

The Influence of Principals' Instructional Leadership, Organizational Climate, and Work Motivation on Teacher Performance: A Study of Public Vocational High Schools in South Dusun District, South Barito Regency

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Abstract

Teacher performance is a critical determinant of vocational education quality; however, empirical evidence remains limited regarding how principals' instructional leadership relates to teacher performance through organizational climate and work motivation as simultaneous mediating mechanisms. This study examined the direct and indirect relationships among these variables among public vocational high school teachers in Dusun Selatan District, South Barito Regency. A quantitative associative design was employed with 95 teachers, selected from a population of 124 using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.1. The results showed significant positive relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance ($t = 3.299$, $p = .001$), organizational climate ($t = 6.457$, $p < .001$), and work motivation ($t = 4.395$, $p < .001$). Organizational climate and work motivation were also significantly related to teacher performance. The structural model explained 73.0% of the variance in teacher performance ($R^2 = .730$), with work motivation demonstrating the strongest effect size ($f^2 = .505$). Furthermore, organizational climate and work motivation significantly mediated the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance. These findings demonstrate a dual-mediation mechanism, suggesting that instructional leadership is associated with teacher performance both directly and indirectly through supportive organizational conditions and stronger work motivation.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, Organizational climate, PLS-SEM, Teacher performance, Work motivation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in national development because the quality and competitiveness of human resources depend substantially on an effective and adaptive education system. National competitiveness is increasingly determined not merely by natural resources but by the capacity of human resources to respond to social, technological, and economic change. Goetsch and Davis, as cited in Perdana (2010), regard human resources as a critical organizational asset, while Pidarta, also cited in Perdana (2010), emphasizes the central role of education in developing qualified human resources. This orientation is consistent with Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which positions education as a means of developing knowledgeable, creative, independent, and responsible individuals.

Within this context, teachers occupy a central position because the quality of education is ultimately realized through classroom instruction. Teacher performance encompasses the professional execution of responsibilities related to planning, implementing, and evaluating learning and therefore constitutes an important component of school effectiveness. Improving teacher performance, however, cannot be separated from the organizational conditions in which teachers work. In particular, school leadership, organizational climate, and work motivation may shape teachers' capacity and willingness to perform their professional responsibilities effectively.

The importance of teacher performance is particularly relevant given the continuing challenges facing Indonesian education. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported that Indonesian students' performance in mathematics, reading, and science remained below international averages. National education also continues to face challenges related to teacher pedagogical and professional competence, including adaptation to curriculum reform and changing instructional demands (Ditjen GTK Kemendikbudristek, 2023). These challenges cannot be attributed to teacher performance alone, as educational outcomes are shaped by multiple individual, institutional, and contextual factors. Nevertheless, strengthening the organizational and motivational

conditions that support teachers represents an important component of broader efforts to improve educational quality.

One such condition is principals' instructional leadership, which focuses leadership practices directly on teaching and learning. Instructional leaders establish educational goals, support teachers' professional development, monitor instructional processes, and create conditions conducive to continuous improvement (Hallinger, 2020). Rather than functioning solely as administrative managers, principals are expected to provide professional direction and support that enable teachers to improve instructional practices (Sukmawati & Herawan, 2016). From this perspective, stronger instructional leadership may be associated with better teacher performance both directly and through the working conditions it helps establish.

Organizational climate provides one potential mechanism through which leadership may relate to teacher performance. A supportive school climate characterized by effective communication, collegial relationships, trust, and professional support can create working conditions that encourage teachers to perform their responsibilities more effectively (Indrasari, 2017). Conversely, unfavorable organizational conditions may constrain collaboration and reduce teachers' engagement with their work. Thus, organizational climate should not be considered merely an independent organizational characteristic but may also function as an intermediary linking principals' leadership practices with teacher performance.

A second potential mechanism is work motivation. Motivation reflects the internal and external forces that direct individuals toward particular goals (Sugiyono, 2012) and is closely associated with how individuals invest effort in their professional responsibilities (Uno, 2017). For teachers, work motivation may influence commitment to instructional planning, classroom implementation, assessment, and continuous professional development (Kompri, 2016). Instructional leadership that provides clear direction, professional support, recognition, and constructive feedback may strengthen teachers' motivation, which in turn may be associated with improved performance.

These relationships are particularly important in public vocational high schools in Dusun Selatan District, South Barito Regency. Preliminary observations indicated several challenges related to teacher performance, including limitations in the implementation of performance appraisal, recognition of teacher achievement, professional competence, organizational communication, and workplace relationships. These conditions suggest that teacher performance in this setting should be examined not as an isolated outcome but in relation to leadership, organizational, and motivational factors operating within schools.

Previous studies have reported relationships among these constructs. Wahyudi (2021) identified a contribution of pedagogical leadership to teacher performance, while Ahmad and Noor (2022) reported a mediating role of organizational climate in the relationship between principal leadership and teacher performance. Nurhayati (2023) demonstrated the contribution of work motivation to teacher performance, and Setiawan (2024) highlighted the combined relevance of instructional leadership and organizational climate to teacher productivity. However, these variables have frequently been examined separately or through a single mediating mechanism. Consequently, empirical evidence remains limited regarding how organizational climate and work motivation simultaneously mediate the relationship between principals' instructional leadership and teacher performance, particularly within the context of public vocational high schools.

Addressing this gap, the present study examines an integrated structural model involving principals' instructional leadership, organizational climate, work motivation, and teacher performance among public vocational high school teachers in Dusun Selatan District, South Barito Regency. Specifically, the study investigates the direct relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance, organizational climate, and work motivation; the relationships of organizational climate and work motivation with teacher performance; and the indirect relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance through organizational climate and work motivation. By examining these pathways simultaneously, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the organizational and motivational mechanisms associated with teacher performance in vocational education.

II. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative associative design to examine the direct and indirect relationships among the variables in the proposed model. Data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire. The model comprised principals' instructional leadership (X) as the exogenous variable, organizational climate (Z1) and work motivation (Z2) as mediating variables, and teacher performance (Y) as the endogenous outcome variable. The analysis was designed to estimate both the direct relationships among these constructs and the indirect relationships between instructional leadership and teacher performance through the two mediators. The study population comprised 124 teachers from public vocational high schools in Dusun Selatan District, South Barito Regency. A sample of 95 teachers was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling to maintain proportional representation across the population strata. The required sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error (Arikunto, 2002; Hadi, 1984; Priyatno, 2016).

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) (Sugiyono, 2019). Questionnaire items were developed by operationalizing each construct into relevant indicators and statements. The instructional leadership instrument was adapted from McEwan's framework (Muliati, 2013), organizational climate from Litwin and Mayer (Rahsel, 2016), work motivation from Herzberg's framework (Uno, 2021), and teacher performance from Robbins (2006). The questionnaires were administered directly to the selected respondents as the primary source of data (Sugiyono, 2015; Ridwan, 2026).

The measurement model was evaluated for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loadings, with $\geq .70$ adopted as the preferred criterion (Hair, 2022). Indicators that did not meet the specified measurement criteria were removed before evaluation of the final model. Construct reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with values of $\geq .70$ considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2024). Convergent validity was further evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023; Hair et al., 2024).

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS 4.1 for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and the distribution of the study variables (Ghozali, 2018). Following evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Model fit was additionally examined using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and d_ULS (Ghozali, 2022; Hardisman, 2021; Nurannisa et al., 2022).

Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. Statistical significance was determined using a two-tailed criterion of $t > 1.96$ at $\alpha = .05$, together with the corresponding p-values. The structural analysis examined both direct effects among the study constructs and specific indirect effects of principals' instructional leadership on teacher performance through organizational climate and work motivation (Ghozali & Latan, 2020; Santy et al., 2024). This procedure enabled the study to evaluate the proposed mediation mechanisms within a single structural model.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model (**outer model**) was evaluated to establish the validity and reliability of the constructs before assessing the structural relationships. The evaluation included **convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability**.

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators that did not satisfy the specified outer-loading criterion were removed during

measurement model refinement. Following this procedure, the retained indicators met the required measurement criteria. Construct reliability was subsequently evaluated using **Cronbach's alpha** and **composite reliability**.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

Construct	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Evaluation
Instructional Leadership (X)	0.607	0.977	0.978	Valid and reliable
Organizational Climate (Z1)	0.619	0.897	0.919	Valid and reliable
Work Motivation (Z2)	0.560	0.961	0.964	Valid and reliable
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.634	0.942	0.950	Valid and reliable

As shown in Table 1, the AVE values ranged from 0.560 to 0.634, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 and therefore supporting convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.897 to 0.977, while composite reliability values ranged from 0.919 to 0.978, all exceeding the 0.70 criterion. These results indicate satisfactory internal consistency reliability across the four constructs. Accordingly, the retained measurement model demonstrated adequate convergent validity and reliability for subsequent structural model evaluation.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed to determine whether each latent construct was empirically distinct from the other constructs in the model. The Fornell–Larcker criterion was examined by comparing the square root of each construct's AVE with its correlations with the other constructs.

Table 2. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	X	Z1	Z2	Y
Instructional Leadership (X)	0.779			
Organizational Climate (Z1)	0.606	0.787		
Work Motivation (Z2)	0.495	0.653	0.748	
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.684	0.758	0.735	0.796

Table 2 shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with the other constructs. Specifically, the diagonal values were 0.779 for instructional leadership, 0.787 for organizational climate, 0.748 for work motivation, and 0.796 for teacher performance. These results indicate that the measurement model satisfied the Fornell–Larcker criterion for discriminant validity. Overall, the measurement model results provided evidence of adequate convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability for the retained constructs and indicators. The final outer model therefore provided an acceptable measurement basis for proceeding to the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) and testing the hypothesized direct and indirect relationships among instructional leadership, organizational climate, work motivation, and teacher performance.

Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model (inner model) was evaluated to examine the relationships among the latent constructs and the model's explanatory and predictive performance. The assessment included the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), model fit indices, and the significance of the structural path coefficients through bootstrapping.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance in each endogenous construct explained by its predictor(s) in the structural model.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Organizational Climate (Z1)	0.367	Moderate
Work Motivation (Z2)	0.245	Moderate
Teacher Performance (Y)	0.730	Strong

As shown in Table 3, instructional leadership explained 36.7% of the variance in organizational climate ($R^2 = .367$) and 24.5% of the variance in work motivation ($R^2 = .245$). Teacher performance had the highest coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .730$), indicating that instructional leadership, organizational climate, and work motivation collectively explained 73.0% of the variance in teacher performance. The remaining 27.0% of the variance was not explained by the predictors included in the present model.

Effect Size (f^2)

The f^2 effect size was examined to assess the relative contribution of each predictor to the explained variance of its respective endogenous construct. This analysis complements statistical significance testing by indicating the magnitude of each predictor's contribution to the structural model.

Table 4. Effect Sizes (f^2) of Structural Relationships

Structural Path	f^2	Interpretation
Instructional Leadership → Teacher Performance ($X \rightarrow Y$)	0.138	Small
Instructional Leadership → Organizational Climate ($X \rightarrow Z1$)	0.229	Medium
Instructional Leadership → Work Motivation ($X \rightarrow Z2$)	0.094	Small
Work Motivation → Teacher Performance ($Z2 \rightarrow Y$)	0.505	Large
Organizational Climate → Teacher Performance ($Z1 \rightarrow Y$)	0.147	Small

The results indicate that instructional leadership had a medium effect on organizational climate ($f^2 = .229$), whereas its effects on work motivation ($f^2 = .094$) and teacher performance ($f^2 = .138$) were small. Organizational climate also showed a small effect on teacher performance ($f^2 = .147$). In contrast, work motivation demonstrated a large effect on teacher performance ($f^2 = .505$), representing the largest effect size among the structural relationships examined. This finding indicates that work motivation made the strongest relative contribution to the explained variance in teacher performance within the specified model.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The Q^2 calculation yielded a value of 0.871. Because this value was greater than zero, the model demonstrated predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs. The relatively high Q^2 value suggests that the structural model had substantial predictive capability for the observed data.

Model Fit

Model fit was examined as supplementary information regarding the correspondence between the empirical data and the specified model. The evaluation included the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and squared Euclidean distance (d_ULS).

Table 5. Model Fit Indices

Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.080	0.099
d_ULS	15.200	23.196

The SRMR values were 0.080 for the saturated model and 0.099 for the estimated model. The saturated-model value was at the commonly referenced threshold of .08, whereas the estimated-model value was higher. Therefore, rather than interpreting these results as unequivocal evidence of good model fit, they indicate acceptable to marginal fit depending on the criterion applied. In PLS-SEM, however, model evaluation should not rely on SRMR alone and should be considered alongside the measurement quality, explanatory power, predictive performance, and structural relationships. Similarly, the observed d_ULS values of 15.200 and 23.196 cannot, by themselves, establish model fit. Interpretation of d_ULS requires comparison of the original discrepancy value with the corresponding bootstrap-based reference values (e.g., HI95 or HI99). Because these reference values are not reported in Table 5, no definitive conclusion regarding d_ULS-based model fit can be drawn from the available results. Overall, the structural model demonstrated

substantial explanatory power for teacher performance, while the significance and magnitude of the hypothesized structural relationships were subsequently examined through bootstrapping.

Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping was performed to evaluate the direction and statistical significance of the direct structural relationships among the study constructs. The results of the direct-effect hypothesis tests are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing for Direct Effects

Structural Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
Instructional Leadership $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance ($X \rightarrow Y$)	0.297	3.299	.001	Supported
Instructional Leadership $\rightarrow$ Organizational Climate ($X \rightarrow Z1$)	0.606	6.457	< .001	Supported
Instructional Leadership $\rightarrow$ Work Motivation ($X \rightarrow Z2$)	0.495	4.395	< .001	Supported
Organizational Climate $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance ($Z1 \rightarrow Y$)	0.330	3.203	.001	Supported
Work Motivation $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance ($Z2 \rightarrow Y$)	0.458	3.299	.001	Supported

As shown in Table 6, all direct structural paths were positive and statistically significant. Instructional leadership was positively associated with teacher performance ($\beta = .297$, $t = 3.299$, $p = .001$), organizational climate ($\beta = .606$, $t = 6.457$, $p < .001$), and work motivation ($\beta = .495$, $t = 4.395$, $p < .001$). Organizational climate was also positively associated with teacher performance ($\beta = .330$, $t = 3.203$, $p = .001$), as was work motivation ($\beta = .458$, $t = 3.299$, $p = .001$). Among the three direct predictors of teacher performance, work motivation had the largest standardized path coefficient ($\beta = .458$) and the largest effect size ($f^2 = .505$), indicating the strongest relative contribution within the specified structural model. Thus, all hypotheses concerning the direct relationships were statistically supported.

In addition to the direct relationships, mediation analysis was conducted to determine whether organizational climate and work motivation mediated the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance. Mediation was evaluated based on the significance of the specific indirect effects while considering the direct relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing for Specific Indirect Effects

Indirect Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
Instructional Leadership $\rightarrow$ Organizational Climate $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance ($X \rightarrow Z1 \rightarrow Y$)	0.200	2.815	.005	Supported
Instructional Leadership $\rightarrow$ Work Motivation $\rightarrow$ Teacher Performance ($X \rightarrow Z2 \rightarrow Y$)	0.227	2.633	.008	Supported

Both specific indirect effects were statistically significant. Instructional leadership was indirectly associated with teacher performance through organizational climate ($\beta = .200$, $t = 2.815$, $p = .005$) and through work motivation ($\beta = .227$, $t = 2.633$, $p = .008$). Because the direct relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance remained significant after the mediators were included in the model ($\beta = .297$, $p = .001$), the results indicate complementary partial mediation: the direct and indirect effects operate in the same positive direction.

The two significant indirect pathways further indicate a parallel dual-mediation mechanism. The organizational-climate pathway suggests that instructional leadership is associated with teacher performance partly through the organizational environment experienced by teachers, whereas the work-motivation pathway indicates an additional motivational mechanism. The indirect effect through work motivation ($\beta = .227$) was descriptively larger than that through organizational climate ($\beta = .200$); however, this difference should not be interpreted as statistically significant unless a formal contrast between the two specific indirect effects is tested.

Overall, the structural model showed that instructional leadership was associated with teacher performance both directly and indirectly through organizational climate and work motivation. Together, instructional leadership, organizational climate, and work motivation explained 73.0% of the variance in teacher performance ($R^2 = .730$), while work motivation

demonstrated the largest relative effect on teacher performance ($f^2 = .505$). Nevertheless, because the variables were measured through questionnaires at a single point in time, these findings represent statistically significant structural associations rather than evidence of temporal or causal effects. The results therefore support the proposed structural and dual-mediation model within the context of public vocational high schools in Dusun Selatan District, South Barito Regency.

B. Discussion

The descriptive findings indicate generally favorable conditions across all study variables. Instructional leadership was rated very highly (75.8%; $M = 4.00$), particularly in creating a supportive school climate ($M = 4.17$), communicating the school vision and mission ($M = 4.16$), and supporting teachers' professional development ($M = 4.13$). These findings suggest that principals were perceived as actively supporting instructional improvement and stakeholder communication, consistent with Syahminan, Aslamiah, and Suriansyah (2024), Yuridka and Aslamiah (2025), and Meldayani et al. (2026).

Organizational climate was also rated very highly ($M = 4.16$), particularly recognition ($M = 4.29$) and work flexibility ($M = 4.22$), indicating a generally supportive professional environment (Aslamiah, 2016; Suriansyah, 2015). However, comparatively lower scores for work standards ($M = 3.92$) and clarity ($M = 3.99$) suggest areas for further organizational improvement (Novitawati, 2021). Similarly, work motivation was very high ($M = 4.19$), with pride in being a teacher receiving the highest score ($M = 4.34$). This finding highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation in sustaining professional engagement (Aurelia & Wardana, 2016). Teacher performance also received a very high rating ($M = 4.51$), although timely task completion ($M = 3.95$) remained a comparatively weaker aspect. Because performance was assessed through questionnaire responses, these findings represent perceived rather than independently observed performance.

The structural model further showed that instructional leadership was positively associated with teacher performance ($\beta = .297, p = .001$), organizational climate ($\beta = .606, p < .001$), and work motivation ($\beta = .495, p < .001$). These findings reinforce the role of instructional leadership in shaping both teachers' professional performance and their organizational and motivational conditions (Azizah et al., 2024; Masitha et al., 2025; Noviani et al., 2025). Organizational climate ($\beta = .330, p = .001$) and work motivation ($\beta = .458, p = .001$) were also positively associated with teacher performance. Notably, work motivation showed the largest relative effect ($f^2 = .505$), suggesting that motivational conditions constitute a particularly important component of teacher performance within the proposed model.

The mediation results provide the principal contribution of the study. Organizational climate significantly mediated the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance ($\beta = .200, p = .005$), as did work motivation ($\beta = .227, p = .008$). Because the direct relationship remained significant, these findings support complementary partial mediation through two parallel mechanisms. Instructional leadership may therefore be associated with teacher performance not only directly but also through a supportive organizational environment and stronger teacher motivation (Ritonga, Aktar, & Dongoran, 2023; Saragih & Suhendro, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2025).

Overall, instructional leadership, organizational climate, and work motivation explained 73.0% of the variance in teacher performance ($R^2 = .730$). The findings support an integrated perspective in which teacher performance is associated with leadership, organizational, and motivational conditions rather than with a single factor. However, because the study used cross-sectional self-report data, the structural relationships should not be interpreted as definitive causal effects. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs and independent measures of teacher performance to further examine these relationships across broader vocational education contexts.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that **instructional leadership, organizational climate, work motivation, and teacher performance were generally perceived at very high levels** among

public vocational high school teachers in Dusun Selatan District. The structural analysis further showed that instructional leadership, organizational climate, and work motivation were positively and significantly associated with teacher performance, while instructional leadership was also significantly associated with organizational climate and work motivation. Moreover, organizational climate and work motivation **partially mediated** the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher performance, supporting a dual-mediation mechanism. Together, the three predictors explained **73.0% of the variance in teacher performance**, with work motivation demonstrating the largest relative effect. These findings suggest that supporting teacher performance requires an integrated approach that strengthens instructional leadership while fostering a supportive organizational climate and sustained work motivation. Given the cross-sectional self-report design, however, these relationships should be interpreted as structural associations rather than definitive causal effects.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing financial, professional, or personal interests that could have influenced the conduct, analysis, or reporting of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dwi Septian: conceptualization, instrument development, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the original manuscript. **Sutarto Hadi:** research methodology, supervision, interpretation of findings, and critical review of the manuscript. **Ambo Sakka:** theoretical framework, supervision, interpretation of results, and substantive manuscript revision. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

Generative artificial intelligence tools were used solely to support language editing, proofreading, and improvement of the manuscript's readability. AI tools were not used to generate or modify the research data, conduct statistical analyses, or determine the study findings and conclusions. All AI-assisted content was reviewed and verified by the authors, who retain full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the final manuscript.

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