

A study of Korean drama and Indonesian teenager's perception on images of South Korea as a potential tourist destination

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Abstract

The popularity of Korean culture among teenagers around the world has made many teenagers, including Indonesian teenagers, affected by this culture. This Korean culture well known as Korean Wave or Hallyu. Korean Wave or Hallyu is a term to describe South Korean pop culture that has been successfully exported across the globe, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, Korean Wave or Hallyu products were introduced through the Korean television series called Korean drama. The objectives of this study are to determine how the teenagers in Indonesia perceive South Korean images as a destination that is seen in Korean dramas and could lead to the intention to visit South Korea in the future, to find out what are the impacts of watching Korean drama on consumer decision-making on Korean products and to find out whether watching Korean drama could increase the brand awareness towards a brand on Indonesian teenagers. This study uses qualitative methodology. Informants in this study were Indonesian teenagers range age 20-21 years old. Data collection for this study is obtained through interviews. By conducting this research, the researcher hopes to increase readers' insight into consumer decision-making that is influenced by the Korean Drama. The researcher hopes that this study may help future researchers who will conduct similar research from different aspects.

Keywords: korean drama, consumer decision making, intention to visit, brand awareness.

Abstrak

Popularitas budaya Korea di kalangan remaja di seluruh dunia membuat banyak remaja termasuk remaja Indonesia terpengaruh oleh budaya ini. Budaya Korea ini dikenal dengan sebutan Korean Wave atau Hallyu. Korean Wave atau Hallyu adalah istilah untuk menggambarkan budaya pop Korea Selatan yang telah berhasil diekspor ke seluruh dunia, termasuk Indonesia. Di Indonesia, produk Korean Wave atau Hallyu diperkenalkan melalui serial televisi Korea yang disebut drama Korea. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana remaja di Indonesia memandang citra Korea Selatan sebagai tujuan yang dilihat dalam drama Korea dan dapat mengarahkan pada niat untuk mengunjungi Korea Selatan di masa depan, untuk mengetahui apa dampak menonton drama Korea dalam pengambilan keputusan konsumen pada produk

Korea dan untuk mengetahui apakah menonton drama Korea dapat meningkatkan kesadaran merek terhadap suatu merek dibenak para remaja Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif. Informan dalam penelitian ini adalah remaja Indonesia dengan rentang usia 20-21 tahun. Pengumpulan data untuk penelitian ini diperoleh melalui wawancara. Dengan melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti berharap dapat menambah wawasan pembaca tentang pengambilan keputusan konsumen yang dipengaruhi oleh Drama Korea. Peneliti berharap penelitian ini dapat membantu peneliti selanjutnya yang akan melakukan penelitian serupa dari aspek yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: *drama korea, pengambilan keputusan konsumen, niat untuk mengunjungi, kesadaran merek.*

Introduction

Korean dramas have become more than just TV shows. Korean dramas have achieved the popularity in worldwide, including Indonesia. Korean drama was part of Korean Wave or Hallyu products. Korean Wave or Hallyu, first appeared in the mid-1990s after South Korea has diplomatic relations with China in 1992, since then Korean dramas and Korean music gained popularity in Chinese-speaking communities (Haugland, 2019). In Korean dramas and Korean music which are Korean Wave or Hallyu products, there are cultural elements from South Korea, such as the lifestyle of the people, language, fashion styles, foods and drinks, and products from South Korea.

The emergence of the Korean Wave or Hallyu in Indonesia began with the broadcast of the drama "Mother's Sea" in 2002 through Indonesian TV stations, Trans TV, and "Endless Love" through Indosiar. Due to the positive responses from the public, many Indonesian TV stations started to play another Korean drama series. Moreover, the easiness and its free access have made Korean dramas accepted by Indonesians and has led to rapid growth over time. In addition, the spread of the Korean Wave or Hallyu is not only through Korean dramas, but through music, Korean beauty products, food, and tourist destinations. Through the Korean Wave or Hallyu, South Korea has succeeded in introducing their culture to the whole world and has succeeded in creating image in society, thus resulting in many people have applied South Korean culture to their everyday lives.

The popularity of Korean dramas in Indonesia causes many influences that affect all circles of age, especially teenagers in Indonesia. The terms "teenager" and "adolescent" are often used interchangeably (Bell, 2016). The age limit for adolescents is 12 to 21 years of age (Paramitasari & Alfian, 2012). American Academy of Pediatrics divided adolescence into 3 age groups; early adolescence (11 – 14 years old), middle adolescence (15 – 17 years old), and late adolescence (18 – 21 years old). In late adolescents period, they usually have more impulse control by now and may be better able to gauge risks and rewards accurately. In Late Adolescence, they become gradually more emotionally stable. They develop a greater concern for others and start thinking about their purpose in life. They can think ideas, set goals for themselves, and can express their own ideas to others and are confident about them (Salmela-Aro, 2011). Moreover, Elsa Fitri (2018) added that adolescents in this period used appropriate values taught by

environmental informants since childhood. According to Francis & Hoefel (2018) young people have always embodied the popular culture of their communities at the time, profoundly influencing both attitudes and behavior. It is apparent that young people, using the Internet, especially social media, are becoming used to "like" different things, to comment on reality, to evaluate what they buy and use, where they spend time, etc.

Furthermore, the success of Korean dramas is shown through the interesting storyline and the attractiveness of the actors and actresses. According to Syhadah & Supriyanto (2016), the films, dramas, and music carried by Hallyu are very influencing the teenagers in Indonesia so they come to imitate the style of the Korean artist which is resulted in an emergency of interest in buying and consuming Korean cosmetic products. A buying decision is affected by various factors from culture, subculture, social class, membership groups, the family, the personality, the psychological factors, the cultural trends, and societal environment (Rani, 2014). Someone's choice to choose a particular lifestyle can be affected by the media. This proved by the study of Donnelly et al. (2011) that the role of the media consequently influences people's attitudes toward living a healthier lifestyle, especially media plays a role in being a good source of information.

Additionally, watching Korean dramas have seems to increases the audience's awareness regarding the brand that is shown. Brand awareness represents the specificity toward a brand in the minds of the consumers (Foroudi, 2019). Brand awareness has several levels, from the lowest level, unaware of the brand (not being aware of the presence of the brand) to the highest level, the top of mind (aware of the presence of the brand) (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness affecting consumer decision-making, specifically in the context of low-involvement packaged goods (Huang & Sarigollu, 2012). The buyer is aware of the presence of a brand, but the awareness of the brand is minimal and obviously has no particular emotional connection to it, as a result of which they may or may not think of buying the brand (Sawant, 2012), but the product placement promotes better audience recall of the brand as compared to placements that are not mentioned verbally.

Korean dramas showing beautiful and interesting places that make viewers have the desire to visit the original place, in other words, have the intention to visit South Korea. Lee & Bai (2010, as cited in Chan et al., 2018) argued that the Korean Wave had a relationship with visitors' views of South Korea as a potential tourist destination. Intention is the awareness of an individual's motivation or choices to do a certain behavior (Winarta et al., 2017). In the tourism research field, the intention to visit a destination is the willingness of the visitor towards a destination being offered by a tourism agency as a tourism destination (Yacob et al., 2019). The intention to visit a destination is influenced by many factor, one of the factor is the destination image. Hallman, Müller & Zehrer (2015) states destination images is considered as the attributes of the attractions within a destination for the tourists and sellers perceptions and it plays a major role towards the delivery of the destinations product distribution, description, promotion, and amalgamation.

This phenomenon refers to 'Hallyu Tourism' meaning that tourists visit South Korea and its attractions due to the influence of the Korean Wave. The tourist

image of a destination is a major factor, accountable for its trend and popularity for identifying the different characteristics of the image that could provide important information in the development of promotional strategies (Lee & Bai, 2010). According to Court & Lupton (1997, as cited in Chan et al., 2018), a positive destination image does have a positive impact on travellers' intention to visit that location in the future. Chan et al. (2018) suggest that a destination with more positive images would be more likely to be included in the decision-making step to select a destination and a positive image of a destination would also improve travellers' intention to revisit. Reportedly in 2017, the number of South Korean outbound travellers worldwide has approximately reached 26.6 million tourists (Sukonek, 2018). According to data from the Korea Tourism Organization, the total number of tourists visiting South Korea back in 2018 was 15,346,879 people. On the other hand, Table 1 shows that every year the growth total of Indonesian do travelling to South Korea increases every year except for 2015 & 2017.

Table 1. Visitors Arrival from Indonesia to South Korea

Year	Male	Female	Crew	Total	Growth (%)
2015	66.168	53.425	73.997	193.590	-7,1
2016	84.100	80.684	130.677	295.461	52,6
2017	83.897	86.174	60.677	230.837	-21,9
2018	98.228	101.090	49.749	249.067	7,9
2019	107.215	113.481	57.879	278.575	11,8

Source: Korea Tourism Organization

In the first quarter of 2020, COVID-19 has triggered a 22% decline in international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2020). This makes South Korea tourism sector is affected. Table 2 shows the data from Korea Tourism Organization, back in 2020 on January to May, the total visitor from Indonesia to South Korea is significantly decreasing compared to the previous year. In addition, the total growth of Indonesian visitors to South Korea from year to year in unstable, because the numbers fluctuate.

Table 2. Visitors Arrival from Indonesia to South Korea 2020

2020	Male	Female	Crew	Total	Growth (%)
Jan	7.728	8.646	3.069	19.443	3,2
Feb	5.554	8.073	2.173	15.800	-12,8
March	1.924	463	1.373	3.760	-85,3
April	948	102	814	1.864	94,1
May	962	29	761	1.752	-90,7

Source: Korea Tourism Organization (2020)

The earlier studies have suggested how the Korean Wave creates a positive image of tourism destinations for South Korea, which is resulting in the interest of the audience in visiting South Korea. Previous studies have examined the impact of Korean drama in representing Korean cultures, such as Korean styles and fashion, and the perception of what attracts locals towards a destination but rarely used the viewpoint of a specific age range and not many studies explored the viewpoints of teenagers regarding a potential tourist destination. The present

study added the impacted consumer decision-making on Korean products based on what factor, discusses brand awareness, and product placement that is seen in Korean drama.

Therefore, this study aims to determine how informants of this study perceive South Korea's image as a destination as seen in Korean dramas because of the gained popularity of Korean drama despite the Pandemic that has occurred. Other than that, this study aims to find out what are the impacts of watching Korean drama on teenagers in Indonesia in consumer decision-making towards Korean products. Lastly, this study conducted is to find out whether watching Korean drama could increase the brand awareness towards a brand seen in Korean drama on Indonesian teenagers.

Research Methods

There are 6 informants, 5 females and 1 male and their ages ranged between 20 – 21 years old who lives in cities in Indonesia. With this in mind, the informants of this study are considered as the Late Adolescence. The informants of this study came from different backgrounds, they are either students or freelancers. They had known Korean drama for quite some time. Most of them haven't visited South Korea. There is one informant who has visited South Korea. The process of the informants' selection on this study was through the specific age range, lives in Indonesia, and the intensity of watching Korean drama in 2 months.

This study uses qualitative methodology with a case study approach. The reason why the researcher uses this method is that these approaches are able to make the researcher conduct an in-depth exploration of an intricate phenomenon within some specific context. Moreover, the 6 informants that have been selected are based on their willingness to share and how well they know about Korean drama.

The paradigm used in this research is the interpretative paradigm. The interpretive paradigm views humans as conscious beings and is intentional in acting (intentional human being). In other words, all human actions are not automatic or mechanical, nor do they occur by chance, but rather are the result of a decision with an interpretation and meaning. As a result, every human action (considered) is always imbued with and inspired by a specific type of consciousness that is embedded in the individual's mind. In other words, informants learn by fitting new information together with what they choose to experience.

The data collection for this study is through the interview. The interview was focusing more on the experience and perception of each informant and the perpetual process by asking the participants to tell their experiences and opinion. The informants agreed that their names would be made visible, the conversations were to be recorded, and the interview would take place at a time where it was mutually convenient. The interviews using Indonesian, and translated into English. The interview lasts for about one to two hours with each informant. The interview started from September – October 2020. A set of questions were given to the informants about 2 days beforehand to allow the informants to understand the study's area. The gathered data from the interview becomes the primary data for this study. To ensure the point of view of the informants and possibly broaden

the scope to cover in this study, this study uses semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview has open questions, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. There are 9 major questions and additional 3 questions that were presented to the informants whose have been selected.

Table 3. List of Questions

Major Questions:

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- For starter, please introduce yourself.
 - Do you watch Korean Drama?
 - How did you know Korean drama?
 - What do you like from Korean drama?
 - Does watching Korean drama makes you want to visit South Korea?
 - Does watching Korean drama affect your everyday lives?
 - Have you ever bought Korean products?
 - Do you ever noticing something in Korean drama that is presented purposely?
 - Does watching Korean drama increases your brand awareness towards a brand?

Additional Questions:

- Have you ever visited South Korea?
 - Does Korea is just as what you expeted as the ones you see in Korean drama?
 - What is the reason you finalize your decision to buy Korean products?
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Source: Constructed by the Researcher

To support the primary data, the researcher uses journals & articles as the secondary data. The data were analyzed based on interactive model analysis by Miles & Huberman (1994). There are three steps in conducting this technique of analysis; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The validity of the data gathered for this study is validated by the data triangulation method. To generate the result for this study, the researcher used data coding. The findings of this study compared with previous studies and existing theories to refine the conceptual framework of the study and determine the influence of Korean dramas on the informants.

Result and Discussions

To appreciate the informants' confidential, the researcher has asked for their permission to put their identity in this journal. The interviews were conducted in Indonesia and translated into english. There were 6 interviews which have been conducted.

The informants admitted that they have first found out about Korean drama through their relatives, such as family and friends. They were either recommended, forced, or just by observing their relatives to collect the habit of watching Korean drama. According to Albert Bandura (1977), as cited in Swartz & Wilde (2012), illustrates how adolescents learn. They learn by observing others; thinking, reasoning, imagining, planning, and valuing are social rather than individual in nature (Swartz & Wilde, 2012) and support the finding of Francis & Hoefel (2018) that young people have always embodied the popular culture of their communities at the time, profoundly influencing both attitudes and behavior.

In conclusion, Korean drama has influencing both attitudes and behavior on the informants.

The Indonesian teenagers see South Korea as a destination

From the interview, it shows that the beautiful sceneries that are seen in the drama have raised the intention of the informants to visit the actual place. Most of the informants admitted they want to visit South Korea after watching Korean drama. This is because of the images they have seen in the drama, such as the places.

This statement was shown in the interviewee's responses from the questions given:

"K-Drama has an interesting storyline. I take watching K-Drama as a stress-relief for myself. The storyline is creative unlike Indonesian soap opera. There are many interesting places seen in K-Dramas. The good choice of the soundtrack for the drama makes it easy to remember. The ambiance that K-Drama brought to me is really inspirational". (Interviewee AR)

"I like the storyline of K-Drama, every episodes makes me curious and it made me to keep on watching. I love the romance storyline in a K-Drama, specifically Itaewon Class. The storyline is unpredictable. The visual of the characters are pleasing to the eyes makes me wants to visit South Korea. They are so beautiful". (Interviewee E)

"After watching Itaewon Class, I do want to see the actual place of Itaewon itself". (Interviewee G)

Most of the informants added that watching Korean drama gives them references for them to visit a place in the future when about to visiting South Korea. For example, they would visit the shooting place of a Korean drama. This result matches with the previous studies by Chan et al. (2018), that the intention to visit a destination is influenced by destination image. An image influences tourist in the process of choosing a destination, subsequent evaluations of a trip and their future intentions (Chan et al., 2018).

This statement was shown in the interviewee's response from the questions given:

"Yes, indeed. Due to the global pandemic, I can't go to South Korea this year. But if I ever going to visit South Korea, I know exactly where I wanted to visit. I would visit the place that was used as a filming place in Korean dramas". (Interviewee N)

"Yes. I really want to taste Korean food that was made directly by the Korean, I also want to shop for the outfits of the Korean and buy the Korean skincare there." (Interviewee RH)

"I want to see it for myself and experience the life that portrays in the K-Drama Itaewon Class. I think it's cool that 28 the maker of Itaewon Class wants to make Itaewon be the branding of a place through this drama". (Interviewee G)

Apart from the beautiful places that are seen in the Korean dramas, the informants admitted that they want to visit South Korea because of the experiences they have seen in the drama, such as culinary preference and shopping places there. The informants mentioned that they wanted to feel the sensation of eating Korean food or experienced shopping for Korean fashion and Korean beauty products directly in South Korea.

Regarding the following responses shown above, it is in line with the finding of Eid et al (2020) regarding the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) refer as an attitude to the strength of a consumers' favourable or unfavourable feeling toward products. In this study, informants show a favourable attitude to Korean dramas that display many good places in South Korea and its attractions, such as shopping places and culinary preferences and resulting in the behavioural intention to visit South Korea to experience its attractions directly.

On the other hand, an informant has visited South Korea, she admitted that she would revisit South Korea but due to the pandemic, she has to postpone the agenda.

This statement was shown in the interviewee's response, as follows:

"It's just what I expected. Namsan Tower is just a pretty as the one I have seen in the Korean drama. But, the ambiance is the different as we have seen in the drama where it was quiet and peaceful; the truth is it was so crowded and full of people".

"I feel like I was rushed when I join the tour because of choice of the destination, that I think it's not necessary to visit. Take my advice, it is better to do the independent travels".

"Yes, I do. But, due to the pandemic, I have to postpone the agenda".
(Interviewee AR)

The result above implies that the more a person watches Korean drama it will likely enhance a positive image of South Korea as a destination and resulting in the intention to revisiting the destination. In conclusion, the informants perceive South Korea as a potential tourist destination.

Consumer Decision Making on the Participants

Most of the informants in this study have bought Korean products. Most of the informants admitted that they prefer to buy Korean products through Online Shop or *Jastip* service.

This statement shown in the interviewee responses below:

"I think importing it directly from South Korea is much cheaper than buying it here and the perception of the originality as well". (Interviewee RH)

"I pay attention to the price; there are Jastip who chose to increase the price and the opposite". (Interviewee RA)

"I have once asked my mom to buy me Korean skincare products because it was the first time, I think that hearing Korean products that popular in Indonesia. I'm afraid that I will get the fake one if I ordered it here. So I ordered directly from South Korea when she visited there". (Interviewee G)

They perceive that buying Korean products through these two platforms were cheaper than buying Korean products directly in the official distributor or the brand's official store in Indonesia. The result of this study is in line with the consumer decision process stages by Mehrguth (2018) after the informants determine what products they want to buy and they started look up for the products' information. Then, the informants begin to look for the best options for authenticating their buying decisions. In this case, informants did the evaluation of alternatives based on the price. The informants also mentioned that importing Korean products directly from South Korea through online shop and *Jastip*

service will maintain the originality of the product.

Apart from the price and originality options of Korean beauty products, an informant admitted that she would buy K-Pop merchandise goods of her favorite group. This is based on her love for her favorite K-Pop group, she mentioned that she would buy anything that was sold by them.

This statement shown in the Interviewee response below:

“Because the love I have for EXO. If I can afford the price regarding the product I would buy It”. (Interviewee AR)

This also matches with the following theories; consumer buying decisions, where the purchase decision is affected by culture, membership groups, and cultural trends (Rani, 2014). In this case, The Korean Wave and Korean drama influencing consumer buying decisions towards the informants.

Additionally, Korean Drama has created a numerous impact on the informants. The affected elements include languages, dress codes, and beverage preferences.

These results shown in the following responses below:

“Yes. I was carried away the ambiance from the K-Drama. Sometimes I want to act like the character from the K-Drama. Also, I want to imitate their style”. (Interviewee N)

“I talk to my friends using Korean language, because they love K-Drama as much as I do”. (Interviewee RH)

“I learned Hangul and Korean language through Korean drama because my friend encouraged me to do so. I learned about Korean language because she loves K-Drama as much as I do”. (Interviewee AR)

“Ever since watching Korean drama, Soju tasted different than before”. (Interviewee E)

The informants have admitted that they started to learn Korean language and *Hangul* after watching Korean drama and started to speak Korean language with their friends, who are also a Korean drama fans. Also, the informants reckon that the fashion styles seen in Korean dramas were very cool and attractive. This made the informants want to adopt a Korean style fashion. In addition, an informant admitted that after watching Korean drama he started to like consuming Soju. Soju is a traditional Korean distilled beverage made from rice, wheat, or barley, usually containing about 16.8% to 53% alcohol by volume (Figueroa, 2020). The informant admitted that before knowing Korean drama, Soju just taste usual like the other beverages.

The result above shows that the Korean drama has made the informants collect the South Korean cultures, such as languages, dress codes, and food and beverage preferences. The attitude shown in the informant's responses was favorably good. In conclusion, Korean drama has influenced the informants to learn and speak the Korean language, adopting the Korean dress codes, and also has successfully embedded an emotional and psychological image on beverage reference on the informant.

The Increasing Brand Awareness on a brand after watching Korean drama

A brand is essential for marketing purposes. Brands can be an identity for certain products. Most of the informants have admitted they have seen a brand in Korean drama and aware that the seen brands in Korean drama are for

marketing purposes.

The result was shown in the in interviewee responses, as follows:

“Usually, in Korean dramas, I know which brand sponsors this actress. For example, Jo Yi Seo was sponsored by Benefit. Then, I watched Kim Bok Ju, played by Lee Sung Kyung which was sponsored by Laneige. Since then, I know that brand after watching Korean drama. Then I saw their car was Hyundai, it was obvious. I always see Hyundai cars every time I watch Korean drama”. (Interviewee N)

“Yes, very much so. Usually in Korean drama, the actress holds the sponsored item in their right hand”. (Interviewee RH)

“Yes, indeed. For example, I just recently finished watching ‘It’s Okay Not To Be Okay’, then I saw the Samsung Flip that was used by the Ko Moon Yeong, I noticed that brand was Samsung”. (Interviewee G)

The informant notices that there are some brands that often seen in Korean drama, such as Samsung, for their phone, Hyundai, for their vehicles, and the skincare brands such as Benefit and Laneige. Informants claimed that brands such as Samsung, Laneige, and Hyundai are very renowned and would just instantly aware of the presence of these brands in the Korean drama at the time.

This result implies that those brands conform to the theory of Aaker (1991), brand awareness. Brand awareness has several levels, from the lowest level, unaware of the brand (not being aware of the presence of the brand) to the highest level, namely the top of mind (aware of the presence of the brand). The brands mentioned are on the top of the minds of the informants.

On the other hand, an informant notices the product placement in Korean drama. She admitted that she often sees the promoted product in Korean drama is seen or held in the right hand. This result proves that the product placement promotes better audience recall of the brand as compared to placements that are not mentioned verbally (Kit & P’ng, 2014). However, this result has indeed increased the brand awareness towards the brand but the informants admitted that it doesn’t necessarily influence them to buy the products, or in other words, they didn’t have the purchase intention towards the product. In conclusion, the result of this study shows that watching Korean dramas successfully increases the informant’s awareness of a brand.

Conclusion

The role of the image of Restaurant X is important in increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Consumer satisfaction is not formed directly from service quality, but must be through corporate image. If the customer feels that the quality provided is getting better, then the customer will increasingly have a positive image of Restaurant X and will make the customer feel satisfied, which will eventually become a loyal customer. Based on the results of this study, if you want to increase customer loyalty, what needs to be done is to increase customer satisfaction due to a positive image of the restaurant.

Although service quality does not have a direct effect on Customer Satisfaction, it does not mean that Restaurant X does not need to pay attention to these variables. To grow customer satisfaction and loyalty, Restaurant X still has to maintain service quality so that it is always excellent, and as a result its image becomes more positive. This research has limitations where the

researcher is only conducted in one industry, namely the service industry (restaurants) and does not consider the manufacturing industry. Differences in business processes between the manufacturing industry and the service industry can lead to different findings in the manufacturing industry. It would be more appropriate for further researchers to examine the comparison between the two industries. Future researchers can also make comparisons between restaurants that already have a strong image (such as restaurant X) and similar restaurants whose image is not too strong.

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