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# ANALYSING SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF TOP HIJAB BRANDS IN MALAYSIA: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF ENGAGEMENT METRICS AND FOLLOWER DEMOGRAPHICS FOR EFFECTIVE BRANDING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract:

This research aims to thoroughly investigate the social media engagement strategies employed by the leading hijab brands in Malaysia focusing on comprehensively analysing engagement metrics and follower demographics to derive insights crucial for formulating effective branding strategies with the pervasive influence of social media on consumer behaviour, understanding the intricacies of engagement strategies becomes imperative for hijab brands seeking to enhance their market presence. The research employs a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative analysis of engagement metrics (such as likes, shares, and comments) in social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X and others in a range of qualitative analyses of follower demographics using media analytic platform and brand's social media audience characteristics. This study aims to uncover patterns that contribute to successful online branding. The targeted hijab brands represent a diverse spectrum within the Malaysian market, allowing for a nuanced understanding of industry-specific dynamics. The research not only delves into the quantitative aspects of engagement but also explores the qualitative dimension by and scrutinising follower demographics. This dual approach provides a comprehensive view of how engagement strategies resonate with distinct audience segments. The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to social media marketing and branding, providing hijab brands with actionable insights to refine and optimise their strategies. Additionally, the research may offer theoretical contributions to the broader literature on social media engagement and its intersection with cultural and religious contexts. As hijab brands navigate the evolving landscape of social

media, this research aims to equip them with evidence-based strategies to foster meaningful connections with their audience, enhancing their overall brand positioning and impact in the Malaysian market.

**Keywords:**

Advertising, Branding, Brand Strategy, Engagement Metrics, Social Media

**Introduction**

The background of the study serves as the contextual basis and justification for the research, setting the stage upon which the research questions arise. In today's marketing and brand management field, the widespread impact of social media is unquestionable. With the growing reliance of businesses on digital platforms for brand promotion, it is crucial to comprehend the intricacies of social media interaction. This study examines the hijab industry in Malaysia, which is a specialised and rapidly changing sector influenced by cultural, religious, and socio-economic variables.

The decision to investigate hijab brands is motivated by their distinct position at the crossroads of fashion, identity, and cultural expression. The study focuses on analysing the social media interaction techniques used by the leading hijab brands, with a particular emphasis on the Malaysian market. This market is chosen due to its broad client base and cultural subtleties. An investigation of this nature is especially pertinent in a globalised setting, where the virtual domain plays a crucial role as the main platform for brand-consumer engagement. This research aims to explore the complexities of social media engagement within the hijab industry, providing valuable insights for developing effective branding strategies. Additionally, it seeks to contribute to the academic discussion on digital marketing and fill a significant gap in the existing literature.

The development of technology today shows changes in various aspects of life. In the past, traditional media, namely print and broadcast media, were the main channels of communication in business affairs for merchants or entrepreneurs to advertise and promote products (Faradillah, 2020). However, now, the emergence of a new phenomenon, namely digital media marketing, essentially promotes brands using all forms of digital advertising media to reach target segments such as radio, mobile phones, the internet, television, and social media (Faradillah, 2020).

The undeniable influence of social media on brand communication and consumer engagement in the current era of digital marketing is well-established (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Nevertheless, in specialised sectors that are defined by distinct cultural and religious aspects, like the hijab business in Malaysia, there is still a noticeable lack of academic research on the specific difficulties and advantages of using social media to create successful branding strategies. Although there is a lot of research on various areas of social media marketing, there is a lack of literature that specifically examines the complex dynamics of these phenomena in the Malaysian hijab industry. The hijab, as a symbol of cultural and religious identity, has unique aspects that require careful examination.

This study aims to fill the gap in academic research by performing a comprehensive analysis of the social media engagement methods used by well-known hijab companies in Malaysia.

The focus is to understand the complexities of engagement metrics and the characteristics of their followers. The research aims to shed light on these aspects to enhance the academic discussion on digital marketing strategies. Additionally, it seeks to provide practical knowledge for hijab brand practitioners who wish to successfully navigate and prosper within Malaysia's diverse consumer base, which is influenced by intricate socio-cultural factors. This study aims to contribute to the advancement of theory and practice in digital marketing and cultural branding by thoroughly examining unexplored terrain. It emphasises the importance of tailoring strategies to the unique characteristics of specific markets.

Currently, hijab entrepreneurs are encountering a growing number of competitors. In the current era of intense competition, entrepreneurs must prioritise product quality and recognise the significance of marketing strategies, such as advertising and sales promotion, to boost sales and achieve future growth. One of the challenges faced in establishing current hijab brands is the intense rivalry from rapidly emerging brands. The primary obstacles that must be addressed for the successful establishment of e-commerce enterprises are intense competition among traders, knowledge gaps, concerns related to discipline, and the level of entrepreneurial commitment (Thoriq Baharun, 2021).

### Galak PKS manfaat media sosial tingkat pemasaran produk

Oleh Prof Madya Dr Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi - Jun 10, 2022 @ 11:00am  
bhrencana@bh.com.my



Pengusaha PKS perlu bijak memanfaatkan media sosial dalam mempromosi dan meningkatkan pemasaran produk masing-masing. - Foto hiasan/Aizuddin Saad

**Figure 1: Encourage SMEs to Utilize Social Media to Enhance Product Marketing.**  
(Source: bhrencana, 2022)

Social media serves various functions beyond being a tool for virtual interaction. It acts as a platform for virtual community interaction, whether sharing online games, songs, visuals, videos, advertisements, or product and service promotions. In short, social media has great potential for marketing activities, helping to boost sales, generate profits, and prevent losses (Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi, 2020).

There are many advantages to using social media in marketing, including direct communication with customers, creating a positive brand image, instant access to the market, and broad market reach and coverage. Branding is crucial for every organization, not only to gain profit but also to enhance competitiveness and sustainability in the future. Therefore, social media should be fully utilized as a marketing and branding channel (Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi, 2020).

However, brand equity is critical when aiming to improve marketing. Brand equity is essential for increasing customer awareness and trust, boosting sales, and encouraging repeat purchases. Customer satisfaction is also vital for a company's competence, as it helps an organization remain sustainable. Therefore, reviews and feedback from influencers are also important in promoting the brand (Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi, 2020).

### Laman sosial pilihan terkini promosi produk



**Figure 2: Social media is the latest choice for product promotion.**

(Source: Amir Abd Hamid, hmetro, 2023)

Influencer Muhd Fitri Jamil, popularly known as Abang Foodie, noted that today's generation is far more creative in product promotion, which significantly differs from the techniques used in the past. He highlighted that one key reason social media is now the preferred choice is its cost-effectiveness, requiring minimal to no budget. "With just a mobile phone, the content created using these gadgets can have a massive impact, reaching millions of viewers," he explained. This shift emphasizes how modern technology and creativity are revolutionizing promotional strategies, making social media an invaluable tool for engaging audiences (Amir Abd Hamid, 2023)

This is due to the perpetual growth in the demand for online items. According to Mohsin (2019), it is projected that online sales will rise to 4.5 trillion USD in 2021, a significant increase from 1.3 trillion USD in 2014. In addition, the existence of social media facilitates the transmission and promotion of a brand without encountering any hindrances from any entity.



## Literature Review – Social Media

Today, social media platforms have garnered significant public attention, as people utilize them for entertainment and information. Consequently, many companies are beginning to leverage these platforms to promote their brands and products. Consequently, it is essential for fashion brands to adapt their marketing strategies and fully leverage these social media platforms to ensure better future growth for their brands (Wenxi Wu, 2024).

With a vast number of viewers, social media platforms demonstrate significant commercial value, shaping the way products are promoted. They have evolved into not just a free tool for public relations but also a vital link between the market and potential buyers. In recent years, marketing has become increasingly crucial for fashion brands. Implementing effective marketing strategies is essential for gaining both reputation and sales for these brands. Many fashion houses have begun utilizing social media to generate content prior to an event or show, yielding numerous benefits. Thus, understanding how social media platforms influence brands' marketing strategies is vital (Wenxi Wu, 2024).

According to a study, about 50% of the global population utilises social media. Social media is revolutionising lives and transforming how we engage with our communities and advertise our business. The typical user dedicates almost 2 hours daily to social media. Approximately 40% of small enterprises employ social media advertising to earn income. The magnitude of its influence is evident from the fact that over 50% of the global population utilises social media.

As Matt Ahlgren noted in 2023, if Facebook were treated as a country, it would have the largest population globally. YouTube and WhatsApp have a user base of approximately 2 billion each. WeChat, boasting over 1 billion active users, is the leading non-US brand in popularity. TikTok, QQ, Douyin, and Sina Weibo are among the top 10 non-US brands. Current trends indicate that prominent social media platforms will persist in attracting users. Leading brands possess the capacity and advanced technologies to sustain their superiority.

Data from datareportal.com in 2024 indicates that a survey of internet users worldwide aged 16 to 64 found that the primary motivation for using social media is to maintain connections with family and friends. This figure represents 48.6% of the total number of internet users worldwide. Additional factors include using spare time (36.3%), perusing news articles (35.2%), seeking amusing or interesting material (30.9%), staying informed about ongoing discussions (29.3%), seeking inspiration for creations and purchases (27.5%), and searching for products to purchase (26.1%). There are further factors that can be added to the list.

Influencer marketing is recognized as a social media strategy that targets specific key individuals (Ali and Morshed, 2024). Forbes (2023) reports that approximately 4.9 billion people use social media globally, and this figure is expected to rise to around 5.85 billion by 2027 (Salhab H. 2024). Notably, 88% of Millennials value the authenticity of the influencers they follow, which should inform marketers in shaping their strategies to promote various brands (Jreissat et al., 2024). The growing use of social media influencer marketing by companies as a strategy effectively attracts their target audience (Ramadan and Morshed, 2024).

At the beginning of 2024, Malaysia had 33.59 million internet users, with an internet penetration rate of 97.4 per cent. In January 2024, Malaysia had 28.68 million social media users, accounting for 83.1 per cent of the country's population (datareportal.com, 2024).

Social media offers numerous advantages and positive attributes over traditional media. As a result, marketing communication efforts are increasingly transitioning from traditional methods to social media platforms. Both businesses and consumers, the two key players in marketing communication, are using social media more frequently each day (Günay, K. 2023). The utilisation of social media marketing techniques has a substantial impact on enhancing the reputation of brands, fostering contact with customers, and shaping their views towards the brand for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia (Musa, H., Rahim, N., Azmi, F., Shibghatullah, A., Othman, N. (2016).

Malaysians have a higher propensity to utilise Facebook and WhatsApp for social, educational, and career-related objectives, hence generating a favourable influence on society as individuals employed and enrolled in educational institutions (Saleh, N., & Rosli, M. (2020). As a form of social media, Facebook effectively promotes environmental awareness in Malaysia. Customer satisfaction is influenced by the quality of the system, service, and information provided (Mahat, H., Hussein, S., Saleh, Y., Hashim, M., Nayan, N., Said, Z., & Kurniawan, E. (2023). In the vibrant landscape of Malaysian fashion, hijab brands have emerged as influential and integral players, catering to Muslim women's diverse needs who seek modesty and style. With a rich tapestry of cultural influences and a penchant for innovation, Malaysia has become a hub for hijab fashion, attracting both local talent and international recognition.

### ***Top Hijab Brand***

Among the myriad hijab brands that adorn the Malaysian fashion scene, several have risen to prominence, captivating the hearts of women across the nation and beyond. From timeless elegance to contemporary chic, these brands offer a spectrum of designs and styles, reflecting the multifaceted identities of modern Muslim women. Distinguished by their commitment to quality, creativity, and cultural sensitivity, these brands have redefined the concept of modest fashion and become symbols of empowerment and self-expression for millions of women.

From traditional to contemporary designs, each brand has its unique story and philosophy, catering to its customers' diverse needs and preferences. Let's delve deeper into the world of hijab fashion in Malaysia by exploring five of the most popular hijab brands in the country.

With 968k followers on Instagram, Naelofar seems to be a popular brand, possibly focusing on fashion and hijabs. Founded by Malaysian celebrity Neelofa, Naelofar Hijab offers a wide range of hijab styles and accessories. The brand has gained popularity not only in Malaysia but also internationally. Naelofar Hijab is a prominent Malaysian hijab brand and a well-known Malaysian celebrity and entrepreneur. Since its establishment, Naelofar Hijab has become one of the leading hijab brands in Malaysia and has also gained popularity internationally.

This brand has 558k followers on Instagram. The dUck Group, often referred to simply as dUck, is a prominent Malaysian lifestyle brand founded by entrepreneur Vivvy Yusof. It offers diverse products including scarves, apparel, bags, cosmetics, and stationery. dUck is particularly well-known for its luxurious and stylish scarves, which come in various materials and designs, catering to different preferences and occasions.

With 525k followers on Instagram, Alhumaira is a prominent Malaysian hijab brand that offers a wide range of modest wear options for Muslim women. The brand offers a diverse range of hijabs, including square scarves, shawls, instant hijabs, and inner hijabs, in various colours, prints, and fabrics. Alhumaira is known for its attention to detail, quality craftsmanship, and commitment to providing comfortable and stylish hijab wear for its customers.

This brand has 697k followers on Instagram. Calaqisya is a popular Malaysian hijab brand that offers a wide range of modest wear for women. The brand is known for its elegant and contemporary designs, catering to modern Muslim women seeking fashionable yet modest clothing. Calaqisya offers a variety of hijabs, modest dresses, tops, skirts, and accessories, all designed with modesty and style in mind. The brand uses high-quality materials and craftsmanship to ensure comfort and durability for its customers. Calaqisya has gained a significant following in Malaysia and has expanded its reach to other countries as well, making it a well-respected name in the modest fashion industry.

A brand with 938k followers on Instagram. Ariani is a well-known Malaysian hijab brand under the Ariani Group, which specializes in producing and retailing a wide range of scarves, shawls, and hijabs for women. Established in 2008, Ariani has quickly become a prominent name in the modest fashion industry in Malaysia and has gained recognition internationally as well.

### **Methodology – Social Media Interaction**

The research strategy for the study on the social media interaction techniques of leading hijab brands in Malaysia employs a mixed approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. This design facilitates a thorough investigation of the research topics by integrating the advantages of quantitative data analysis with the richness of qualitative insights.

The mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative research instruments will be utilised. The quantitative research instrument will involve social media analytics tools such as Facebook Insights and Instagram Insights, which will be used to collect numerical data on engagement metrics, including likes, shares, comments, and follower growth. This data will provide a quantitative foundation for analysing social media engagement strategies.

The qualitative research instruments will include interviews, surveys, and content analysis. Additionally, online surveys distributed through relevant platforms will gather qualitative insights from a larger sample of social media followers, incorporating both closed-ended and open-ended questions to explore follower demographics and opinions on social media engagement strategies. Content analysis will involve a systematic examination of comments, posts, or images shared by followers on the selected hijab brands' social media profiles to identify recurring themes, sentiments, and cultural nuances embedded in user-generated content. Integrating these quantitative and qualitative variables during the analysis will provide a holistic understanding of how engagement metrics correlate with follower demographics, cultural factors, and preferences. Quantitative variables will be analysed using statistical tools to identify trends, patterns, and correlations, while qualitative variables will undergo thematic analysis, content analysis, or other appropriate qualitative research methods. This mixed-methods approach aims to offer a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the social media engagement strategies employed by top hijab brands in Malaysia.

**Table 1: Research Method**

Category	Details
Population	Leading hijab brands active in Malaysia using SPSS for data collection
Demographic Count	Social media followers of selected hijab brands
Sampling Size	200 respondents
Subject of Study	Must have a social media account and be exposed to social networking sites (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, X/Twitter); focus on women and shopping through social networks
Age Range	18 years and above
Sampling Methods	Purposive sampling, in-depth interviews, open-ended and close-ended questionnaires

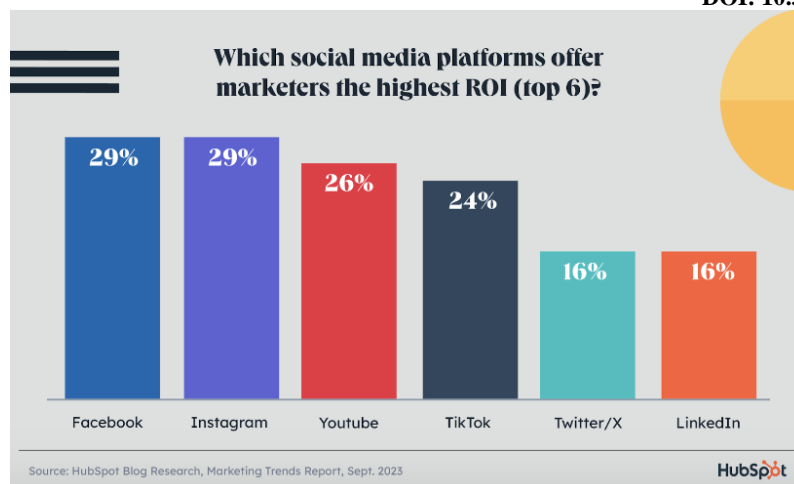
By combining quantitative and qualitative measurements, this study will uncover not only the numerical effectiveness of various engagement strategies but also the underlying factors that drive follower engagement. This dual approach is expected to yield rich, actionable insights that can inform more effective social media strategies tailored to the unique demographic and cultural landscape of hijab brand followers in Malaysia.

### **Findings – Social Media Platforms**

In the present day, brands are progressively utilising social media platforms to entice purchasers and engage in communication with their clientele. Social media is a cost-effective method for contacting new clients, especially when compared to traditional means. When considering conventional approaches, the expenses for reaching 2,000 individuals are as follows: \$150 for radio broadcasting, \$500 for magazine articles, and \$900 for direct advertising campaigns. Nevertheless, the expense of social media marketing is about \$75 to target an equivalent audience, representing a 50% reduction compared to the most economical conventional approach (Matt Ahlgren, 2023).

The Instagram platform excels at swiftly sharing content and facilitating impactful communication. According to global advertising data, Instagram had a minimum of 1.440 billion users globally as of July 2022 (datareportal.com, 2022). Studies indicate that Instagram provides additional avenues for advertisers to interact effectively with their customers.





**Figure 3: Facebook and Instagram both lead with 29% of marketers identifying these platforms as offering the highest ROI, but engagement has become more competitive each year.**

(Source: sproutsocial.com, 2024)

According to Matt Ahlgren's research in 2023, Instagram has the highest engagement rate for marketers at 81%, surpassing Facebook's general engagement rate of 8%. Furthermore, according to Matt Ahlgren's research in 2023, a significant 44% of Instagram users engage in weekly product buying, with 28% of these shopping endeavours being premeditated. The total count of active Instagram users in Southeast Asia is 168.0 million, placing it in the third position worldwide according to data from datareportal.com in 2022.

Influencer marketing is a contemporary marketing strategy that involves leveraging popular social media users to promote businesses or services on social media platforms. Over the past few years, influencer marketing has become increasingly popular due to the ability of social media users to be easily drawn to and trust the advertisements promoted by influencers on their own accounts.

### ***Modest Fashion Brand Comparison***

**Table 2: Modest Fashion Brand Comparison on Social Media**

SOSIAL MEDIA/ BRANDS	GALERI ARIANI	THEDUCK GROUP	SUGAR SCARF	NAELOFAR	ALHUMAIRA	CALAQISYA
FACEBOOK	1.5M	43K	442K	222K	862K	235K
INSTAGRAM	938K	557K	499K	968K	524K	701K
TIKTOK	295K	27.4K	46.3K	84K	57.7K	41.1K
YOUTUBE	40.5K	1.58K	7.77K	33.4K	111K	4.54K
X	3.2K	2.7K	2.1K	-	-	12.4K
THREADS	56.4K	-	32.1K	-	-	48.1K

Source: (Brand Social Media, 2024)

In the competitive landscape of modest fashion brands on social media, Galeri Ariani emerges as the standout leader. With an impressive presence across various platforms, Galeri Ariani boasts the highest overall popularity among its peers. On Facebook, it commands a substantial following of 1.5 million, indicating a robust community engagement. This strong presence extends to TikTok, where it garners 295,000 followers, showcasing its appeal among younger demographics. Additionally, Galeri Ariani maintains a significant presence on Threads, with 56,400 followers, demonstrating its reach in niche markets.

While Galeri Ariani excels across multiple platforms, Naelofar emerges as a notable competitor, particularly on Instagram. With a staggering 968,000 followers on this platform, Naelofar showcases strong engagement and influence within the modest fashion community. However, Naelofar's absence on X and Threads suggests a narrower focus compared to Galeri Ariani's comprehensive multi-platform strategy.

Alhumaira, another key player in the modest fashion sector, commands a substantial following on Facebook with 862,000 followers and maintains a presence on YouTube with 111,000 subscribers. Despite its strength on these platforms, Alhumaira's lack of presence on X and Threads limits its overall reach compared to Galeri Ariani.

Other brands like The Duck Group, Sugarscarf, and Calaqisya possess moderate followings across social media platforms but do not match the extensive reach and engagement levels of Galeri Ariani. These brands may cater to specific segments within the modest fashion market but do not command the broad, cross-platform appeal that Galeri Ariani enjoys.

In conclusion, Galeri Ariani emerges as the most popular and engaging brand in the modest fashion industry, leveraging its strong presence across Facebook, TikTok, and Threads, alongside substantial engagement on Instagram. Naelofar proves to be a formidable competitor, particularly dominant on Instagram. The competitive landscape underscores the importance of multi-platform presence and engagement strategies in capturing and maintaining a loyal audience within the modest fashion community.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

The study effectively highlights the crucial role that social media, particularly Instagram, plays in shaping brand identity and enhancing consumer engagement in the hijab fashion sector. It emphasizes the necessity for brands to utilize social media platforms effectively while considering audience demographics, which can significantly improve their visibility and help them forge meaningful connections with their target communities. The findings provide merchants with valuable insights regarding the impact of visual advertising and the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, as evaluated through various engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments. By focusing on Return on Investment (ROI), the research offers merchants essential tools to gauge the effectiveness of their marketing expenditures, facilitating more informed decision-making that can lead to better marketing outcomes.

Moreover, this study enriches the understanding of social media dynamics within the hijab branding context, thereby laying a solid groundwork for future research and strategic developments. By exploring the intricate relationships between brand identity, consumer engagement, and social media strategies, it opens avenues for merchants to optimize their approaches in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace. As the landscape of digital marketing continues to evolve, the insights from this research can guide hijab brands in crafting

effective marketing strategies that resonate with consumers. Ultimately, the study serves as a valuable resource for enhancing consumer-brand interactions, enabling brands to remain relevant and maintain a competitive edge in a rapidly changing environment.

The study's objectives have been met, as it offers significant insights and guidelines for both researchers and merchants, indicating the importance of continual adaptation and innovation in social media strategies for hijab brands to maintain their relevance and competitive edge.

Future studies in the realm of social media marketing within the hijab fashion industry could explore several key areas to build upon the current research findings. First, investigating the impact of emerging social media platforms, such as TikTok or Snapchat, on brand visibility and consumer engagement could yield valuable insights into shifting consumer preferences and behaviours. Additionally, researchers could examine the effectiveness of influencer partnerships in enhancing brand loyalty and consumer trust, particularly in a culturally sensitive market like hijab fashion.

Another area of interest could be the role of user-generated content in shaping brand perceptions and fostering community engagement. Analysing how customers' posts, reviews, and feedback influence brand identity could provide a deeper understanding of consumer dynamics in the digital age. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could assess how marketing strategies evolve over time in response to changing market trends, consumer behaviour, and technological advancements.

Lastly, conducting comparative studies across different regions or countries could highlight cultural differences in social media usage and its impact on brand marketing strategies. This could help hijab brands tailor their approaches to better meet the needs of diverse consumer bases. Overall, future research should continue to focus on the interplay between social media, branding, and consumer engagement, ensuring that hijab brands can navigate the digital landscape effectively.

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