

Religious Character Education Using a Compassion Approach: A Study at Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This article is a case study design using a critical analysis method oriented towards a qualitative approach. The problems in this article are first, what is the background of the establishment of the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad tahfidz boarding school. Second, how are the forms of affection approach as one of the religious character education programmes of students at PONPES Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad. Third, what are the obstacles in implementing this form of affection in implementing religious character education. The results of this study are: First, the concern of the founder of the pondok pesantren related to the character and morals of teenagers. Second, the form of compassion approach as one of the religious character education programmes implemented by applying habituation in good speech and applying the principle of equality for all parties in the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad boarding school environment, so that none of the santri feel discriminated against. Third, the obstacles felt by educators such as, children influencing each other's bad treatment, for example teaching their friends to smoke, skip class, or even the existence of seniority between them. Using a compassionate approach in character education is a step that must be developed in the scope of education. Due to the importance of a teacher's compassion when providing education to students.

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Introduction

The term character education is currently one of the most interesting things to talk about. Either among administrators or in activities such as seminars, workshops and trainings. As time goes by, character education becomes an increasing significance in gaining attention and recognition from the people of Indonesia (Syakroni, 2023). The term education is a very important field and is a top priority in advancing the quality of the nation's generations in order to create qualified and civilized individuals. Especially in this era, the development of technology is growing so rapidly that it can indirectly have a significant impact on the *socio-cultural* development of society (Prasetyo, 2020). This condition certainly not only causes a shift in the tendency of knowledge, but also a shift in behavior experienced by almost all countries, including Indonesia.

The existence of a nation can be seen through the character of the nation itself. It can be said that to become a nation that has a high quality of dignity and respected by other nations must have a very strong character in facing every problem in the country. Given the decline of character

today has resulted in the emergence of “emergency” conditions that are very troubling because it occurs in almost every layer of society. The “emergency” conditions in question include: crime, drugs, harassment, violence, brawls, or even those that often occur in educational institutions such as bullying and seniority (Achmad, 2020). This is certainly one of the impacts of the issue of failure in character education, especially in educational institutions.

Character education is the endeavor to teach kids how to make sensible decisions and put those decisions into practice in their everyday lives so they can positively affect their surroundings. The universal values (religious, moral, civic, customary, cultural, legal, and others), that are acceptable to all groups and can serve as unifying factors for the entire society made up of various cultures, religions, races, customs, tribes, and backgrounds are the character traits that children should be taught (Thohir et al., 2023).

Affection is defined as one of the asset strategies to educate children because this affectionate approach can lead them to future success according to their talents and interests. This affection approach is ideally always applied in every scope of the group, for example: families, educational institutions, communities, and other institutions (Rahmatullah, 2014). Generally in the discussion of education, compassion is a topic that is very rarely discussed either in light discussions, scientific discussions, or the learning process directly. In fact, if we examine more deeply, these two contexts are two things that are interrelated and cannot be separated (Hadi, 2022). However, what happens is that affection is only used as a backup option in the realm of education. Of course, it is very ambiguous if affection is only used as another option, instead of being equalized or the foundation in the arrangement of the educational domain, especially religious character education which certainly requires a delicate touch from various parties.

As a process of religious character education in students through a compassionate approach in order to be able to implement and understand the objectives in the educational process within the scope of Islamic boarding schools. Because the education system in boarding schools allows using the affection approach as an endeavor in religious character education. Students or santri are teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18. In this case, adolescence is a time where their desire for freedom and the desire to actualize themselves is great. As a result, they need a place that can support the changes they are going through so as not to move in an unfavorable direction. They are passionate, innovative, and eager to showcase themselves, but they are also easily influenced by the actions of others, both positively and negatively (Maghfiroh & Cahyadi, 2021). Departing from that, in general, this article aims to find out how the form of affection approach applied by Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School as one of the strategies in efforts to educate the religious character of its students, as well as the obstacles faced by educators in carrying out the program.

Religious character education is very important to be applied to every person from an early age because it will greatly affect their growth in preparing themselves in the future. Therefore, it must be done seriously in order to be able to develop good attitudes and personalities and in accordance with the teachings of Islam. To carry out education cannot be separated from a touch of affection because affection is a very important thing in education. When affection is fulfilled properly, it will automatically realize peace of mind, confidence, and a feeling of security that can cause education to be more easily accepted and applied by students. With the spaciousness of the heart and the feeling of acceptance, it can increase the motivation to do good.

Method

This research was conducted with a systematic case study using a critical analysis method that leads to a qualitative approach. This research is an *intensive description* and analysis of events, phenomena, social activities, beliefs, perspectives, ideas from individuals or groups. This critical analysis research uses a case study approach, a view of an event that occurs, is intensive, unlike experimental studies or a theory that is leveling or comparative (Harahap, 2020). In this qualitative research, the case is an integration of events or cases, which are studied in depth and of course

complete. An large collection of data from a contextually "broad" range of information sources is used in a case study, which is a long-term research of a "bounded system" or "a case/variety of cases" (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). Stated differently, a case study is a sort of research in which a researcher uses a variety of data collection procedures to gather thorough and extensive information about a particular phenomena (case) across time and an activity (program, event, method, institution, or social group).

This research was conducted at the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School located in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. As for taking subjects in this study using a random sampling technique (not bound by special criteria), with key informants namely ustadz/ustadzah (teacher) who teach at PONPES Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz and supporting informants namely santri/santriwati (student) who are still actively studying at the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Islamic Boarding School. Researchers used random techniques in sampling and made teachers as the main informants because they were the ones who really knew how the religious character education program with a compassionate approach was implemented, as well as from the boarding school administrators involved. While students as supporting informants because researchers want to know how the perspective and point of view of the student on the program implemented in the boarding school to find out the impact of the program.

The data collection techniques used in this research are sorted into two, namely: primary data collection and supplementary data collection. *First*, primary data collection is obtained by informants via online. *Second*, supplementary data is obtained from supporting documents, such as: youtube (channel of Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School). Primary data or supplementary data will be combined or put together through the process of indirect observation, online interviews, and documentation. Through these various stages, researchers hope to obtain the desired and accurate data to answer the problems in this research case.

The problem that will be discussed in the discussion refers to the research objectives as described in the previous introduction. Namely, the form of affection approach as one of the efforts to educate the religious character of students which is a program of the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic boarding school, as well as the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the program.

Result

Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School is located on Kerongkong, South Bagik Payung village, Suralaga district, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. It was established on April 8, 2014 by Lalu Muhibban with the background of his concern about the lack of attention of the local community with religious knowledge, especially the knowledge of the Qur'an. Departing from this, Lalu Muhibban established this boarding school by focusing on memorizing the Al-Qur'an as its main program in addition to other programs. The students are targeted to memorize 6 juz at the elementary School, 12 juz at the Junior High School, and 15 juz at the Senior High School. It then conducts regular tests to monitor students' memorization abilities, with the aim of providing them with the necessary foundation to lead a fulfilling life in society. In addition, the school actively participates in Qur'an memorization competitions at various levels, demonstrating its commitment to producing future Qur'an memorizers. The establishment of this educational institution is expected to be able to strive to be a solution to the provision of Islamic cadres in the future with independent, responsible, disciplined personalities, and of course morally good based on the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah. Through its efforts, it aims to contribute to the development of education in Indonesia.

In addition, the establishment of Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School, was also motivated by the founder's concern for the character and moral values of teenage children who are still far from Islamic law. In its management, the board of the cottage does not only focus on memorizing students, but also on understanding the content of the Qur'an itself. As revealed by one of the teacher who teaches there that they not only guide children to memorize,

but also understand the meaning. As for the steps applied by the board of the cottage in providing an understanding of the Qur'an to students, namely by carrying out imtaq every day, and in imtaq itself the teacher provides students with motivation and understanding of how important it is to live life with the Qur'an.

Apart from memorizing the Qur'an, understanding the content of the Qur'an is very important. This is because we as Indonesians who basically do not use Arabic in communication certainly have difficulty in translating the verses of the Qur'an. Of course, skills and knowledge related to the science of balagoh and grammatical Arabic are needed. So that in understanding the content of the Qur'an, teachers who understand the Qur'an are needed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School in addition to memorizing also provides an understanding to students to understand the content of the Qur'an. However, understanding the contents of the Qur'an certainly requires a process and time that is not short. However, if it is carried out with perseverance, surely Allah will make it easy, especially with regard to things that He commands based on sincere and sincere intentions.

The term affection when interpreted literally has several meanings, namely: pity, feeling, unwillingness, affection, love, feeling comfortable, and loving something. In another sense, affection is also called *Muhabbah* in the sense that it is clear and clean, according to the Arabs the word "clear" is intended for white teeth. The basis for the creation of the universe is love and is used as the foundation for all of God's creations, which are Rahman-Rahim because it is the essence of the entire universe (Aprija et al., 2021). Even Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin* teaches its ummah to be human beings who spread peace, harmony, safety, and welfare. In accordance with the meaning of the word "Islam" itself, namely peace and safety (Muvid, 2021).

Armstrong argued that compassion is the key to changing society and creating a better world for everybody. All religious, ethical, and spiritual traditions are based on the compassion principle, which exhorts us to treat people the way we want to be treated (Barton & Garvis, 2019). The attitude of people who are open to themselves and willing to accept their circumstances in order to survive, especially in terrible situations, is known as compassion (Fitri, 2022). Students who are compassionate are sensitive enough to help those in need and care about others, especially the little and impoverished. Sensitivity to assist others is one of the desired qualities of the compassion evaluation.

In the field of education, fostering compassion has a very effective impact, for example on improving student learning outcomes. This is because affection is a form of communication that if applied can strengthen the relationship between educators and students (Nurul Aulia et al., 2022). Therefore, communication between educators and students must have a close bond, one way is by applying the affection approach in the world of education. Through His words, Allah always encourages every human being to spread kindness, not to force, and compassion, as in Q.S Maryam [19]: 96

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا

Meaning: "Indeed, for those who believe and do righteous deeds, (Allah) the Merciful will instill love (in their hearts)." (Tohri & Nadiyah, 2024).

It is explained in the interpretation of Ibn Katsir that Allah SWT. plants feelings of love and affection in the hearts of His servants, the believing and pious muslims. It is revealed that this is certain and necessary. As also explained in a saheeh hadith, 'Ali ibn Abi Talhah said from Ibn Abbas regarding the words of Allah, "in the future ar-Rahman will instill in their hearts a sense of compassion," he said: "the feeling of love." Mujahid said from Ibn 'Abbas "in the future ar-Rahman will instill in their hearts a sense of compassion," he said: "the feeling of love in the hearts of people in the world." Sa'id bin Jubair said from Ibn 'Abbas: "He loves and instills love in His believing creatures." As Mujahid, adh-Dhahhak and others have said.

It is also explained in Q.S Al-Baqarah [2]: 256, related to the discouragement of coercion:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: *"There is no compulsion in (embracing) the religion (Islam). Indeed, the right way is clear from the wrong way. Whoever disbelieves in tagut and believes in Allah has indeed held fast to a very strong rope that will not break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."* (Mulyadin et al., 2024).

In the interpretation of Al-Misbah, it is stated that Allah wants every individual to feel peace. Peace cannot be achieved if human souls themselves do not have a sense of peace. Meanwhile, such coercion can cause unpeace in one's soul (Shihab, 2002). When viewed in the world of education, a sense of peace is certainly very important to be applied to build good communication between educators and students. Without good communication, it often causes unrest between the two. This can be proven by the frequent occurrence of rebellion by students to murder committed by students to educators or teachers.

Religious character education is an effort that must be carried out by every educational institution, including Islamic boarding schools, aiming to produce the nation's golden generation with good character based on the Qur'an and sunnah. By paying attention to the conditions of social life which are now quite extreme, it is necessary to have a strong foundation in facing social challenges. One way is to strengthen the character of the nation's golden generation which determines the nation's progress in the future.

Strong national character is the result of good education and prioritizes to foster the character of students (Hasanah et al., 2021). The role of religious character is very dominant in the goals of education because education not only creates individuals who are broad in the field of knowledge, but also must have superior manners and personality. Because people who are civilized or good character must have qualified knowledge as well. In an Islamic perspective, religious character education is one of the domains that cannot be separated from the concepts of Islamic education in living a world life based on the Qur'an and hadith (Achmad, 2020). Character education or usually known as moral education can be understood as an effort to develop all individual potential with the aim of becoming a person who is noble, moral, tolerant, and science-oriented imbued with faith and piety (Fauzi, 2020).

Another essential component of Islamic teachings is compassion for one's fellow humans. for muslims, the idea of preserving peace in life is intimately tied to the idea of attachment between people. The names *hablumminallah wa hablumminannas*, which can be understood as relationships with God and people, are frequently used to refer to this idea. Muslims are obligated to uphold their relationship with Allah, the Creator, and with all other people. And loving one another is one of the prerequisites for preserving human connections (Mumtaz et al., 2022). Eight types of social piety—including mutual compassion, pious activities, respect for one another, justice, upholding brotherhood, daring to defend the truth, aiding, and deliberation—and how they are applied in society are identified in a research by Aziz (Azis, 2020).

It has been mentioned in the Qur'an, that humans do not have the slightest knowledge when they are born in the world, but Allah gives sensory skills, reason, to feelings or hearts that can be actualized into a blessing that should be grateful for the grace of Allah SWT. to each of his servants who become khaalifah in this world. This is mentioned in His word in Q.S. An-Nahl [16]: 78

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Meaning: *"Allah took you out of your mother's womb knowing nothing and He made for you hearing, sight, and conscience that you may be grateful"* (Pinem & Akbar, 2024).

Humans are creatures of God who always want to be given affection because it is like a lamp for the heart. Whoever loves himself and wants to be loved by others, then he must cultivate

feelings of affection in himself. In the relationship between teachers and students, it becomes a reciprocal effect of affection because when an educator does not love his students, he will certainly not be able to provide direction, let alone guide his students because there is no connection between the two (Hadi, 2022). Religious character education can be carried out by applying the compassion approach as the main step in planting the foundation in the students. The forms of the affection approach applied in the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Islamic Boarding School are good and polite language speech and principle of equality.

The value of politeness is one of the problems that often occurs and is experienced by the world of education, especially in some millennial young people. In addition to the value of politeness, responsibility, helping, and solidarity have been greatly neglected today (Falah, 2022). This can be said to be one of the causes of technological developments and the non-optimality of educational institutions in fostering student character. As happens in educational institutions that prioritize knowledge over morals, student personality, and its application in everyday life.

If internal communication goes well and principals function as school managers, they can lead the school organization well. The principal's leadership will be very important and determine the progress of the school (Kholidi et al., 2023). Using good and polite speech is one of the efforts that can be made to foster compassion between people. Also as an alternative to character education, applying this method is expected to create a friendly and peaceful atmosphere in the boarding school environment.

As expressed by ustadz Kholil as one of the teachers who teaches at the Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Boarding School revealed that: *"In this Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Boarding School, we as teachers use romantic calls to students. Romantic here means that we use the words "my son" when calling students. Because we position ourselves as parents who must provide a sense of comfort for students. With the hope that they are comfortable and feel the love of their parents indirectly. And for the students, they call each other "brother/sister" as a form of mutual respect."*

In educating children who are still teenagers, where their ages are in the process of growth and development, they need more attention and careful guidance, so that when they reach adulthood, they are not traumatized by educational institutions with boarding school status. As research that has been conducted by Dedi Eko Riyadi Hs, entitled *"Leadership Patterns of School Principals in Character Building of Compassion for Students of SMAN 1 Batu"* (Riyadi, 2022). From the results of this study, the exemplary application of compassion by dealing with students who make mistakes must be faced kindly and helping to solve their problems peacefully, and fostering a sense of brotherhood between them. The difference is that Dedi Eko's research focuses on the leadership of the principal, while in this study all parties in the boarding school are involved.

Besides that, the form of approach in educating the religious character of students is the approach of compassion by giving them a sense of equality in the boarding school environment. Coming from various regions, ethnicities, races, cultures, or even castes, the principle of equality is certainly very necessary. So that students do not feel discriminated against and have the same space to develop themselves to the fullest. Not only between students, but also teachers must also apply this effort. For example, the obligation to memorize the Qur'an is not only intended for students, but also teachers must participate in memorizing the Qur'an.

This is according to one of the teacher who teaches there: *"Teachers do not hold the term teaching, because teachers, students, madrasah heads, and even foundation leaders are all learning. So that no one feels higher among each other. Teachers learn to be good educators, and the students learn to be good students too". "Hopefully, the verses of the Qur'an that are read and memorized can make us become people who love each other. And Allah directly teaches us to love each other through the memorized Al-Qur'an"*

With this equality, no one can feel that they are more than the other, whether in terms of personal quality, material, or anything else. Because in fact what determines human glory is only his piety. For the facilities that have been provided by the boarding school become common

property, all students are entitled to the facilities that have been provided and no one feels they have their own.

Therefore, it is important to apply an affectionate approach that should be made into habits and habits in everyday life, be it to family, friends, or new people known to foster a sense of security. Not only to those who are mentally and behaviorally healthy, but also to people who have many problems are very vulnerable to depression to often do bad things. Especially in the world of education, it must be essential in educating the character of students.

The obstacles faced by Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Boarding School in implementing religious character education programs using the compassion approach are quite complex and severe. Running a program to improve or create a better situation is certainly inseparable from a long process and there are obstacles in implementing the program. Based on in-depth interviews with the foundation, researchers found the fact that in implementing religious character education at Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Boarding School using this compassion approach, the teachers have several obstacles, including the following: *first*, many children influence each other's bad treatment, for example teaching their friends to smoke, skip class, or even be disrespectful to their younger siblings. *Second*, students often consider assertiveness to be violence, meaning that when teachers speak firmly but with high intonation, students consider it as anger. *Third*, every new school year, between the second and fourth months, many of the students feel at home. Of the number of students who enter, 10-20 students feel incapable and it is not uncommon for them to choose to move or quit. *Fourth*, controlling a large number of students causes teachers to often get confused, considering the many behaviors of students who still need guidance from the beginning. In addition, the inherent system, bullying and culture of seniority in educational institutions, including in the environment of students.

The solutions given when encountering obstacles: *first*, the system to overcome the problem of students who are difficult to control and often violate the rules of the boarding school is by making a written agreement. If this method is done three times but it is still not a deterrent and the students still violates the rules, then the students must be dismissed. *Second*, it takes an extra role from teachers to always guide students in speaking well and gently. One of them is by never being bored to reprimand every students who utters bad words. *Third*, provide an understanding to students that being firm is different from anger and convey it still with affection so that students understand it. *Fourth*, teachers must strengthen patience in educating, considering that each students brings their character from home. This is where the role of teachers educates and guides them to be better. At the same time, it can eradicate the seniority that has become a tradition in every educational institution. *And finally*, positioning themselves as a substitute for parents for students, so that they still feel safe, comfortable, cared for, without lack of affection, so they can feel at home in the cottage.

Discussion

The government has taken the initiative to prioritize character education at this time because it is motivated by the crisis of the nation's character as well as the unrest of Indonesian society (Mislikhah, 2020). The importance of character education today, it needs to be instilled from an early age to the golden generation of the nation's successors. As research has been conducted by Indriyani Tri Jayanti, et al. In this study, TPA Nurul Yakin acts as an alternative that can be used as a forum to optimize the strengthening of children's character education through appropriate methods, such as assistance and guidance in practicing consistently or istikomah, then giving advice that can direct students to have a religious character. For example, training in honesty, politeness, collaborating with friends, obeying orders, and being brave in taking steps (Jayanti et al., 2022). The results of this study describe the character education program implemented at TPA Nurul Yakin, in an effort to stabilize and strengthen the character education of students through several methods, including: providing in-depth taahsin qur'an learning, memorizing short verses, telling Islamic stories so that children can take lessons in it, and the form of learning by playing that can train

children's character values, such as: honesty, cooperation, discipline, courage to step up, and self-confidence can increase the strengthening of children's character education.

Religious character education can certainly be implemented with a variety of methods and strategies. As has been implemented by several institutions in strengthening character education. However, it is possible that the methods and strategies implemented do not have the same end result. Therefore, both formal and non-formal educational institutions must be able to take steps and determine the right methods and strategies to achieve the planned goals. In addition, it is also necessary to see and pay attention to the subject or to whom the religious character education is addressed. The more mature the subject, the more diverse thoughts they have and the need for caution and more effort in educating them.

Maragustam lists six general character development techniques that call for an ongoing, engaging practice. Habituation and acculturation, teaching good things (moral knowing), feeling and loving the good, good deeds (moral acting), moral modeling, and Taubat are the tactics used to cultivate character (Cahyono, 2019).

All forms of activities that can help the process of implementing religious character education programs should be given as a whole to students. So that none of them feel discriminated against or not given the opportunity to hone their talents and interests. Because every students certainly has potential if it continues to be honed and given the opportunity to show it can indirectly provide enthusiasm and support for them to continue to learn and process to be even better. In addition, discipline must be further strengthened in dealing with the problems of students. So that the bad influence brought by the students from the previous environment can be minimized to be done again in the boarding school environment.

Conclusion

In this presentation related to religious character education using a religious approach at Baitul Qurro' Wal Huffadz Darusshomad Islamic Boarding School, researchers used a qualitative approach method based on case studies. It can be concluded that religious character education using the compassion approach is pursued with several strategies, such as habituation using good and polite speech, and the application of the principle of equality. The strategies used are quite helpful in the process of religious character education, this is due to the involvement of all parties in the boarding school environment without exception. In educating children who are still teenagers, where their age is in the process of growth and development requires more attention and careful guidance. So that high effort and patience are needed from educators to achieve the goals of the program.

In carrying out the character education process with this affectionate approach, there are obstacles felt by teachers such as, children influencing each other's bad treatment, for example teaching their friends to smoke, skip class, or even being disrespectful to their younger siblings. This is certainly a task for educators to eradicate the bad influences that occur between students. In addition, controlling students with a variety of characters and in large numbers results in teachers often getting confused, considering the many behaviors of students who still need initial guidance. And the inherent seniority system within the students is often an endless problem because it has become a tradition in every educational institution.

Future research can examine the compassion approach in character education in different educational contexts, such as public schools or non-formal religious communities. It could also analyze the long-term impact of the compassion approach on the religious character education process of students. Research can also involve the psychological dimension, for example on the influence of mental health, learning motivation, and the level of religious observance. The practical intervention of compassion applied in various educational institutions is an interesting research opportunity.

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