



Muslim and Non-Muslim Students' Behavioural Intention in Consuming Halal Food

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ABSTRACT

The demand for halal food has become popular and well accepted among Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide. However, limited studies investigate factors influencing behavioural intention in consuming halal food among Muslim and non-Muslim students. Thus, this study aims to fill the gaps by examining the factors influencing Muslim and non-Muslim students' behavioural intention in consuming halal food. This study employed a quantitative and single cross-sectional study. The data were collected through self-administered questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale type. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses showed that attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are significant and positively influenced behavioural intention among Muslim and non-Muslim students in consuming halal food. Meanwhile, the independent sample *t*-test indicated differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. It implies that enhancing the attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control elements can increase the influence level of behavioural intention in consuming halal food. Besides, Muslim students showed a higher level in consuming halal food compared to non-Muslim students in attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. It shows that encouraging these four elements among non-Muslim students can increase their intention of consuming halal food. This study contributes and extends the body of knowledge in Muslim and non-Muslim students' behavioural intention in consuming halal food. This study also confirms Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour comprising attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control influencing the individual's behavioural intention.

1. Introduction

"Halal" is an Arabic term derived from the Arabic language, meaning "permitted or legal". According to Suleman et al. (2021), Muslims have a significant awareness of the need to consume halal food. Halal food and its consumption patterns are vital for the Muslim community (Bonne et al., 2009). Typically, halal is known to have a close relationship with the Muslim community; it controls every aspect of their lives, from proper conduct to food consumption (Rezai et al., 2015). Thus, the impact of food consumption depends on the individual and how they interpret, practice, and adhere to or follow the teachings of their faith or beliefs (Suleman et al., 2021). Muslim dietary law states that halal food refers to certain foods permitted under the Islamic legal code. In this regard, the concept of halal food is the idea of clean and comprehensive food intake for safe consumer consumption (Bonne et al., 2007). Therefore, the credibility of a product needs to confirm its halal status, and the worldwide market needs to recognise that certified halal food products have undisputable quality assurance (Mohayidin & Kamarulzaman, 2014).

The product's characteristics reflected by the halal status have made it very appealing to consumers. Regenstein et al. (2003) mentioned that Islam has clear guidelines on food choices and lifestyle among all religions. These dietary guidelines state that Muslims must eat only halal (permitted or halal) and *tayyib* (clean) food products and should refrain from *haram* (prohibited or *haram*) food (Regenstein et al., 2003).

Even though halal food is very significant in Muslim life, limited studies focus on young consumers' behavioural intention in consuming halal food in Malaysia (Khalek et al., 2015). In addition, fewer studies emphasise the factors influencing behavioural intention among young consumers (Marmaya et al., 2019). Furthermore, limited studies show that younger consumers have different behaviour patterns than the older generation (Khalek et al., 2015). In this regard, younger consumers are heavier consumers, knowledge-based in their choices, brand-minded, and trend determinants (Khalek et al., 2015). Therefore, a study on behavioural intention among the younger generation towards consumption of halal food is critically important because of their unique consumption behaviours and preferences, including non-Muslim consumers. Elseidi (2017) mentioned that the halal food market in non-Muslim countries is substantial, and non-Muslim countries offer enormous opportunities for halal food producers. As such, halal food is becoming an Islamic phenomenon and a lucrative business not only among Muslim countries but also non-Muslim ones. Hence, studying young non-Muslim perspectives towards halal food is crucial and significantly impacts halal products.

A comparison between Muslim and non-Muslim behavioural intention is crucial. Since 1970, the concept and understanding of halal food products have evolved in Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Badrudin et al., 2012). Meanwhile, halal food is a need of all Malaysians, whether Muslim or non-Muslim (Mansor & Daud, 2020). A large number of non-Muslim consumers tend to buy halal food products believing that halal-certified products are clean and safe to eat (Yusoff et al., 2015). However, non-Muslim behaviour towards halal food is unpredictable because they have different intentions to consume it (Chetioui et al., 2019). Therefore, a study on the behavioural intention of non-Muslims towards halal food products is much needed.

Chetioui et al. (2019) stated that three factors influencing individual behavioural intention are attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. However, there are limited studies conducted on the behavioural intention of Muslim and non-Muslim adolescents to eat halal food (Khalek et al., 2017). In addition, limited studies compare young Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in halal food consumption. Therefore, this study aims to examine the infence of attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention, and to investigate the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention in the context of young Muslim and non-Muslim consumers at Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (PTSS) in halal food consumption.

In this regard, four research objectives have been developed, namely (a) to examine the influence of attitudes on behavioural intention, (b) to examine the influence of subjective norm on behavioural intention, (c) to examine the influence of perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention, and (d) to ascertain differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. This study will help understand the factors influencing the behavioural intention of Muslim and non-Muslim students in consuming halal food in Malaysia and improve and encourage halal food consumption not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslim students in the future.

2. Literature review

2.1 Attitudes

Attitudes can be defined as the expression of feelings within an individual, whether a person is happy or unhappy, likes or dislikes, and agrees or disagrees with a particular object (Haro et al., 2016; Golnaz et al., 2010). Attitude also can be referred to as the assessment of performing a particular behaviour such as buying a product and indicating a person's level of favourable or unfavourable in evaluating that particular product (Blackwell et al., 2006). Golnaz et al. (2010) found that consumer attitudes towards halal food were the most important and interesting predictors of behavioural intention. At the same time, Khan and Azam (2016) mentioned that attitudes used to be the most significant factor in predicting purchasing halal food. Khalek et al. (2015) recommended that factors influencing Muslim and non-Muslim behavioural intention in consuming halal food in Malaysia are based on their attitudes towards halal food and the feeling of comfortable consuming it. Therefore, attitudes towards halal food are seen as necessary in predicting and explaining the behaviour of young consumers. It is important to understand that consumer attitudes towards halal food are an important investigation area (Rezai et al., 2010). Rezai et al. (2010) found that food safety and environmental hygiene significantly influence Muslims and non-Muslims in consuming halal food. Therefore, strengthening the attitudes of young Muslims and non-Muslims towards halal food products encourages an increase in their behavioural intention related to halal food products.

2.2 Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is the most influential driver of intention to choose halal food products (Khalek et al., 2015). According to Ajzen (1991), subjective norm refers to perceived social pressure from other persons, including family, friends, colleagues, relatives, or other significant groups, on whether or not to perform the specific behaviour. On the other hand, subjective norm represents an individual's perception or opinion of what others believe the individual should do (Finlay et al., 1999). In the context of halal food consumption, if someone perceives that the people around him have a strong influence on buying halal food products, social pressure will arise to generate interest in buying products labelled halal (Vizano et al., 2021).

If the purchase of halal food is seen as socially desirable behaviour, based on what other important people think about it, individuals are more likely to purchase halal food (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). A study done by Vizano et al. (2021) found that subjective norm significantly affects the purchase intention of halal food. Meanwhile, Ag. Damit et al. (2019) also found that subjective norm positively influences non-Muslim consumers' repurchase intention of halal food. In contrast, Bashir et al. (2018) found that subjective norm does not significantly correlate with consumer behavioural intention.

2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control

According to Vizano et al. (2021), perceived behavioural control is defined as an individual's perception of difficulty performing certain behaviours. In other words, perceived behavioural control steers the individual's perception of conducting an intended behaviour (Ag. Damit et al., 2019). There are two parts in perceived behavioural control: how much jurisdiction an individual has over behaviour and how confident an individual feels about acting or not acting out a particular behaviour (Liou & Contento, 2001). According to Alam and Sayuti (2011), perceived behavioural control is not a critical predictor of the behavioural intention of buying halal food in Malaysia. Meanwhile, Rezai et al. (2010) suggested that food safety and environmentally friendly under perceived behavioural control could influence the Muslims' and non-Muslims' intention in consuming halal food. It is also supported by Haque et al. (2015), stating that there are several factors, such as food safety, cleanliness, location, and price, that non-Muslims might consider to choose halal food. They will evaluate these factors against their ability before consuming halal food. Furthermore, Omar et al. (2012) stated that the intention in consuming halal food is higher when the consumer has high perceived behavioural control. It happens when the consumer has more resources and opportunities, such as time, money, and skill (Rachbini, 2011). Ag. Damit et al. (2019) found that perceived behavioural control towards halal food products positively influences their behavioural intention to purchase halal food. Vizano et al. (2021) also found that perceived behavioural control significantly affects behavioural intention. On the other hand, Bashir et al. (2018) stated that perceived behavioural control does not significantly correlate with consumer behavioural intention.

2.4 Behavioural Intention

Behavioural intention can be defined as the subjective probability that an individual will execute a particular behaviour (Mahardika et al., 2020). It is depicted as the best possible predictor of an individual's action, despite the many factors that may affect the effectiveness of the intention-behaviour relationship (Prasetyo et al., 2020). Knowing why and how consumers consume a certain product shall help marketers formulate ways to enhance the current products, launch products needed by the market, or entice consumers to buy their products (Blackwell et al., 2006). Consumer behaviour can be predicted through behavioural intention, while purchase intention represents what consumers think they will buy (Marso & Hasan, 2019). According to Marso and Hasan (2019), previous studies on consuming halal food consumption concluded that religiosity is the antecedent of behavioural intention and proven to have a positive, significant, and direct influence.

2.5 Research Framework

The independent variables are attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is behavioural intention. In addition, this study also involves two samples: Muslim and non-Muslim students. Figure 1 shows the study's research framework.

2.6 Research Hypotheses

Based on the research framework shown in Figure 1, there are seven hypotheses developed in this study as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive influence between attitudes and behavioural intention.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive influence between subjective norm and behavioural intention.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive influence between perceived behavioural control and behavioural intention.

Hypothesis 4: There are significant differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning attitudes.

Hypothesis 5: There are significant differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning subjective norm.

Hypothesis 6: There are significant differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning perceived behavioural control.

Hypothesis 7: There are significant differences between Muslims and non-Muslims concerning behavioural intention.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, single cross-sectional, and survey research method. The study's population is Muslim and non-Muslim students of PTSS. They are from all academic departments: Department of Tourism and Hospitality (JPH), Department of Commerce (JP), Department of Electrical Engineering (JKE), Department of Information Technology and Communication (JTMK), Department of Design and Visual Communication (JRKV), and Department of Mechanical Engineering (JKM). Based on data gathered from the Student Affairs Unit (HEP), the total population for the 1:2021/2022 session is 3046 students. Specifically, the population from JPH is 654, JP is 610, JKE is 449, JTMK is 448, JRKV is 542, and JKM is 343. Based on Raosoft Software, if the sample is 3046, the minimum needed is 342 samples. Stratified random sampling was employed to identify the sampling. Based on the calculation, the sample required from each department is 77 for JPH, 75 for JP, 69 for JKE, 40 for JTMK, 54 for JRKV, and 25 for JKM, a total up of 340.

This study adapted the questionnaire from Khalek et al. (2015) and divided it into five parts. Part A is on attitudes with eight items, Part B is on subjective norm with five items, Part C is on perceived behavioural control with five items, and Part D is on behavioural intention with seven items. Lastly, Part E is on the respondents' demographic profiles comprising gender, age, race, and departments. For the reliability of the questionnaire, this study utilised Cronbach's alpha coefficients, while for validity, this study used a panel of three content experts to validate the questionnaire. All the items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.

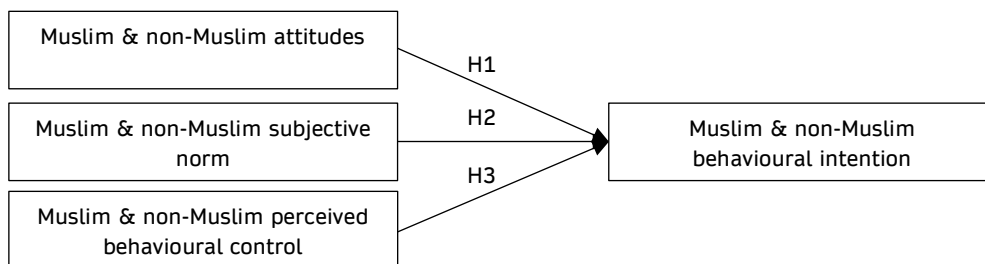


Figure 1: The study's research framework (Adapted from Khalek et al. (2015))

This study employed a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 for data analysis. The data analysis used is descriptive: frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation, and inferential analysis: Pearson correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and independent-sample *t*-test.

4. Analysis and Finding

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Out of 340 questionnaires distributed, this study only managed to collect 311 completed questionnaires and this gave a rate of return of 91%. Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic profiles. Based on the results, female (53.7%) was the highest number of respondents, followed by male (46.3%). In terms of age, respondents aged between 18-20 years old (82.0%) was the highest, followed by 21-11 years old (13.2%), 23-25 years old (4.5%), and lastly, 26 years old and above (0.3%). Malay (62.4%) was the highest number of respondents, followed by Indian (22.8%), Chinese (7.4%), Siamese (6.4%), and others (1%). The highest number of respondents based on the program was JPH (23.5%), followed by JP (22.2%), JRKV (17.4%), JKE (16.1%), JTMK (12.9%), and lastly, JKM (8%).

Table 1 The demographic profile of the respondents results

No.	Demographic	Particular	Frequency	Percent (%)
1.	Gender	Male	144	46.3
		Female	167	53.7
2.	Age	18-20	255	82.0
		21-22	41	13.2
		23-25	14	4.5
		26 years old and above	1	0.3
3.	Race	Malay	194	62.4
		Chinese	23	7.4
		Indian	71	22.8
		Siamese	20	6.4
		Others	3	1.0
4.	Department	JPH	73	23.5
		JP	69	22.2
		JTMK	40	12.9
		JKE	50	16.1
		JKM	25	8.0
		JRKV	54	17.4

4.2 Reliability Results

The reliability results showed that all variables were reliable. The reliability value of attitudes was 0.961, the subjective norm was 0.880, perceived behavioural control was 0.754, and behavioural intention was 0.981. Table 2 shows the study's reliability results.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha value	N
Attitudes	0.961	8
Subjective norm	0.880	5
Perceived behavioural control	0.754	5
Behavioural intention	0.981	7

Table 2: The reliability results

4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis analysed Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, and Hypothesis 3. The preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity assumptions (Pallant, 2020; Omar, Ariffin, & Ahmad, 2016). The results showed a strong and positive correlation between attitudes and behavioural intention ($r = 0.853$) and subjective norm and behavioural intention ($r = 0.854$). Meanwhile, a moderate and positive correlation existed between perceived behavioural control and behavioural intention ($r = 0.385$). The strongest variable correlating with behavioural intention was subjective norm, followed by attitudes and perceived behavioural control. Table 3 shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis of the study's variables.

Table 3 The result of Pearson correlation analysis

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4
Attitudes	4.089	1.282				
Subjective norm	4.465	0.789	0.861**			
Perceived behavioural control	4.277	0.893	0.514**	0.489**		
Behavioural intention	4.787	0.376	0.853**	0.854**	0.385**	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1- tailed).

4.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

After conducting the Pearson correlation analysis, the multiple regression analysis was performed. Based on the results, model 1 presented the effects of attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention. The result indicates adjusted $R^2 = 0.788$, meaning that attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are the factors explaining 78.8% of the variances in behavioural intention with $F = 384.366, p < 0.000$. In this case, attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control were significant; the prediction of behavioural intention with the beta values of $\beta = 0.492, p < 0.000, \beta = 0.480, p < 0.000, \beta = 0.103, p < 0.001$, respectively. In addition, attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control positively influenced behavioural intention. Hence, Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, and Hypothesis 3 are supported. These show that all three research objectives are perfectly achieved. Table 4 shows the results of the study's multiple regression analysis.

Table 4 The Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Model	B	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	0.756		1.749	0.081
Attitudes	0.800	0.492	9.343	0.000
Subjective norm	0.689	0.480	9.266	0.000
Perceived behavioural control	0.350	0.103	3.343	0.001

Dependent variable: behavioural intention

4.6 Independent Sample t-Test

The independent sample *t*-test was utilised to analyse Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5, Hypothesis 6, and Hypothesis 7. This study's continuous variables were attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention, while the participants were Muslim and non-Muslim students. For attitudes, the results indicated a statistically significant difference ($t(338) = 17.395, p < 0.000$) between Muslim (Mean = 4.896, SD = 0.271) and non-Muslim students (Mean = 3.753, SD = 0.846), with p -value < 0.000 . Hence, Hypothesis 4 is supported. Moreover, it was found that Muslim students (Mean = 4.896) had a higher mean value compared to non-Muslims (Mean = 3.753). In terms of subjective norm, the results indicated a statistically significant difference ($t(338) = 17.035, p$ -value < 0.000) between Muslim (Mean = 4.759, SD = 0.398) and non-Muslim students (Mean = 3.479, SD = 0.913), with p -value < 0.000 . Hence, Hypothesis 5 is supported. Moreover, it was found that Muslim students (Mean = 4.759) had a higher mean value compared to non-Muslims (Mean = 3.479).

For perceived behavioural control, the results also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference ($t(338) = 7.305, p$ -value = 0.000) between Muslim students (Mean = 4.899, SD 0.314) and non-Muslims (M = 4.602, SD = 0.397), with the level of perceived behavioural control p -value < 0.000 . Thus, Hypothesis 6 is supported. Furthermore, it was found that Muslim students (Mean = 4.899) had a higher mean value compared to non-Muslims (Mean = 4.6017). Finally, for behavioural intention, the results showed a statistically significant difference ($t(338) = 20.417, p$ -value < 0.000) between Muslim students (Mean = 4.841, SD = 0.40127) and non-Muslims (Mean = 2.840, SD = 1.266), with the level of behavioural intention p -value < 0.000 . Moreover, it was found that Muslim students (Mean = 4.841) had a higher mean value compared to non-Muslims (M = 2.840). Hence, Hypothesis 7 is supported.

These findings indicate that Muslim students' attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention influence consuming halal food more than non-Muslims in consuming halal food in PTSS. In sum, all the variables showed differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students. It can be concluded that Muslim students are better concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention compared to non-Muslim students in consuming halal food. Table 5 exhibits the results of the independent sample *t*-test analysis.

Variables	Religion Status	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Sig.
Attitudes	Muslim	194	4.895	0.271	17.395	0.000
	Non-Muslim	117	3.752	0.847	14.167	0.000
Subjective norm	Muslim	194	4.759	0.380	17.035	0.000
	Non-Muslim	117	3.479	0.914	14.356	0.000
Perceived behavioural control	Muslim	194	4.899	0.314	7.305	0.000
	Non-Muslim	117	4.602	0.397	6.900	0.000
Behavioural intention	Muslim	194	4.842	0.401	20.417	0.000
	Non-Muslim	117	2.840	1.265	16.616	0.000

Table 5 Independent Samples T-Test Analysis Result

5. Discussions

The first research objective is to examine the influence of attitudes on behavioural intention towards consuming halal food. The results showed that attitudes were significant and positively influenced behavioural intention. It is consistent with the study of Khalek et al. (2015), finding that attitudes positively influenced behavioural intention in consuming halal food. It is also consistent with Hariyanto et al. (2020), finding a positive influence of attitudes on behavioural intention. It is probably because PTSS students perceive halal food as clean, safe, and important. Lim et al. (2020) mentioned that halal food is considered clean, hygienic, and good quality. Hence, it shows that religiosity shapes the students' attitudes and behaviour in choosing and consuming halal food, including non-Muslims (Suleman et al., 2021).

The second research objective is to examine the influence of subjective norm on behavioural intention towards consuming halal food. The results showed that subjective norm was significant and positively influenced behavioural intention. It is consistent with Khalek et al. (2015), finding that attitudes positively influenced behavioural intention on students consuming halal food. It is also consistent with Hariyanto et al. (2020), finding that attitudes and behavioural intention have a positive influence. It is probably because PTSS students are influenced by their family members preferring halal food. Secondly, PTSS students also believe that their friends influence them to choose halal food in their lives. Suleman et al. (2021) mentioned that people would significantly impact social pressure to perform specific behaviour, including pressure from friends, family, and colleagues to consume halal food. In addition, based on the awareness inherited from family, friends, and the surrounding community on the importance of healthy, clean, and quality food, thus attracting consumers to consume halal food, and this is where the acculturation effects come into consumer decision consideration (Lim et al., 2020).

The third research objective is to examine the influence of perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention towards consuming halal food. The results showed that perceived behavioural control was significant and positively influenced behavioural intention. It is consistent with Khalek et al. (2015), finding that attitudes positively influenced students' perceived behavioural control in consuming halal food. It is also consistent with Hariyanto et al. (2020), finding a positive influence of perceived behavioural control on behavioural intention. It is probably because PTSS students believe it is easy to find halal food in Malaysia. Secondly, PTSS students also believe that they have a chance to eat halal food. Lastly, PTSS students believe that they have many choices in choosing halal food.

Lastly, the fourth research objective is to examine the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention towards consuming halal food. The results showed significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students concerning attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. Based on the results, the huge differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students are behavioural intention, followed by subjective norm and attitudes. The less differences are perceived behavioural control. The findings support that Muslims must abide by and follow the law of Islam to eat only halal food and avoid haram food (Elseidi, 2020). However, it has been found that non-Muslim consumers place great importance on halal food as they believe that halal food is safer, animal-friendly, and environmentally sustainable (Lee et al., 2016).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In sum, this study found that attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control significantly and positively influence Muslim and non-Muslim students' behavioural intention in consuming halal food in the context of Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin. The study also found that Muslims had better attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention compared to non-Muslim students in consuming halal food. Therefore, enhancing the attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control elements is crucial to increase students' behavioural intention in consuming halal food.

However, this study has a few limitations. Firstly, the limitation concerns the variables used. The study's results showed that other factors influence students' behavioural intention in consuming halal food. Therefore, future research should include other variables. Secondly, this study focused on PTSS students only; perhaps future research should include other Polytechnic students.

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