the UT digital library.</p>
<p>Learning management system (LMS)</p>	<p>Learning management system (LMS)</p>	<p>I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic I chose after using the UT LMS during lectures, and it occasionally motivated me to improve my writing. As an illustration, the discussions in the discussion forums facilitated my recollection of previous discussions. Despite the fact that the UT LMS did not directly influence the publication of my article, I am of the opinion that it was significantly beneficial to the overall process.</p> <p>Some courses require students to complete tasks aimed at submitting articles to journals. Initially, I found the challenge daunting, but I eventually recognized that these assignments provided valuable experience in the publication process. I believe it would be advantageous for UT to implement a Learning Management System (LMS) that focuses on article writing and the various stages of scientific article publication, including selecting a journal, using an open journal system, and submitting articles for publication.</p>
<p>Accessibility in communicating with supervisory lecturers and UT service personnel</p>	<p>Accessibility in communicating with supervisory lecturers and UT service personnel</p>	<p>I have never encountered any challenges in communicating with my supervisors. They are frequently accessible via WhatsApp messages. My supervisors frequently initiate communication with me.</p> <p>My supervisors significantly impacted my experience in publishing scientific articles. They provided invaluable assistance, providing both emotional support and technical advice. Their encouragement enabled me to maintain a sense of tranquility and assurance throughout the entire writing process, from submission to publication.</p> <p>I will only communicate with UT staff if I require information regarding UT regulations on publications as part of my graduation requirements. For instance, I will verify the prerequisites for the intended journal. My supervisor offered suggestions for journals where I could submit my work for publication. Occasionally, I reached out to the study program to verify specific</p>

	Accessibility of the scientific writing tools service	information. I obtained information regarding the utilization of "Mendeley" and "SPSS" among other instruments that facilitate the composition of articles and publications at the scientific workshop conducted by UT. From attending several webinars hosted by UT, I gained insights into the ethical use of ChatGPT and Grammarly tools. I found these webinars to help publish and compose articles.
Social	Interactions with a supervisory lecturer	I had a competent advisor who was easy to contact and not only provided corrections but also gave feedback that improved the quality of my writing. My supervisor was serious when giving feedback, but she did so in a manner that kept me from feeling stressed or panicked. This significantly aided me in publishing my scientific article. She also offered crucial guidance on my research topic, showcasing her expertise in the field.
	Learners' community, such as a study group	I communicate with my colleagues through a WhatsApp group. Occasionally, we engage in discussions when we encounter challenges or have inquiries. My classmates and I use a WhatsApp group to discuss the progress of our research, the writing of articles, and their publication. We maintain open communication and share important information about the publication process, including details about the target journal, necessary preparations, and submission guidelines. Additionally, we offer each other encouragement and support. My friends and I, who are in the same class, formed a study group to discuss the process of publishing articles. I feel more comfortable in a small group than in a larger one. We exchanged information on various topics, including journals and references.

3.2 Discussion

The process of open and distance education embodies the concept of inclusive education, which encompasses system, access, and social dimensions. The diverse characteristics and backgrounds of UT learners are recognized and supported by UT systems, enabling them to publish scientific articles. Not only is this accomplishment considered an academic achievement, but it also plays a crucial role in developing and expanding their professional networks (Schuller, 2017). For many UT learners, the requirement to publish articles for graduation poses an intriguing challenge. Nevertheless, within this framework, UT learners are presented with significant opportunities and a wide array of options to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

Respondents indicated that guidance from thesis advisors creates the most supportive environment for publishing scientific articles. UT learners rely on this mentorship to overcome isolation and navigate the process of publishing articles. To meet their needs, it is essential to build strong systems of communication and support throughout the research journey, preparing students for research, writing, and publication while accommodating their life and work commitments (Kara & Can, 2019). Additionally, constructive feedback, expanded opportunities, and accessible online communication platforms are vital for ongoing communication (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). This comprehensive approach directly supports UT learners in achieving their educational goals, including publication.

UT learners perceive their classmates as the primary learning partners who support them in the article publishing process, rather than relying on supervising lecturers. In the context of ODE, learners situate themselves in different locations from their peers, which significantly differs from traditional

educational settings (Keaton & Gilbert, 2020). While the lack of socialization poses a challenge in the ODE environment, the interactions among learners as they collaborate on article publication remain impactful. Collaborative interaction in the ODE context is a critical issue; however, creating a good social climate and sense of community by encouraging true collaboration through the effective use of technology may prove to be highly effective when learner characteristics and the learning context are considered carefully (Bernard et al., 2000).

Research findings indicate that when UT's guidance, training, and publication channels are functioning effectively, learners gain more confidence and are more successful in publishing their articles. The mentoring system has been identified as a crucial element in the success of these publications. UT has established an efficient remote mentoring system that aligns with the evolving landscape of learning. This system contextualizes learning within various physical or virtual environments that offer growth opportunities (Goodrich, 2021). As technology continues to advance, the methods of knowledge delivery are also changing (Turner & Turner, 2017). Additionally, tutors play a significant role in motivating learners, as students are not always self-driven to seek mentors or participate in online peer mentoring (Vegliante & Sannicandro, 2020; White et al., 2021). While they tend to seek information from diverse online sources, they may hesitate to pursue mentorship independently.

Respondents believe that academic writing workshops should be organized to reinforce the concepts and skills introduced during the course, such as effective manuscript structuring, proper citation practices, and strategies for identifying suitable journals for publication. The need for training and workshops in academic writing and article publishing highlights the importance of systemic academic support. Designing an online academic writing and publishing workshop should be a feasible, affordable, and sustainable training method suitable for low-resource settings (Hanafi et al., 2025). The workshop should address the structure of scientific articles, the fundamentals of academic writing, plagiarism issues, and the publication process. Moreover, recent advances in generative AI have revolutionized academic writing by introducing technology-assisted learning, resulting in dynamic, interactive, and personalized educational experiences. While tools like ChatGPT can assist learners in writing essays, summarizing research, answering questions, and generating code, they also pose challenges for higher education institutions, particularly in Open and Distance Education (Maphoto et al., 2024). To succeed, ODE learners must receive not only awareness but also targeted workshops and mentoring to effectively navigate AI writing tools.

Digital access is essential for ODE learners aiming to succeed in publishing scientific articles (Maphosa & Bhebhe, 2019). Although UT offers resources such as digital libraries, e-learning modules, and a learning management system (LMS), many learners face challenges in using these tools effectively. These difficulties stem not only from unequal internet access and the limited availability of suitable devices but also from a lack of understanding of how to utilize these resources and recognize their benefits for academic article publication. Additionally, digital literacy poses a significant challenge (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020; Sá et al., 2021); learners frequently struggle with navigating academic databases, citation software, and digital platforms for writing and publishing academic articles. The findings reveal that UT learners have diverse backgrounds, attitudes, and beliefs, which shape their experiences and utilization of these educational tools. To address these barriers, UT should focus on enhancing digital competencies, ensuring that all learners can engage meaningfully in academic writing and publishing.

Researchers require references to develop their academic articles as a prerequisite for publication (Mallik & Mallik, 2017). Unfortunately, UT learners often struggle to develop effective strategies for identifying, evaluating, and integrating relevant research, which negatively impacts the quality of their articles and restricts their ability to situate their research within a broader academic context (Kerlind, 2008). Despite UT providing access to digital libraries, learners continue to face challenges in locating and analyzing the necessary literature for publication. Additionally, as novices with tools like Mendeley or Zotero, UT learners may encounter increased frustration, frequent citation errors, and a more difficult writing process. Reference managers, also known as citation managers, are designed to generate bibliographic citations and automatically create a list of works cited. Modern reference managers help researchers manage increasingly large collections of Portable Document Format (PDF) files, web pages, and other documents (Francavilla, 2018). To enhance opportunities for UT learners in publishing

academic articles, structured support through training and mentoring on organizing and accessing references for targeted journals is essential.

In ODE, the LMS plays a crucial role in facilitating academic interaction and mentoring. However, the process of article publication requires various communication modes between UT learners and thesis supervisors, such as WhatsApp, email, phone calls, and BIMON, a thesis supervision platform. The quality and consistency of these communications shape learners' confidence and academic development (Long & Aleven, 2013; Ross et al., 2014). Effective communication offers clarity, emotional support, and intellectual growth (McFarlane, 2016). These elements directly affect how well learners' publications succeed. In contrast, limited or highly formal communication can create isolation and self-doubt (Egbert & Camp, 2022; Kahl & Cropley, 1986), especially for learners new to academic publishing. ODE must therefore prioritize both technological infrastructure and human-centered academic relationships. Regular feedback, culturally sensitive mentorship, and peer support across multiple platforms are essential. These elements help every learner feel acknowledged, supported, and able to contribute meaningfully to the academic community.

The interpersonal connection between ODE learners and their thesis supervisors is also a key driver of both motivation and the quality of their articles (Li, 2016; Nagy & McDonald, 2007). ODE learners depend on the supervisor to meet the publication requirement. Moreover, informal interactions, information support, and collective enthusiasm largely fostered by peer engagement strengthen learners' drive to publish. Peer support is powerful, and effective learner-supervisor synergy enables more focused mentoring, even in remote settings (Kardam et al., 2021; Styles & Radloff, 2001). Social interaction and community remain vital for the successful publication of articles.

4. Conclusion

The field of inclusive education has been subject to many forms of research over recent decades. Particularly, research in the area of Open and Distance Education and scientific article publication have been extensive, with researchers showing interest in emergent themes. In our study presented in this article, researchers examine the factors that impact the success of UT learners in publishing scientific articles through the lens of inclusive education. Universitas Terbuka learners, as primary participants in ODE, are required to publish scientific articles as a graduation prerequisite. Nevertheless, the diversity of UT learners' backgrounds affects their readiness for publication. They assumed that guidance from tutors acting as thesis advisors as the most supportive learning environment for publishing scientific articles. Additionally, their classmates are the primary learning partners who assist them in the article publishing process, in comparison to supervising lecturers.

The responses from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed thematically through the IE lens. This analysis reveals that the views of UT learners regarding services and facilities significantly impact scientific article publishing. The findings are presented from the perspectives of system, access, and social factors. Academic guidance and access to digital references are vital services that support successful publication for learners in open and distance education. Additionally, university systems, particularly Learning Management Systems and guidance applications, play a crucial role in connecting ODE learners with valuable resources and mentors, as well as incorporating various communication tools. These systems also provide social support from lecturers and peers, which helps to build confidence and offers extra motivation for learners to actively engage in the article publication process.

These research findings serve as a reference for the ongoing development of pedagogical support, which will better equip UT learners with the knowledge and experience necessary to enhance their skills and facilitate their participation in the research community. Implementing tailored interventions and strengthening inclusive policies will further empower UT learners, thereby enhancing publication outcomes and supporting equitable academic achievement.

Research recommends enhancing regular and inclusive scientific training services by providing free online learning opportunities that include certification focused on academic article publication. Moreover, improving ODE learners' digital literacy in using references, writing tools, and publication channels is a critical point to facilitate them with the required ability in article publication. Another critical point that should be considered is encouraging the formation of learning communities or active discussion forums to share publication tips with each other, not only for UT learners but also including a sharing session by involving tutors or experts. It is advisable for UT to establish a model for academic

article publication that is rooted in the principles of inclusive education, considering the profiles and characteristics of UT learners. Furthermore, this initiative necessitates close collaboration among UT stakeholders to effectively support students throughout the academic article publication process. This support may encompass assistance across multiple stages, including independent study courses, thesis composition, thesis defense preparation, identification and selection of appropriate target journals, converting these into scholarly articles following the specific templates of those journals, and overseeing the submission, review, and publication procedures, which also involve technical communication with journal editors.

The limitations of the research include the small number of respondents, which does not adequately represent the entire UT region or the broader context of UT as a whole, particularly in relation to ODE. Additionally, the data collection method is limited solely to the use of questionnaires, which could be further developed and explored. Future research should focus on creating a system that guides learners in the ODE context on how to publish academic articles. Such a system would help learners understand the process of publishing scientific articles that effectively summarize their research. Furthermore, additional studies should identify the specific needs of UT students and alumni regarding publishing in accredited journals. Based on these identified needs, future researchers could develop an inclusive guide for publishing scientific articles within the ODE framework.

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