

A Narrative Literature Review on the Impact of Social Media Use as Marketing Tools for Enhancing Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Business Performance in Malaysia

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Abstract

In today's digital age, social media has become an avenue where MSMEs can extend their marketing campaigns to a wider range of consumers. This study aims to understand the impact of social media use as marketing tools for enhancing MSMEs business performance in Malaysia. This study based on qualitative data obtained through a narrative literature review involving gathering, critiquing and summarising journal articles textbooks related to the research topic. The data drawn from ten selected journal article identified using Google Scholar, covering the period from 2019 to 2023. The findings of this study reveal consistent impacts of social media use, emphasizing the dependence on industry type and the specific social media platforms aligned with MSMEs' business objectives. The results of this study indicate that the use of social media for marketing has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs, especially in increasing sales, customer relationships, productivity, and creativity. This means that the better the use of social media for marketing, the better the performance of MSMEs will be. Nonetheless, the impact of this study is still widespread. Therefore, further research needs to be done to gain more insights on the drivers of social media use and their impact on the performance of MSMEs.

Keywords: Social Media, Marketing, Business Performance, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise

Tinjauan Literatur Naratif tentang Kesan Penggunaan Media Sosial sebagai Alat Pemasaran untuk Meningkatkan Prestasi Perniagaan Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil & Sederhana (PMKS) di Malaysia

Abstrak

Dalam era digital hari ini, media sosial telah menjadi saluran di mana perusahaan mikro, kecil dan sederhana (PMKS) boleh meluaskan kempen pemasaran mereka kepada julat pengguna yang lebih luas. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memahami kesan penggunaan media sosial sebagai alat pemasaran untuk meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan PMKS di Malaysia. Kajian ini adalah berdasarkan data kualitatif yang diperolehi melalui Kajian Literatur Naratif, yang diambil daripada 10 artikel jurnal tentang topik penyelidikan yang dikenal pasti menggunakan Google Scholar dari 2019 hingga 2023. Penemuan kajian ini mendedahkan kesan konsisten penggunaan media sosial, bergantung kepada jenis industri dan penggunaan platform media sosial yang sejajar dengan objektif perniagaan oleh PMKS. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan media sosial untuk pemasaran memberi kesan positif terhadap prestasi PMKS terutamanya dalam meningkatkan jualan, perhubungan pelanggan, produktiviti, dan kreativiti. Ini bermakna semakin baik penggunaan media sosial itu untuk pemasaran, semakin baik prestasi yang ditunjukkan oleh PMKS. Namun begitu, kesan kajian yang dibuat ini masih meluas. Oleh itu, kajian lanjut perlu dilakukan untuk mendapatkan lebih banyak pandangan yang lebih khusus tentang penggunaan media sosial dan kesannya terhadap prestasi PMKS.

Kata Kunci: Media Sosial, Pemasaran, Prestasi Perniagaan, Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana

Introduction

Social media refers to websites, computer or mobile applications, and platforms that connect users and enable them to easily share information or content in real-time. Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) Internet User Survey (2020) states that 88.7% of the population in Malaysia are internet users, marking a 1.3% increase from 87.4% in 2018. Among the top online activities, 93.3% of users in Malaysia engage in social media. According to Chen and Qasim (2021), over the last decade, the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook have increased dramatically. These platforms are utilised by people for communication purposes.

In today's business world, social media is the most strategic tool for increasing a company's value proposition, image, revenue, and competitive advantages. As a result, it is undeniable that the majority of businesses, including micro, small, and medium enterprises, are compelled to use social media as part of their marketing and sales promotions (Wibawa et al, 2022). Furthermore, social media can be used to build trust and relationships, as well as improve interactions and transactions with current and potential customers. According to the Companies Commission Enterprise (2020), by the end 2019, a total of 1,344,911 companies and 7,511,278 businesses were registered under the Companies Commission of Malaysia. These figures include the establishment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Malaysia as well.

However, the marketing activities of MSMEs faced various constraints, such as limited capital, resources, and skills. One of the most significant issues in the development of MSMEs is the technology aspect. Technology provides MSMEs with both opportunity and challenges. On the one hand, it provides opportunities for market expansion, increased efficiency, and increased competitiveness. Conversely, the quick pace of technological change and the related expenses might pose hurdles, necessitating MSMEs to manage the dynamic landscape in order to successfully reap the benefits while addressing potential barriers. Therefore, the strategic application of

technology should be implemented to improve MSMEs' overall performance, particularly in field of marketing. Earlier studies have shown that social media is a recommended tool for enterprises to attract customers and become more reputable (Appel et al., 2020).

Connections between enterprises and the public are supported using video and image-sharing platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube, online networks like Facebook and Twitter, and other social bookmarking websites like Pinterest and Snapchat. According to Wee et.al (2020), among the social media platforms, most SMEs prefer to use Facebook as an advertisement tool to attract new customers and generate sales revenue. With many Facebook fans, SMEs can create an impression and value for customers. The information on the organic and reach of the advertisements leads to a better decision on cost spending on such advertisements. Therefore, it improves the open interaction between customers and business owners.

Other than that, there has been a significant increase in the number of MSMEs engaging in social media marketing (Syaifullah et.al, 2021; Sherly, 2020). The main intention for MSMEs to engage in social media as a marketing tool is to seek new opportunities and expand business. Among those intentions, brand awareness, cost-efficiency, develop a new customer base, and customer engagement are mentioned the most in previous research. Mehdi (2023) stated that social media features have been perceived as an excellent opportunity for companies to create brand awareness globally. However, it is challenging for SMEs due to a lack of knowledge to build compelling campaigns through social media.

Although social media provide convenience for MSMEs to engage with their customers, there are challenges for them in retaining the value of the interaction (Andhyka, Yustisiana, & Widayadi, 2023). Otherwise, customers may leave nasty comments, reviews, or negative feedback about the business. Thus, this study aims to explore the impact of social media use as a marketing tool on their business performance.

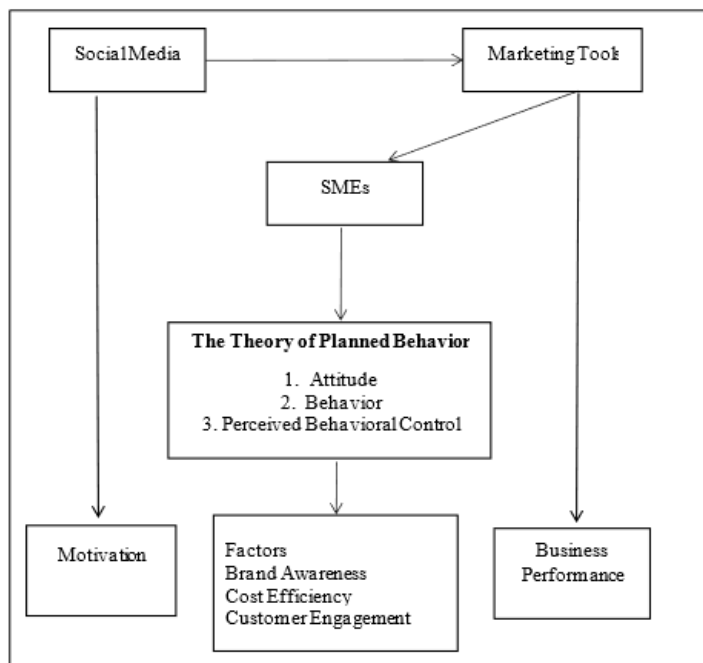


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

The Role of social media

Innovation on the internet has had a significant impact on corporate success over the last 20 years. Social media presents a new avenue for direct interaction between businesses and customers in commerce. Social media is a valuable online resource for current and trustworthy information. Open communication made possible by social media can also help businesses better understand their customers' demands and inspire them to act quickly and effectively to meet those needs (Wardati & Mahendrawathi, 2019).

The growth and various social media usage have encouraged SMEs to realize their ambitions to market their products, brands or services more efficiently and widely. This is supported by Alwan and Alshurideh (2022), Khattak and Yousaf (2021), and Puspaningrum (2020) who stated that the use of social media by a company makes it easy for companies to build their brands and increase their business activities.

Additionally, compared to traditional communication channels, social media enables businesses to interact directly and more efficiently with end users at comparatively low prices. Businesses have begun using social media for various marketing initiatives, such as customer relationship management, branding, research, services, and sales promotions (Tundung, 2021). Based on these diverse goals, most businesses use social media for branding. Furthermore, a company's reputation can benefit from social media marketing which consumers can access a variety of shared information sources, including recommendations and experiences from other consumers, by utilizing social media (Puspaningrum, 2020).

Social media influences also not just company tactics but also the overall structure of consumer brand interactions. It has developed into a dynamic force that connects businesses and customers in unconventional ways. In conclusion, as organizations manage the complexity of the developing social media world, they not only handle difficulties but also open up new possibilities for development and innovation (Muninger, Hammedi, & Mahr, 2019). Accepting the dynamic nature of consumer brand interactions in the digital era allows businesses to survive in an environment where adaptation and forward-thinking strategies are critical to long term success.

MSMEs in Malaysia

Micro, small, and medium companies (MSMEs) are an essential part of Malaysia's commercial environment, and they are divided into three main categories depending on size and operating factors. These classifications provide valuable insights into the country's varied range of businesses. Micro-enterprises are distinguished by their capacity to

meet specific criteria, allowing them to function on a smaller scale and serve specialized markets or consumer segments.

According to Lestari (2020) micro-enterprises are essential in encouraging economic inclusion and adding to the overall vibrancy of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Small businesses, on the other hand, are characterized as profitable, self-sufficient companies led by individuals or organizations that are not directly or indirectly associated with giant corporations. Jamai (2021) and Siahaan (2020) highlight the critical importance of small firms in stimulating innovation and competitiveness and functioning as engines of economic growth by encouraging creativity and adaptation.

Medium-sized firms are uniquely positioned because they meet vital criteria that place them between small businesses and giant corporations. Lee, Lim, and Eng (2023) dives into the challenges and opportunities encountered by Malaysian medium-sized firms, focusing light on their specific role in the business environment. Moreover, the classification of MSMEs in Malaysia offers a nuanced view of the diversified entrepreneurial ecosystem. These micro, small and medium-sized businesses contribute considerably to the country's economic development.

By studying each category, researchers gain insights into the challenges, opportunities, and distinctive traits that identify MSMEs in the Malaysian context. Within the field of MSMEs also, there is a growing body of study that especially investigates the impact of using social media as marketing tools. Scholars are looking into how MSMEs in Malaysia use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to improve their business success.

MSMEs and social media

Malaysia encounters a constantly changing business environment shaped by technological innovations, unpredictability in the market, and unparalleled obstacles such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Abd Rahim, Ramlee, and Putit (2022) found that the pandemic had a transformative

impact on Malaysian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The findings show that the challenges created by the pandemic prompted MSMEs to adapt and use social media platforms, stressing the importance of flexibility as a critical component for navigating unpredictable times.

It is essential to comprehend the subtle contextual factors that impact social media usage in the ever-changing world of Malaysian MSMEs. Abu Bakar and Ahmad Zaini (2022) provide an in-depth discussion of this complexity and stresses the significance of customized social media strategy for MSMEs depending on contextual considerations. Examine a real-world instance from Malaysia where "GadgetHub," a well-known local MSME, identified the different internet habits of its target market.

GadgetHub adjusted its social media content and advertising methods following the knowledge that Malaysians have varying preferences for social media platforms, with some preferring Facebook and others using Instagram more frequently. GadgetHub successfully optimised its social media presence because of this contextual understanding. For example, they discovered that younger users tended to interact with Instagram more, encouraging the business to use visually appealing

posts and stories to highlight its items. However, they kept a strong presence on Facebook, seeing that it was still well-liked by an older audience, so they could reach a wider audience there. In essence, GadgetHub's experience demonstrates how Malaysian MSMEs may succeed by carefully customizing their social media tactics to the specific characteristics of their target market. This level of personalization, guided by a thorough awareness of local factors, not only increases engagement but also equips MSMEs to successfully traverse the challenges of Malaysia's changing business landscape.

Business Performance

Performance is the outcome of business operations and strategic management procedures. It is a dynamic, ongoing process that involves managers, partners, and business owners. According to

Yuhainis et.al (2022) and Srimulyani (2021), business performance is crucial to a company because it affects wealth production, resource management, and employment prospects. How successfully a company manages its internal resources and adjusts to its external environment through increased growth and productivity is determined by its business performance corporate success or failure can also be predicted in part by looking at corporate performance (Abu Bakar, 2022).

Throughout the entrepreneurial life cycle, business owners are responsible for managing SMEs and seeking to improve SMEs' performance through new procedures, plans, and strategies (Sukri, 2023; Subagja, 2022; Rosyadi, 2020). Hence, from the marketing perspective, performance can be explained by efficiency and effectiveness. These measurements show that there can be internal and external explanations behind strategies. The goal of evaluating business performance in the SMEs sector is to boost business growth, pursue internal and external business possibilities, and expand all business actors' competencies (Salam & Hoque 2019).

When seen from the standpoint of providing value for customers, the process of crystallizing business performance is process-oriented in order to optimally disseminate the values of the firm's competitive firm's advantage (Garg et al. 2020). This, of course, necessitates a set of abilities as well as a feedback mechanism that helps firms to comprehend customer wants and expectations. In order to create the required business performance, an entrepreneur needs to take tangible action through the usage of social media and the use of market orientation at this point (Fernandes et al. 2020).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design focusing on a narrative literature review. Qualitative research is an investigative method for understanding the underlying motives, attitudes, and actions of individuals or events. In this context, a narrative literature review is the

synthesis and complete description of existing literature on a specific topic, offering a narrative account of the information accessible in a certain field of study (Hakala et al., 2020).

In addition, this study enables for in-depth investigation and interpretation of data acquired from a variety of sources. In this case, the data is derived from ten journal papers picked using a comprehensive literature search on Google Scholar from 2019 to 2023. Keywords used in the literature search included “social media” OR “SM” AND “micro, small medium enterprises” OR “MSME's” AND “sales” OR “marketing” and other pertinent topics. The keyword search covered articles in both English and Malay, focusing on journal submissions.

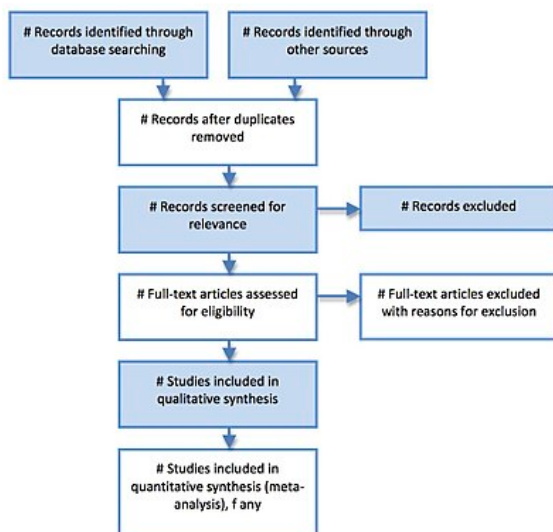


Diagram 1: Narrative Literature Review Process

Based on the diagram above, items found by the database search were chosen based on whether their titles corresponded with the desired topic. Subsequently, additional records were found by searching the references of the chosen records, meta-analyses, and reviews on the subject. The third phase involved reviewing the chosen records' abstracts and eliminating any that didn't fit the requirements for inclusion. Lastly, the

eligibility of the full-text articles was evaluated. Only ten articles that met the subsequent selection criteria were considered for inclusion in the review:

- a) The study evaluated social media usage as a marketing tool and the impact on SMEs' business performance in Malaysia
- b) All articles are related to the understanding of the impact of social media usage as a marketing tool and the impact on SMEs' business performance in Malaysia
- c) The study had experimental, statistics and research findings.
- d) The study was published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Findings and Discussion

The study's findings on the referenced literature indicate that social media use has specific effects on MSMEs' business performance. Their use of social media is based on the firm's business objectives. The influence observed is mainly associated with MSMEs' sales and marketing processes, including the interactions between the business and its stakeholders, customers, business partners, and competitors (Rakshit et. al., 2022). Within the context of social networks, social media is used by the majority of sectors. This is customized to the industry's goals and tactics for using social media within the business.

Additionally, Hruska & Maresova (2020) stated that the community at large is the primary target audience for industry social media use, so social media platforms that are selected are those that are accessible to all demographics. According to Wardati & Mahendrawathi (2019), MSMEs in the intense information business may see a rise in revenue due to the influence of social media usage on their sales process (examples include television programs, films, and books). The active use of social media by SMEs allows firms to obtain feedback and fresh ideas from various stakeholders, including consumers, suppliers, and employees.

MSMEs must take a more active role in revitalizing organizational settings through online digital, social, and transformational technology. Organizations can use this to inspire and increase industrial creativity, as well as to foster the emergence of entrepreneurial generations. According to recent trends, MSMEs use social media to solicit feedback from consumers or other users. That is, MSMEs investigate information collected through social media for business purposes (Syaifullah et. al., 2021).

This is marketing research in which firms gather feedback and fresh ideas from multiple stakeholders (customers, suppliers, and workers) and turn them into products or services in order to understand client demands and produce new innovations in developing products or services.

Furthermore, Cheng & Shui (2019) stated that social media use has a positive impact on organizational performance in terms of cost reduction, improved customer interactions, and increased information accessibility. Extensive social media marketing does not have to be expensive. Reaching out to and creating contacts with new clients, distributors, and end customers, as well as increasing exposure, are all benefits of using social media for MSMEs. MSMEs can create relationships with new consumers abroad by entering new markets, as well as decrease limits in terms of location and time, even if they have limited human resources and funding.

In manufacturing industry, social media is used to increase marketing, interaction, collaboration, and networking among stakeholders. This type of business requires more than one integrated social media platform. A website, for example, is used to update firm information, while Facebook is used to cultivate relationships with clients and online chat groups are used to discuss product or service development (Macarthy, 2021). The use of social media entails the development of new resources that serve as communication tools as well as innovative distribution routes. The selling and negotiating process has been

carried out via e-mail and phone connections, which can decrease the requirement for actual touch.

The ability to use social media allows businesses to take a more planned and proactive strategy to sales. Social media is made up of both existing and new resources that have a positive impact on business interactions. As argued by the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) perspective and demonstrated by the 4R model, social media as a resource has demonstrated its effects when combined with other relevant and related resources (Drummond, McGrath & O'Toole, 2023). First, entrepreneurs and sales managers have a role in social media utilization. Second is the effective use of social media in sales activities. Third is resource knowledge with reference to using social media. Fourth, alterations to the characteristics of linked resources may affect social media's existing and prospective value as a resource.

The state of the business itself determines how well social media is used as marketing tools for MSMEs. Not every MSMEs business is interested in adopting social media. According to Olsson & Benhard (2021), social media platforms that are challenging to utilize, particularly for older entrepreneurs, may be the cause of these difficulties. Because of this, many are hesitant to use social media and would rather stick to more conventional techniques. The literature study's findings demonstrate that every MSMEs has different objectives for implementing social media in their businesses.

The ability of MSMEs to handle social media in their businesses is another factor that determines the success of social media implementation. In conclusion, only ten journals from various experts were chosen out of the 20 examined for their dependability and relevance to the subject area. The findings from these 10 journals focus on discovering the impact of social media use as a marketing tool for enhancing MSME's business performance in Malaysia. The detailed findings are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Findings based on past year studies

Authors (Year)	Journals	Method	Causes	Findings
Wardati, N. K., & Mahendra wathi, E. R. (2019).	The Impact of Social Media Usage on the Sales Process in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): A Systematic Literature Review	Systematic Literature Review (SLR)	- Social Media - Marketing	The impact of social media usage on the sales process in SMEs can increase income for SMEs in the intensive information industry (examples of television programs, films, books).
Abu Bakar, N. A., & Ahmad Zaini, A. F. (2022).	Literature Review on the Factors Influencing the Usage of social media among Entrepreneurs in Malaysia	Conceptual Study	- Social Media Usage - Marketing	Studying social media usage as a marketing tool can help entrepreneurs gain competitive edges, build relationship with customers and build business presence in the market.
Syaifullah, J. (2021)	Social Media Marketing and Business Performance of MSMEs During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Quantitative approach and the analytical tool used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square	- Social Media Marketing -MSME Performance	The results of this study indicate that the use of social media for marketing has a positive effect on the performance of MSMEs, especially in increasing sales, customer relationships, productivity, and creativity.
Tundung Subali Patma (2021)	The impact of social media marketing for Indonesian SMEs sustainability: Lesson from Covid-19 pandemic	Quantitative approach with partial least squares structural equation modeling to obtain a deep understanding of this phenomenon	- Social Media Marketing	The adoption of internet/e-business technology can be explained by perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and cost marketing, and SMEs' sustainability.

Kasih, Y (2019)	The Role of social media on the Performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Palembang City	Quantitative Method	- Social Media - MSME Performance	Social media is used predominantly to facilitate interaction with customers, provide the product information, reduce costs, implement marketing strategies, and to gain product popularity.
Johan, M. R. M (2019)	Social Media and E-Commerce Online Shopping Perceived Risk among Micro SMEs in Malaysia	Quantitative Research	- Social Media	Customer preferences, non-delivery risk and financial transaction & security risk significantly affect social media and e-commerce online shopping platform usage among micro-SMEs in Malaysia.
Nur Yuhainis Ab Wahab (2020)	The Importance of ICT Adoption in Manufacturing Sector: An Empirical Evidence on SME Business Performance	Survey method	- Business Performance - Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	ICT adoption had significant correlation and relationship with business performance of SMEs
Subagja, A. D (2022)	The Role of Social Media Utilization and Innovativeness for Development of SMEs Performanc	Quantitative Approach	- Business Performance - Social Media	The findings of this study provide positive and significant evidence between the role of social media utilization and innovativeness on SME performance.

Salam, S., & Hoque, A. S. M. M. (2019).	The role of social media and effect of relationship marketing on SME performance in Bangladesh: multi-group CFA	Survey Method	- Performance - Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Relationship Marketing (RM) strategy has significant effect on Bangladeshi SME performance and social media significantly moderate the effect of RM on SME performance in Bangladesh
Ali Qalati (2020)	Examining the Factors Affecting SME Performance: The Mediating Role of Social Media Adoption	Qualitative Method	- Business performance - Social media	Technology, organization, and the environment play effective roles for SME performance.

Conclusion

Finally, this study investigated the tremendous impact of social media as a powerful marketing tool for Malaysia's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The findings highlight the revolutionary effect of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in increasing brand visibility, encouraging customer involvement, and, ultimately, improving business success. A thorough assessment of MSMEs' social media strategy reveals that those that use these digital platforms have a competitive advantage.

The study revealed critical success aspects such as focused content production, interactive customer involvement, and analytics-driven decision-making. Furthermore, the research throws light on the issues that MSMEs confront, such as limited resources, digital literacy gaps, and the need for strategic planning. Recognizing these issues is critical for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and business owners as they develop supportive frameworks and actions to improve the incorporation of social media into MSME marketing strategy.

As the corporate landscape changes, the importance of social media in shaping consumer behavior and influencing market trends cannot be emphasized. The consequences of this study go beyond individual organizations, adding to a broader discussion about the digitization of businesses in emerging economies like Malaysia. MSMEs that leverage the power of social media not only improve their own performance, but also contribute to the nation's economic growth and sustainability.

In essence, this study demonstrates the critical significance of social media in driving MSMEs to new heights of success in Malaysia. As organizations go through the dynamic digital landscape, embracing and maximizing social media strategies will be critical to achieving long-term development, stimulating innovation, and being resilient in an ever-changing industry.

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