

## The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision of Somethinc Products in Denpasar City

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how the brand image of Somethinc products influences consumers' decisions to buy. Purposive sampling was used in this study, which had 120 respondents and was conducted in Denpasar. Questionnaires were distributed in order to collect data. Path analysis and the Sobel test were then used for analysis. According to the findings, brand ambassadors have a positive and significant impact on decisions about what to buy, and brand image also has a positive and significant impact on decisions about what to buy. Brand image also partially mediates the influence of brand ambassadors on decisions about what to buy. The research's consequences can serve as a reference and reinforce earlier findings.

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## INTRODUCTION

New products with their respective advantages are growing rapidly in Indonesia. This diversity of products gives consumers many choices to decide which ones to buy. This situation leads to increasing competition as businesses strive to survive and attract the public's interest to gain profits. One of the burgeoning industries is the beauty and care industry. According to a survey by the Indonesian Digital Marketing Association, this category became the best-selling product category on Shopee in 2020. The abundance of available skincare products drives companies to continually promote their brands to increase recognition and influence consumer purchasing decisions. Purchase decision is a process where consumers recognize their problem, search for information about various products, and evaluate how well each alternative addresses their needs, ultimately leading to a purchasing decision (Tjiptono, 2014: 21). Consumers seek information about brands across various media, including electronic media. The development of social media, coupled with societal behavior, has led people to look up to celebrities as their role models. Observing this trend, many companies have leveraged the situation by partnering with celebrities to market their products.

A brand ambassador is defined as a tool to establish relationships with the public and help companies grow sales (Lea-Greenwood, 2012: 88). Research by Lestari and Cahya (2023) explains that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Different results were obtained in the study by Ashariyanti and Norhabibah (2023), which concluded that purchase decisions are not influenced by brand ambassadors. Given the discrepancies in previous research results, further studies are needed involving brand image as a mediating variable. Brand image is chosen as a mediating variable because it represents the perception consumers hold about a brand (Rahmadani, 2019). According to Dewi et al. (2020), brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. According to Sri Hartati et al. (2022), brand image can mediate the effect of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. This research will focus on a skincare brand called Somethinc. Despite being only five years old, Somethinc has achieved numerous accolades and is popular among the Indonesian public. According to ukmindonesia.id (2022), Somethinc ranked third as the best-selling local skincare product on Shopee and Tokopedia in the first two weeks of February 2021.

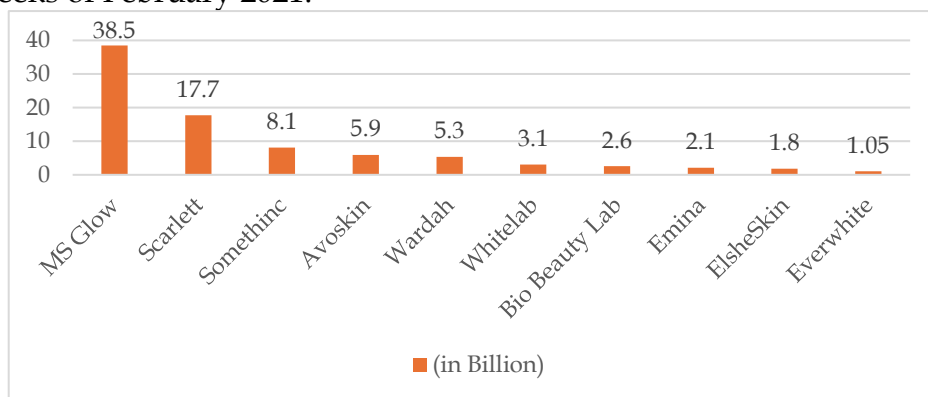


Figure 1. Most Used Local Cosmetic Brands in 2022

Source: ukmindonesia.id

The total sales of Somethinc are considered very good, especially since it is the second youngest brand after Whitelab and has managed to rank in the top three. However, compared to the first and second positions, Somethinc's total sales are still significantly lower. MS Glow's sales reached IDR 38.5 billion, and Scarlett, which was established a year before Somethinc, achieved IDR 17.7 billion, twice that of Somethinc. Therefore, Somethinc needs to implement a more optimal strategy in this competitive market. Considering the numerous competing products that have been in the beauty industry longer and the new brands that could potentially surpass Somethinc's success in the coming years. Somethinc has chosen the South Korean boy group NCT Dream, currently popular among teenagers, as its brand ambassador. NCT Dream consists of seven members known among fans for their youthful and trendy image. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the role of brand image in mediating the influence of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions of Somethinc products in Denpasar City.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Consumer Behavior*

According to Kotler & Keller (2016: 179), consumer behavior is defined as the study of individuals in determining, purchasing, and consuming a product or service. This field is crucial to understand because each individual has their own preferences. The goal of marketing is to influence people to buy a product, so company needs to understand the factors that can effect consumer's purchase decision (Sunyoto & Saksono, 2022: 2).

### *Purchase Decision*

A purchase decision is a stage where consumers identify a problem, seek information about various brands, and decide to make a purchase (Tjiptono, 2014: 21). According to Kotler & Keller (2016: 166) five stages of purchase decision are: 1) problem recognition; 2) research the information; 3) evaluate all alternatives; 4) purchase decision; and 5) post-purchase decision.

### *Brand Ambassador*

A brand ambassador is when a famous person endorses a brand by appearing in an advertisement (Uribe et al., 2022). Amidst increasingly intense brand competition, the presence of a brand ambassador is expected to maintain the existence of the endorsed product (Melzica & Wardana, 2022). Research conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2022) on the e-commerce platform Shopee found that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

**H1: Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.**

### *Brand Image*

Brand image is defined as a perception formed in the consumer's mind about a particular brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016: 274). Company is required to

implement marketing strategies to maintain their brand image in order to attract public attention (Putra et al., 2014). According to research conducted by Mudzakir (2018), brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on brand image.

**H2: Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant effect on brand image.**

Subsequent research conducted by Umbola et al. (2019) and Arianty and Andira (2021) found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. This aligns with the statement by Windyastari and Sulistyawati (2018) that to attract potential customers in today's intense competition, companies must continuously strive to create the best possible brand image.

**H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.**

Research conducted by Sri Hartati et al. (2022) found that brand image can mediate the effect of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions. A good brand ambassador will create a positive brand image, which can convince consumers to make a purchase (Wijaya, 2020).

**H4: Brand image can mediate the effect of brand ambassadors on purchase decisions.**

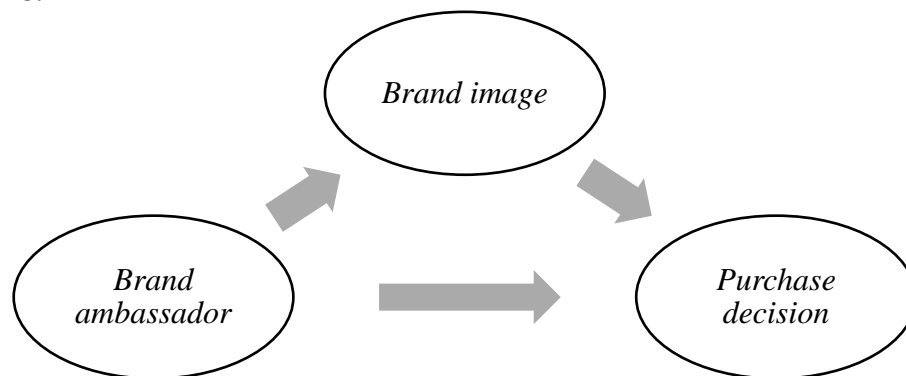


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework  
Source: Wijaya, S.N.C (2020)

## METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative associative approach, which means it examines the relationship between two or more variables. The study was conducted in Denpasar, Bali. Denpasar was chosen because, according to data from the Bali Provincial Central Statistics Agency, it had the highest percentage of residents accessing the internet over the past five years. This indicated that more people were aware of events happening on social media. The objects of this research were consumer behavior, namely purchase decision, brand ambassador, and brand image.

The population in this study consisted of residents of Denpasar who had purchased or used Somethinc products. The sample size used was 120 respondents. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which involved selecting samples based on specific considerations or criteria. The data in this research included qualitative and quantitative data sourced from both primary and secondary data. The data collection method was conducted through

the distribution of questionnaires. All research variable instruments – purchase decision, brand ambassador, and brand image – had met the requirements for validity and reliability tests.

**Table 1. Results of the Validity Test**

Variabel	Instrumen	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	Keterangan
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y1	0,883	0,000	Valid
	Y2	0,720	0,000	Valid
	Y3	0,850	0,000	Valid
	Y4	0,867	0,000	Valid
Brand Ambassador (X)	X1	0,814	0,000	Valid
	X2	0,809	0,000	Valid
	X3	0,911	0,000	Valid
	X4	0,954	0,000	Valid
Brand Image (M)	M1	0,822	0,000	Valid
	M2	0,863	0,000	Valid
	M3	0,895	0,000	Valid
	M4	0,898	0,000	Valid

Table 1. presents the validity test outcomes, indicating that all research variable instruments were validated. Each instrument exhibited a Pearson Correlation coefficient exceeding 0.30 and a significance level below 0.05.

**Table 2. Results of the Reliability Test**

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Keterangan
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,842	Reliabel
Brand Ambassador (X)	0,880	Reliabel
Brand Image (M)	0,880	Reliabel

Table 2. presents the reliability test outcomes, demonstrating that each variable's Cronbach's Alpha exceeded 0.60. Therefore, it can be concluded that all instruments satisfied the reliability criteria. The data analysis employed both descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis, including path analysis, classical assumption tests, and the Sobel Test.

## RESEARCH RESULT

Something is a local skincare brand founded in 2019 by Irene Ursula. Something offers products made from natural ingredients such as plant extracts, essential oils, and other natural substances. Something sells several categories of products, including skincare, makeup, and beauty tools. The price range of Something products is between IDR 30,000 and IDR 300,000. Something products can be purchased both online and offline.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

Variable		Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender	Male	18	15
		Female	102	85
<b>Total</b>			<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
2.	Age	17-25 years old	105	87,5
		26-35 years old	9	7,5
		≥36 years old	6	5
<b>Total</b>			<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
3.	Job	Student	95	79,2
		Entrepreneur	6	5
		Civil Servants	1	0,8
		Others	18	15
<b>Total</b>			<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
4.	Monthly Income	<IDR 500.000	47	39,2
		IDR 500.000 - IDR 1.000.000	19	15,8
		IDR 1.000.001 - IDR 3.000.000	35	29,2
		IDR 3.000.001 - IDR 5.000.000	14	11,7
		>IDR 5.000.000	5	4,1
<b>Total</b>			<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on Table 3. it can be seen that the number of respondents in Denpasar City used as the sample was 120 people. Based on gender, the respondents in this study were predominantly female, with a percentage of 85 percent. The age criterion was dominated by respondents aged 17 to 25 years, with a percentage of 87.5 percent. The most common occupation among respondents was students, with a percentage of 79.2 percent. In the monthly income criterion, the income range of less than IDR 500.000 had the highest percentage at 39.2 percent.

Table 4. Description of Respondents' Answers on Purchase Decision

Statement	Frequency of Answer					Total	Average	Category
	1	2	3	4	5			
1. I choose Somethinc as my primary option for purchasing skincare.	0	1	18	65	36	496	4,14	High
2. I recommend Somethinc products to my close relatives.	0	7	38	58	17	445	3,70	High
3. I will make repeat purchases of	0	2	20	73	25	481	4,00	High

	Somehinc products.								
4.	I will not switch to other skincare products besides Somehinc.	0	5	36	64	15	449	3,74	High
<b>Total Average</b>								<b>3,90</b>	<b>High</b>

The purchase decision variable with the lowest average value is the statement "I recommend Somehinc products to my close relatives," with an average score of 3.70. Although this falls under the high category, it has the lowest average compared to the other statements. This indicates that, in general, respondents have not fully recommended Somehinc to others.

Table 5. Description of Respondents' Answers on Brand Ambassador

	Statement	Frequency of Answer					Total	Average	Category
		1	2	3	4	5			
		1.	I believe NCT Dream is very suitable for promoting Somehinc products.	0	1	13			
2.	I think NCT Dream is capable of conveying information about Somehinc products to consumers.	0	6	36	65	13	445	3,70	Good
3.	I decided to buy Somehinc products promoted by NCT Dream.	0	1	22	72	25	481	4,00	Good
4.	NCT Dream is a strong reason for me to purchase Somehinc products.	0	4	28	67	21	465	3,88	Good
<b>Total Average</b>								<b>3,94</b>	<b>Good</b>

The brand ambassador variable with the lowest average value is the statement "I think NCT Dream is capable of conveying information about Somehinc products to consumers," with an average score of 3.70, which falls

under the good category. However, it has the lowest average compared to the other statements. This means that NCT Dream has not yet effectively conveyed information about Somethinc products to consumers.

Table 6. Description of Respondents' Answers on Brand Image

Statement	Frequency of Answer					Total	Average	Category
	1	2	3	4	5			
1. I believe Somethinc is a high-quality product.	0	0	5	65	50	525	4,38	Very Good
2. The price of Somethinc products matches the value and benefits offered.	0	0	25	67	28	483	4,03	Good
3. I feel that Somethinc is well-known among the general public.	0	2	24	78	16	468	3,90	Good
4. I believe Somethinc offers more benefits compared to other brands.	0	2	41	66	11	446	3,72	Good
<b>Total Average</b>							<b>4,00</b>	<b>Good</b>

The brand image variable with the lowest average value is the statement "I believe Somethinc offers more benefits compared to other brands," with an average score of 3.72, which falls under the good category but has the lowest average. This means that, in general, respondents feel that Somethinc has not fully succeeded in highlighting its unique benefits compared to other brands.

Table 7. Results of Path Analysis for Regression Structure 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	7.275	.872		8.346	.000
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	.554	.055	.682	10.132	.000
R Square	= 0.465				
F Statistics	= 102.654				
Sig. F Test	= 0.000				

The structural equation formed can be formulated as:

$$M = \beta_2 X + e_1 \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$M = 0,682X + e_1$$

Table 8. Results of Path Analysis for Regression Structure 2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.411	1.275		1.107	.271
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	.395	.087	.394	4.552	.000
<i>Brand Image</i>	.496	.107	.402	4.651	.000
R Square	= 0.532				
F Statistics	= 66.595				
Sig. F Test	= 0.000				

The structural equation formed can be formulated as:

$$Y = \beta_1X + \beta_3M + e_2 \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

$$Y = 0,394X + 0,402M + e_2$$

Table 9. Results of Normality Test for Regression Structure 1

	<i>Unstandardized Residual</i>
N	120
<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</i>	0,063
<i>Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0,200

Table 10. Results of Normality Test for Regression Structure 2

	<i>Unstandardized Residual</i>
N	120
<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</i>	0,057
<i>Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0,200

Table 11. Results of Multicollinearity Test for Regression Structure 1

Variable	<i>Tolerance</i>	VIF
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	1,000	1,000

Table 12. Results of Multicollinearity Test for Regression Structure 2

Variable	<i>Tolerance</i>	VIF
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	0,535	1,870
<i>Brand Image</i>	0,535	1,870

Table 13. Results of Heteroscedasticity Test for Regression Structure 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.239	.521		2.377	.019
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	-.011	.033	-.030	-.323	.747

Table 14. Results of Heteroscedasticity Test for Regression Structure 2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.671	.790		3.381	.001
Brand Ambassador	-.009	.054	-.020	-.162	.871
Brand Image	-.083	.066	-.156	-1.256	.211

The Sobel test is used to test the strength of the indirect effect of the brand ambassador variable (X) on the purchase decision variable (Y) through the brand image variable (M). If the calculated  $z > 1.96$  (with a significance level of 0.05), then the mediator variable is considered to significantly mediate the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. The formula used is:

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{b^2 S_a^2 + a^2 S_b^2 + S_a^2 S_b^2} \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

$$z = \frac{ab}{S_{ab}} \dots\dots\dots(4)$$

Calculating the values of  $S_{ab}$  and Z:

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{b^2 S_a^2 + a^2 S_b^2 + S_a^2 S_b^2}$$

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{(0,496)^2(0,055)^2 + (0,554)^2(0,107)^2 + (0,055)^2(0,107)^2}$$

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{0,000744 + 0,003514 + 0,000035}$$

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{0,004293}$$

$$S_{ab} = 0.065521$$

$$z = \frac{ab}{S_{ab}}$$

$$z = \frac{(0,554)(0,496)}{0,065521}$$

$$z = \frac{0.274784}{0.065521}$$

$$z = 4,19$$

## DISCUSSION

Based on the path analysis results in Table 7,  $\beta_2$  is 0.682 with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that the brand ambassador variable has a significant positive effect on brand image. This result is supported by the research of Mudzakir (2018), which found similar results. The research of Situmorang & Herdiansyah (2022) also stated that brand ambassador has a significant positive effect on brand image. In Table 8. a  $\beta_1$  of 0.394 was obtained with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which means that the brand ambassador variable has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Lestari and Cahya (2023). The result is also supported by the research of Hijra (2022), which found the better the brand ambassador, the higher the purchase decision. The regression structure model 2 also obtained a  $\beta_3$  of 0.402 with a significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating that the brand image variable has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. This result is consistent with the findings of Dewi et al. (2020) and Korompis et al. (2022) that the purchase decision is influenced by brand image. The total

determination value (R Square) of regression structure 1 is 0.465 or 46.5 percent, and for regression structure 2, it is 0.532 or 53.2 percent. The results of the error variable calculations for 1 and 2 are as follows:

$$e = \sqrt{1 - R^2} \dots\dots\dots(5)$$

$$e_1 = \sqrt{1 - 0,465} = \sqrt{0,535} = 0,731$$

$$e_2 = \sqrt{1 - 0,532} = \sqrt{0,468} = 0,684$$

Next, the total determination coefficient is calculated using the following formula:

$$R^2m = 1 - (e_1)^2(e_2)^2 \dots\dots\dots(6)$$

$$R^2m = 1 - (0,731)^2(0,684)^2$$

$$R^2m = 1 - (0,534361)(0,467856)$$

$$R^2m = 1 - 0,25 = 0,75$$

This means that 75 percent of the variation in the purchase decisions for Somethinc products in Denpasar City is affected by variations in brand ambassadors and brand image, while the remaining 25 percent is affected by other factors outside the research model.

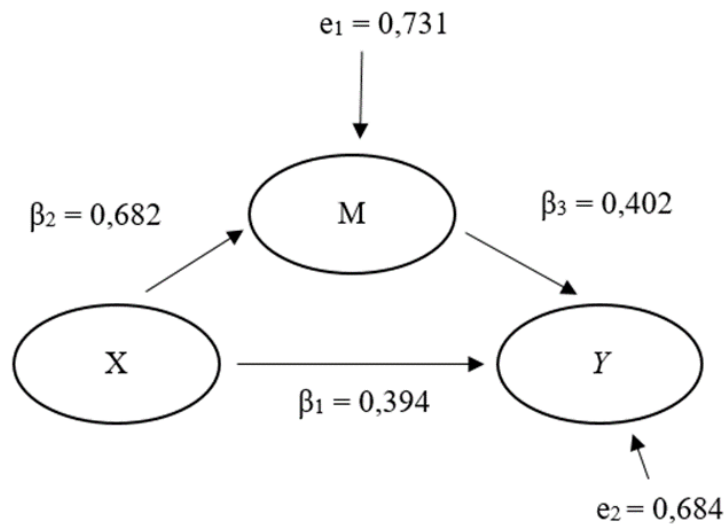


Figure 3. Final Path Model Validation Diagram

Based on Figure 3. the calculations of direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects can be seen in the following table:

Table 15. Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Total Effects

Variables	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects (M) = ( $\beta_2 \times \beta_3$ )	Total Effects
X → Y	0,394	(0,682 × 0,402) = 0,274	0,668
X → M	0,682		0,682
M → Y	0,402		0,402

The results in Table 15. conclude that brand image can enhance the effect of the brand ambassador on purchase decisions. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Sri Hartati et al. (2022) that brand image has a partial role in mediating the effect between brand ambassador and purchase decision. The type of mediation in this study, based on the conditions observed, is partial

mediation. The normality test results show a Kolmogorov-Smirnov value of 0.063 and 0.057 and an Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, indicating that regression structure 1 and 2 are normally distributed since the Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200 exceeds the threshold of 0.05. The multicollinearity test results show a tolerance value of 1.000, and a VIF value of 1.000 in regression structure 1, and a tolerance value of 0.535, and a VIF value of 1.870 in regression structure 2. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity, as the tolerance values are above 10% (0.1) and the VIF values are below 10. The heteroscedasticity test results show that the brand ambassador variable in regression structure 1 has a Sig. value of 0.747. In regression structure 2, the brand ambassador variable has a Sig. value of 0.871 and the brand image variable has a Sig. value of 0.211. This means that regression structure 1 and 2 do not show heteroscedasticity, as the Sig. values exceed the threshold of 0.05. The Sobel test results reveal a Z value of 4.19, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96, indicating that brand image significantly mediates the effect of the brand ambassador on purchase decisions. This finding is corroborated by the study conducted by Pratiwi and Rastini (2023), which concluded that brand image serves as a positive and significant mediating variable.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data analysis and the discussion of the effects of each variable, it is concluded that the brand ambassador has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, a positive and significant effect on brand image, and that brand image has a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision. Additionally, brand image positively and significantly mediates the relationship between the brand ambassador and purchase decision. Recommendations for Somethinc include providing rewards to consumers who regularly share testimonials about Somethinc products with their peers, creating informative content to engage and educate customers, and focusing on the development and improvement of Somethinc products.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has certain limitations, and it is recommended that future researchers refine the research on this topic. Additionally, other researchers are encouraged to explore different variables or models and to expand the scope of the research.

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