

Study on the Impact of Price and Functional Quality towards Customer Satisfaction of Mobile Network Providers in Indonesia

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Abstract:

The study is designed to investigate the relationship between price and functional quality towards customer satisfaction of leading mobile network service providers in Indonesia. 210 data were collected from respondents in top five cities namely Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung and Semarang. The study finds that price, and flexibility are the drivers of customer satisfaction of mobile network providers. The current research has taken into account new driver of customer satisfaction in a high-growth market and this is the first study on drivers of customer satisfaction of leading mobile network providers in the top five cities of Indonesia.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Price, Functional quality, Mobile network providers, Indonesia.

I. Introduction

The market for mobile network in Indonesia is keep on growing every year. The report from Statista.com indicates that “Indonesia poses a large and fast-growing market for mobile technologies. The sector has a high potential for growth. According to forecasts, smartphone penetrations rate in Indonesia will rise from 26 to 33 percent between 2018 and 2023. The number of smartphone users in Indonesia could reach as high as 89.86 million by the year 2022”.

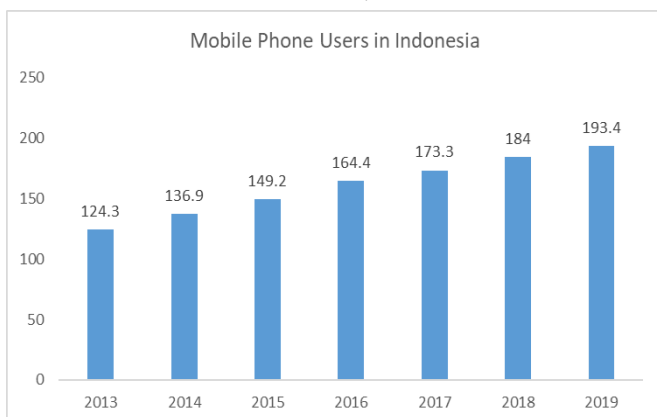


Figure 1 is representing the mobile phone user in Indonesia

There are 5 mobile service provider in Indonesia and each is offering the standard packaging or benefits. Each mobile network provider need to highlight at least one unique or

competitive advantage in order to attract customer to become their customer. The current market indicates that customer is looking for a more functional benefits together with the reasonable price (Izogo, 2016). Customer is knowledgeable and they can do comparison between all the networks and choose the best one according to their needs (M. Shamsudin et al., 2015).

The table below is just a comparison to highlight how important is the price and functional quality and benefits for customer.

Table 1: Sample of package offered in the Indonesia market

Network	SIM card features	Price
SIM2Fly Travel Prepaid	Data: 6GB Calls: not included SMS: not included Credit validity: 10 days	US \$19.90
TrueMove H	Data: 6GB Calls: not included SMS: not included Credit validity: 10 days	US \$19.90
China Unicom 4G	Data: 4GB Calls: not included SMS: not included	US \$22.90

	Credit validity: 12 days	
Three UK	Data: 12GB Calls: not included SMS: not included Credit validity: 30 days	US \$39.90
TrueMove H	Data: 6GB Calls: not included SMS: not included Credit validity: 15 days	US \$39.90

The table shows that all packages is almost the same except the credit validity parts. The longer the credit validity duration, the higher is the price. Other benefits remain the same. The situation may need customer to evaluate their requirements and benefits that they are looking at. A good package is the one who can offer low price but greater functional benefit that can lead to customer satisfaction.

II. Literature review

Customer satisfaction

The challenge of mobile service provider in the world is to keep customer stay in the network. The market becoming saturate while customer has been given too many option and choices due to fierce competition(Borishade et al., 2018). Mobile phone become necessary to everyone as early as 4 years old(Jusoh, Zakuan, Bahari, Ariff, & Hayat, 2012). Today, mobile operator faced tough time to maintain their market growth due to high bargaining power of customers. There is no other way that mobile cellular can focused into except pay more attention in keeping customer through high quality service(M. Shamsudin et al., 2015). A satisfied customer have more tendency to stay longer and brings many benefits to the mobile service provider(Abd-elrahman, Hassan, El-borsaly, & Hafez, 2019). Focusing on customer satisfaction through high service quality especially on the functional quality is the best strategy in keeping customer stay and stand a chance for being loyal(Hirata, 2019).

Customer satisfaction brings many benefits to mobile service providers. They have a tendency for repeat purchase should the customer is belong to prepaid segment(Y. Liu et al., 2019). Today, having a prepaid number is as easy buying groceries. In a split second, customer can change their prepaid mobile numbers since the process is easy and cheap(Özer, Argan, & Argan, 2013). There is no switching barrier for customer to change between one into another. Satisfied customer will remain in the network and support the mobile network(Ruiz Díaz, 2017). The task of mobile service

provider is to keep customer happy by fulfilling their responsibility as the mobile service provider.

(Shafei & Tabaa, 2016)claimed that it is much easier for service provider to introduce new product innovation or mobile network plan for existing satisfied customer. Satisfied customer will support and easy to communicate with. Mobile service provider can easily communicate and offer the new product to the current customer as a token of appreciation(Lien, Cao, & Zhou, 2017). Satisfied customer is willing to be part and strong supporter of the mobile network. They are the one who will talk good about the services and quality provided(Wang, Ou, & Chen, 2019). They spread the good and positive information to others through word of mouth. Today, the word of mouth spread very fast using the social media. Customer used technology to spread their feelings. E-word of mouth is faster than the traditional word of mouth. The coverage of social media is unlimited therefore, the mobile network have a better chance to get more coverage using the platform of satisfied customer as a medium(Giovanis, Zondiros, & Tomaras, 2014; Jusoh et al., 2012; Lien et al., 2017).

Mobile service provider can also use the customer segment of satisfied customer as a potential market in other product or services(Phong, Khoi, & Nhat-Hanh Le, 2018). Mobile service provider can prepare a one-stop shopping that can enables the current customer to enjoy more benefits. They can pay bills, enquiries, upgrade phone and do many other things in the one stop shopping center(Abd-elrahman et al., 2019; Izogo, 2016; Mannan, Mohiuddin, Chowdhury, & Sarker, 2017). Mobile network may have enjoyed the benefits of easy communications and engagement with the customers. One stop shopping enables mobile service providers to add more value to their current customers(Muhammad, Farid Shamsudin, & Hadi, 2016).

The ultimate challenge of all service provider is to have a pool of customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is the highest level of customer where they become the spokesperson of the mobile network(Sharma & Sharma, 2019). In order to achieve that level, mobile network need to ensure a continuous quality services provided that later change the customer status from satisfied to loyal. Past research indicated that (Izogo, 2016)satisfied customer does not necessarily become loyal because of the free switching cost as compared to a decade ago. Today the only thing that may hinder customer from quick switch is the legal contract that they signed. In most country, the contract is for 24 months(Mannan et al., 2017). Customer may have enjoyed a free phone or special package that bundled with mobile services for a certain number of period. Customer can only exit or breach the contract by paying penalty(Hapsari, Clemes, & Dean, 2016). That is

among the valid switch barrier that customer may thing many times before deciding to switch.

The advantage of having satisfied customer is because they have a high tolerance on the price(Hirata, 2019). A slight increase on the price for example will not make any changes to their satisfaction level. Customer satisfaction is important because it provides a room to mobile network to increase the price if necessary but of course with a promised on good service quality (Rita, Oliveira, & Farisa, 2019). Satisfied customer tends to ignore the price because they know the level of quality provided by the mobile service provider(Y. Liu et al., 2019). They have trust in the service provider thus may not change their network for just a small reason. Satisfied customer is also belief in the brand reputation of their mobile service network(Zhang, Zhang, & Zhang, 2019). They believed that they currently in the best mobile network and no other networks that can satisfied them. Among all the reason, customer satisfaction is also believed that the mobile network provides the excellence services. Satisfied customer will not easily switch network for a simple reason unless there is something big such as offering, savings or a frequent service failure that make them dissatisfied(M. Shamsudin et al., 2015).

Customer satisfaction on the other hand also contribute to positive corporate performance. High numbers of subscribers will generate high numbers of revenue that later translate into profit. That is why mobile service provider is competing for their market share and growth. High market share means they acquired more customer than the competitors(Davras & Caber, 2019). However, in order to achieve that, mobile service provider must make sure that their service quality is good and attractive. Two important elements for the mobile service providers is market growth and profits(Broetzmann, Kemp, Rossano, & Marwaha, 1995).

The mobile service provider is responsible to provide a high functional service quality to customers. The benefits of having satisfied customer can be achieve through service quality especially functional quality where customer will interact with the mobile network personnel and their role is important in providing the service that required by customer at the reasonable standard and quality required(Abd-elrahman et al., 2019; Octabriyantiningtyas et al., 2019).

Overall, most of the past research indicates that the service quality have a strong relationship towards customer satisfaction but it depends on the availability of the switching cost(Shafei & Tabaa, 2016). In the mobile networks services, the switching cost is only available as an option to postpaid customers. Prepaid customer may come and go but yet the

same principle is usable where customer will remain in the mobile network should the mobile operator managed to satisfied their needs by providing quality services that meet their needs.

Price

Price is known as the most flexible marketing mix. Early marketing era introduced four important P's as part of marketing important elements. "P"represent products, place, promotion and price. Out of the 4 elements, price is the most flexible. There are few ways that service providers can play in the pricing strategy. Advantage normally for the for the first mover in the market. Pricing is flexible that it can be change according to service provider's objective(Kotler, 1994). Price can be set high to earn high margin or set low in order to get more sales. Price also can be change to be at par with competitor so that customer not switch to other service provider(Liang, Ma, & Qi, 2013).

Right level of pricing is important as it drive the service providers' direction towards meeting their goal. Service provider can provide discount or marketing campaign to encourage customer to buy more(Konuk, 2019). Price also can be various subject to early purchase, volume purchase or defer based on geographical area or size of consumption. In mobile network, price play important role as it involves a commitment from customer to pay on monthly basis(Uddin, 2019). There is also a pay per use package that may allow customer to budget their usage. Any price different carries a different benefit that the mobile network customer enjoyed. Customer may decide based on their needs and requirements.

Price according to (Swani & Yoo, 2010)create impressions to customer on the capacity of product or services that the customer will get. Premium amount for data plan may represent high speed, unlimited size and bundle with other free services. Low monthly package is suitable for low usage with limited speed and data size(Boniface, Gyau, & Stringer, 2012). There is also daily subscription for those who only one to subscribe when there is a need to use. Price represent the benefits that the customer enjoyed.

Price in mobile networks created dilemma among the market players. A slight change by one industry player may resulted the rest to follow. Switching cost in mobile is cheap thus customer may decide to change should the mobile service provider did not provide the best service according to others. the price of charges for mobile networks is getting cheaper(Cakici, Akgunduz, & Yildirim, 2019). Mobile service provider can no longer charge at premium because of the economy situation. Customer start to used more internet call rather than normal call. Revenue from many other revenue streams start to shrink such as SMS, voice call and video call.

(Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2014) claimed that the price charged in the mobile networks is no longer attractive to the service provider. The mobile products and services is currently at the matured stage where there are many options given to customer by the competitors. (Shafei & Tabaa, 2016) stated that price is part of the inter firm rivalry in the industry. Mobile service providers need to compete at the price level since most of the services intangible and tangible is almost the same or standard.

(Herrmann, Xia, Kent, & Huber, 2007) emphasize that price is important to determine profit. Each customer representing revenue potential and the price lead to the potential revenue and profit of the mobile service providers. Price have been used as a tool to beat competitor. (Lynn & Brewster, 2018) warned that war price may not lead to advantage to mobile provider but to customer.

A good price with a high quality service will drive customer to satisfaction. It is the objective of mobile service provider to earn more market share and increase more customer (Narteh, 2018). Having more satisfied customer is the target for all market player as it will contribute to long term sustainability. The role of price is not only as a tool of sales promotion but to customer it represents the perception of quality (Minbashrazgah, Maleki, & Torabi, 2017). Customer satisfaction can only occur if the customer tolerates on the price elements and focused on the quality (Asadi, Pool, & Jalilvand, 2014). Contract customer who signed up for a two years' service contract may not complaint about price but they cannot switch out due to the subscription agreements. Overall, the role of price is important towards customer satisfaction.

Functional quality

Service quality is divided into two categories, which is technical quality and functional quality (Kotler & Stonich, 1991; Moghavvemi, Lee, & Lee, 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). Technical quality is relate to the outcome of the overall services (Zhang et al., 2019). Functional at the same time is more related with how the interaction between customer and the mobile service provider. The functional quality is focusing on the service transfer between the mobile service operators to customer during the delivery process (Lien et al., 2017).

This research remains the quality dimension of SERVQUAL but breaking it down into more details segment which is functional quality (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). It involves how the mobile operator dealings with customer in terms of communication, attitudes of employee, internal relations, customer and employee satisfaction, the willingness of the employee to serve customers and their appearance. The five dimension of service quality remains as

reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1993).

Technical quality at the same time is focus on the technologies, the machines and computerization used, know how concept, professionalism and finally is the qualification. (Oliver, 1993) claimed that functional quality is more important towards customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1993). Many customer is less aware on the technical parts as what they asked for is the continuous uninterrupted services. Functional quality is closer to customer as they involved in the process. Technical quality is more on the core elements while the functional is the process of delivery from service provider to customer using the similar SERVQUAL dimensions as introduced by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

Reliability in functional service quality is referring to the process of how the service provider deliver the services related to the performing the services accurately. The mobile network need to ensure to perform the task right every time with zero error. For example, customer application was handled in the right manner. Customer request delivered accurately. Customer who interested to add or increase mobile internet size will have received what exactly they requested. Another important element is the delivery of the service is within the time framed promised, if the customer promised the delivery within 24 hours than it must be delivered within or before the promised time. (Famiyeh, Asante-Darko, & Kwarteng, 2018) suggested that customer might have highly dependable on the employee. They know that the customer services personnel will give priority to their request and delivered within time with no error. Customer expect that they will get what they needs upon consult with the service personnel (Yilmaz, Ari, & Gürbüz, 2018). As a result, customer will have enjoyed the functional reliability of service quality by the mobile service provider.

Past research on the service quality results in various findings. (Izogo & Ogba, 2015) claimed that it depends on the nature of business or services that customer is consumed. In certain areas reliability is not important as the service provider may have a standard process and there is not much changes required to do so (Gregory, 2019). The reliability elements are also subject to the competition level and numbers of competitor in the market. High completion such as mobile network will resulted to high pressure to the service provider to improve their service level from time to time in order to win the market (Wu, 2017).

The next dimension is functional quality related to assurance. In this part, assurance is referring to how the service provider make the customer believed that their transaction is safe (Shafiq, Mostafiz, & Taniguchi, 2019).

Today, there is a campaign of keeping customer data as confidential. Customer expects that all their details such as details of contact numbers, conversations, messages sent and internet activities to be taken care confidential(Kumar & Hundal, 2018). No customer would like to have their mobile number sold to marketing agents for telemarketing activities; such situation if happened may breach the customer confident and trust against the mobile service provider(Aydemir & Sahin, 2019). Employee is expected to be continuously uphold their motivation to serve customer. Employee must consistently courteous in providing the services(Hamzah, Lee, & Moghavvemi, 2017). There is time where service failure would have happened but that can be solved through a good communication and promised to solve the issue within reasonable time. Functional assurance is also related to the level of knowledge in answering customer questions. Employee should be update with latest technology and issues related to their job scope(Ramanathan, Di, & Ramanathan, 2016). Today the technology developed faster than ever, gadgets and mobile devices upgraded very fast. Mobile service provider need to have the knowledge of that anything new in the market so that they can give advice and suggestion to customer whenever necessary (Islam, Ahmed, Ali, & Ahmer, 2019).

Functional quality in tangibility is related to the equipment used by the employee to solve problem or matters. Today, the registration of mobile cellular is no longer required to fill up a few pages of application forms(Kim & Lee, 2017). The same thing that option given by the mobile service provider to customer when they wanted to interact with customer services, Customer can call the customer services or visited them during the office hours. Customer also have the option to email or chat with the customer services. (Liang et al., 2013) There are also a virtual chat provided by the service provider in order to assist customer in a quick problem solving. Up-to-date equipment is important, as that is part of "how" elements that mobile service provider used to satisfied customer. (Octabriyantiningtyas et al., 2019) claimed that it is also important for the employee to have a professional appearance during the service delivery. The neat and professional look may increase the customer confident level and reliability. Beside that employee also should be equipped with latest appealing facilities in order to assist them in service delivery. Overall, the functional tangibility is related to "how" the employee process to deliver the quality services to customer(Ruiz Díaz, 2017).

Empathy is referring to how the employee of the mobile service provider handling their customer(Eberle, Milan, & Dorion, 2016). Employee may come from a various background and they may have a different kind of problem.

Having a functional empathy attitude enable the customer to be approached by employee(Yilmaz et al., 2018). Employee is willing to listen and helps customer to solve problem. Employee at the same time have been trained to be more caring and try to understand customer. Functional quality related to empathy is more towards how the employee going to managed their customer by giving individual attention(Kant & Jaiswal, 2017; Moghavvemi et al., 2018). Customer will feel happy once the employee managed to solve their problems. Such situation enable customer to feel satisfied. Employee play important role in connecting the customer and service provider. Employee is the asset to service provider where they are the one who will continuous strive hard to achieve the service provider goals (Thaker et al., 2020).

The last functional quality is related to responsiveness(M. F. Shamsudin, Shabi, & Salem, 2018). It refers to the courtesy of the employee in managing the customer. All questions or enquiry answered promptly and within the reasonable duration, Customer not only received good explanation but also explained on the process(Uzo & Nzegwu, 2018). Employee is helpful and willing to help at any time(J. M. Liu & Chen, 1985). Customer services handle enquires promptly. Call centers pick up phone and in fact ready to return call customer when the problem solved. Responsiveness is also explaining about how the mobile service provider handling service failure. They will keep customer informed should there is a service failure or maintenance activities done that may resulted to poor quality during certain period(Abdelrahman et al., 2019). Customer actually liked to be entertained promptly. They are more than happy if the employee is giving attention to every of their problem. Past research indicates that responsiveness is very important in service quality as it managed the direct relationship between the employee and customer(Octabriyantiningtyas et al., 2019).

III. Methodology

Data was collected using questionnaire in this quantitative based research. The purpose of quantitative data because it helps to focused on the problem and produces accurate results. The used of questionnaire is helps to save time in collecting data and yet it is less expensive as compared to qualitative. Survey using questionnaire did not limit the range of area for data collection and flexible.

210 data collected from five cities in Indonesia namely Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung and Semarang. Each branch is located at one city. 50 data were collected from each district. The data collection session was done for 2 days with the help of three research assistant. Respondent was selected based on convenient basis. Each respondent who volunteer to participate will be given a token worth USD3. There is no

missing data as the research assistant guides the respondent during the session.

IV. Data analysis

Gender breakdown between male and female is considered as balance. 59% respondent are male and the balance is female. There are however majority of customer subscribed for prepaid package as compared to postpaid services. The ratio is however acceptable according to the national ratio of subscription of mobile cellular. Most of customer choose prepaid package as it is easy to manage as compared to postpaid where customer responsible to pay fixed monthly commitment fees. 60% of respondent below the age of 40. Majority participants is at the age of below 30. Respondent occupancy background is various with majority of them are from professional and students.

Table 1: Respondent analysis

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	123	59%
Female	87	41%
Total	210	100%
Package		
Prepaid	167	80%
Postpaid	43	20%
Total	210	100%
Customer age		
21 - 30 years	68	32%
31 - 40 years	58	28%
41 - 50 years	43	20%
51 - 60 years	34	16%
61 years and above	7	3%
Total	210	100%
Occupational status		
Service	23	11%
Business	45	21%
Professional	55	26%
Student	39	19%
Not employed	32	15%
Retired	16	8%
	210	100%

Table 1: Summary of statistics of questionnaire survey

Constructs	Number of Items	Mean	Sd
Functional service quality	11	5.256	1.524
Price	6	6.034	1.320
Customer satisfaction	4	5.365	1.278

Table 1 above indicates the details of items according to the constructs together with the mean value. Mean value for Functional is 5.256, price is 6.034 and customer satisfaction is 5.365.

Table 2: below shows the rotated factor loadings and their eigenvalue and Cronbach alpha value. The results indicated that calculated alpha value is more than 0.7 that reflects a good consistency among items.

Table 2: Result of factor analysis

No	Functional service recovery	Price	Customer satisfaction
FSQ 1	0.911		
FSQ 2	0.962		
FRQ 3	0.933		
FRQ 4	0.907		
FSQ 5	0.752		
FSQ 6	0.735		
FSQ 7	0.617		
FSQ 8	0.736		
FSQ 9	0.671		
FSQ 10	0.823		
FSQ 11	0.639		
P 1		0.843	
P 2		0.866	
P 3		0.775	
P 4		0.982	
P 5		0.736	
P 6		0.915	
SAT 1			0.718
SAT 2			0.835
SAT 3			0.871
SAT 4			0.956
Eigenvalue	6.754	3.332	1.653
Cumulative	36.325	56.321	74.601

percentage of explained variance			
Cronbach alpha	0.870	0,754	0.834

SAT 2	0.825	18.321*		
SAT 3	0.821	18.799*		
SAT 4	0.926	21.133*		

** indicates significant at p<0.01 level

Table 3 shows the AVE values for constructs ranged in between 0.55 to 0.79 indicating good reliability. The table also shows that all values are above the threshold value 0.7. It means that all the constructs have high reliability value.

Table 3: Measurement model results

Constructs	Standardized loadings	t statistics	CR	AVE
FSQ 1	0.921	21.246*	0.96	0.78
FSQ 2	0.915	22.357*		
FRQ 3	0.932	21.463*		
FRQ 4	0.940	22.258*		
FSQ 5	0.702	16.567*		
FSQ 6	0.735	16.123*		
FSQ 7	0.901	21.136*		
FSQ 8	0.915	22.357*		
FSQ 9	0.902	21.463*		
FSQ 10	0.900	22.258*		
FSQ 11	0.712	16.567*	0.87	0.71
P 1	0.813	20.586*		
P 2	0.826	20.674*		
P 3	0.755	14.212*		
P 4	0.952	21.668*		
P 5	0.726	14.388*		
P 6	0.945	21.265*	0.83	0.58
SAT 1	0.728	14.256*		

Table 4: Correlations between constructs

	Functional service recovery	Price	Customer satisfaction
Functional service quality	0.78*		
Price	0.06	0.71*	
Customer satisfaction	0.18	0.35	0.58*

*Diagonal elements are AVE

The AVE value for price is 0.71 while the squared inter-construct correlations estimates value is 0.35. AVE for functional service quality is 0.78 and the squared inter-construct correlations estimates value is 0.06 for price and 0.18 for customer satisfaction. Table 5 is the final results of the path analysis. Both hypothesis supported

Table 5: Path analysis of structural model

Casual path	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	t-stat	Results
Functional → Customer satisfaction	H1	0.205**	3.45	Supported
Price → Customer satisfaction	H2	0.302**	5.541	Supported

** indicates significance at P<0.01 level

Table 5 indicates that both casual path between functional and price towards customer satisfaction is positive and supported. It means that both construct is positively important in achieving customer satisfaction.

V. Conclusion

The results indicate that functional service quality and price are both important towards customer satisfaction. Functional service quality is important because it relates to the “how” elements of how the mobile network operators connects with customer. The “how” elements are important because it will tie back with the mobile service provider on their operation strategy and management objective. It is about time for mobile service provider to focused on the elements of functional quality so that the elements can be used as part of competitive advantage against competitor in the industry.

The function of price in mobile service network is also important and play important roles towards customer satisfaction. The price however is at par among the operator. Any decision towards manipulating the price is actually will affect the mobile network potential revenue and profit. Price however depends on the overall industry strategy. In certain country, price of mobile network is control by government so that the market player cannot simply reduce or increase the price to their advantage.

Price is positively influence customer satisfaction and this could be a benchmark for all mobile network operators so that they are very careful in making any policy in pricing. The result of this research although found parallel to other previous research by (Izogo, 2017; Mannan et al., 2017; Sharma & Sharma, 2019) but it lead to another opportunity for future research focusing only on certain generation. It was reported that the different generation type behaves differently. Focusing on the different type of generation may produce different results.

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