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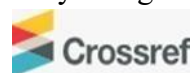
Social Practice and Portrayal of Women in the Choice of Cosmetic Products in Lagos Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of socio-cultural practice features and portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria.

Materials and Methods: The study examined social practice features and portrayal of women in choice of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria using a mixed method design. The study adopted purposive sampling because this study was only to investigate cosmetic product advertisements and involved only women. The data were collected from seven advertisements of popularly used cosmetic products from company websites and transcribed to ease the process of analysis. They were then analyzed based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. Data for the quantitative aspect data was collected using a questionnaire based on Likert-type scale questions ranging from 1-5 to capture the variables and analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics as correlation analysis and regression analysis through SPSS and presented in tables.

Findings: The findings indicate that sociocultural practice features significantly predicted portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products as the result shows direct positive of social-cultural practice. Most of the portrayal of women tend to

persuade the women on a certain form of beauty despite the Nigerian culture. As a result, many people believe what the advertisement says and choose to see themselves in the light of these advertisements. This is part of the effect on social change created by advertisements in the society. Thus, advertisers tend to change the way society views beauty by creating a new beauty ideology and a new standard of beauty derived from what their advertisement says.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy:

The study was guided by CDA and the Magic of Meaning theory. Results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the influence of socio-cultural practice features and the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products. Using CDA, this indicates some social wrongs in the advertisements including the issue of self-esteem in women thereby eroding confidence of the consumers; the demand for women to continually look attractive through these products and compulsive impulse to buy these products. Issues of self-esteem in women are raised thus, cosmetic companies should learn to advertise their products with less manipulative words that will be more societally acceptable. Also, further research is recommended since advertising has an essential role in society.

Keywords: CDA, Ideology, Self-esteem

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Advertising is any non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services, usually paid for by an individual sponsor (Dominic, 2005). Advertising serves four basic functions in society: Serves marketing function by helping companies that provide products or services sell their products. Second, it is educational. Through advertising, people learn about products and services, or improvements in existing ones. Third, it plays an economic role. Advertising enables new products to enter the market. Finally, it performs a definite social function. By vividly displaying their material and cultural opportunities, available in a free-enterprise society, advertising helps increase productivity and raises the standard of living (Dominic, 2005). The importance in advertising cannot be overestimated and as such performs several functions in the society such as education by making products known, communicating information about products and at times the location of sales to consumers. It helps introduce new products and even remodified ones for consumers to use. Moreover, it helps in building brand preference and loyalty. This explains the rationale for the submission of Arens et.al (2011) that advertising makes one aware; makes one comprehend; makes one create a conviction; makes one form a desire; and makes one take action. Advertising may take different forms, namely: television commercials, websites, text messages telemarketing calls, e- mails and so on.

Advertisement plays, product placement in TV shows, coupons, sales letters, event sponsorship, a crucial role in communicating messages in today's society. Among others, advertising contributes to the creation of opinions, the production of certain roles that viewers take up after their idols and the creation of shared knowledge. Advertisement is not only an economic entity, but it also deals with values, attitudes and ideas shaping culture (Sinclair 1987). Advertising plays a lot of roles in a nation's economy and is one of the most important forms of contemporary social communication. However, advertising is closely linked to its ideological and economic functions. Through the years, it has become more critical to manipulate social values and attitudes than to inform about products and services (Whipple & Courteney, 2015). Wolf (2012) contends that women as sex appeals in advertising may produce sexual obsessions and dissatisfaction. These are some of the issues but despite a lot of efforts by international organizations in terms of policies, programmes and other regulations such as gender equality and gender balance, the issue of how women are portrayed in advertisements and the application of various discourse strategies to promote products still persists. To curb this menace, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice (2015), now known as ARCON (Advertising Regulation Council of Nigeria) with the guideline on how female models should be portrayed in advertisements that will be acceptable to all cultural sectors of the society, that will not ridicule females as sex objects and be conscious of societal expectations of the sanctity of marriage as well as family standards and values. Despite this, advertisers tend to see the female gender as reliable marketing tools that influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers and penetrate their cultural lives with language and images, which, at times in the process, portray women negatively in society. This study therefore seeks to explore the influence of socio-cultural practice and portrayal of women in choice

of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria with the aim of making recommendations to stakeholders to encourage more societally acceptable and friendly content.

Statement of the Problem

Advertising serves many functions in the society and is essential worldwide thus it has become a large industry (Baran, 2014). Nevertheless, its strategies has generated a lot of criticism primarily because of its stereotyping of women and portrayals. This is because of the appeals that most commercial organizations and advertisers employ to influence or compel the target audience to make purchase (Aaker, 2010). The strategies advertisers use and the appeal targeted at the audiences by the advertisers have been brought to question or have been put in the spotlight. Some of these strategies include female images, creative and persuasive words, celebrity endorsement etc. A significant area of concern has been in the way women are portrayed in advertisements incredibly the sexualized or erotic display of women in more recent years and the use of texts that may not be entirely true or promoting certain ideologies of beauty that could affect self-esteem to encourage purchases by Susanti (2019). For instance, young women have been used for advertising products that they are hard or not even associated with, such as motor vehicles, sports equipment, alcohol, etc. It is rare to see adverts without women playing some form of role. A lot of intervention has been made by the government and other international organizations in terms of policies, programmes and other regulations such as gender equality and gender balance, and women advocacy programmes, among others, but despite all these, the issue of negative portrayal of women remains a challenge in the society. This portrayal of women has affected many homes as some housewives feel insecure and believe they must look like the image in the advertisements in order to remain attractive to their husbands, often with negative consequences. This study therefore seeks to examine the influence of socio-cultural practice features and portrayal of women in choice of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria with the aim of making recommendations to stakeholders to come up with policy to put in check propaganda and lies that have negatively affected the female consumers of cosmetics. **Objective of the Study**

To examine the influence of socio-cultural practice features on the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products in Lagos, Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Two theories were selected for the theoretical framework of this study: Critical Discourse Analysis and the Magic of Meaning Theory. Norman Fairclough describes CDA as a type of social practice where ideology and power both affect and interact. Advertisements can be analysed according to different theoretical works so as to be able to understand them and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA hereafter) is favoured to analyse this work. Also, the Magic of Meaning Theory is looked at because it supports CDA and resonates with this study. CDA is not a separate field or discipline but rather an interdisciplinary point of view of discourse that sees language in context and considers it as a kind of social practice. Of relevance to this study is the three-dimensional framework developed by Norman Fairclough for studying discourse. Three different methods of analysis are

intended to be combined: analysis of texts (spoken or written), analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution, and consumption), and study of discursive events as illustrations of socio-cultural practices. Baig, (2013) notes that among the three dimensions of Fairclough's model, each dimension requires a different type of analysis: for the first dimension 'text analysis' or description, for the second dimension 'processing analysis' or interpretation, and for the third dimension it is the 'social analysis' or explanation. (Nima Rashid *et al.*, 2020; Zhuang & Liu, 2020) All dimensions are inter-dependent and therefore it does not matter with which kind of analysis one begins with as they are "mutually explanatory" (Janks, 2002). The analysis of discourse is done by means of formulated theoretical points of departure. In the more general convention, discourse refers to the broad framework that enables communication. Discourse is sometimes used as a complimentary term for the text (Education, 2018).

Looking at Critical discourse analysis (CDA) in advertisements, Kaur, K., Arumugam, N., & Yunus, N. M. (2013) posits that beauty as an ideology is produced and reproduced through advertisements. Beauty products advertisements usually manipulate people to an extent that they believe whatever said is true. Beauty is one of the main focuses of media in general and in advertising in particular because of the sociological perception that a woman wants to remain beautiful at any age. Thus, advertisers use youthful attributes in media to capitalize on the female need to remain beautiful so as to purchase the advertised products.

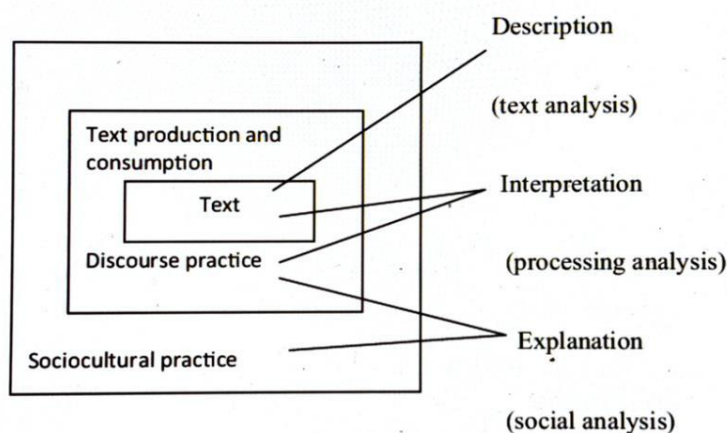


Figure 1: Fairclough's Three Dimensions to Discourse

CDA tends to explore various social theories that analyze the interaction of language, power and ideology in various contexts. According to Fairclough (2003) language is an intricate part of social life which is interrelated with the fundamentals of social life and as such can be seen as characteristic of social practice in a certain culture. That is, the way language is used will help us to know about the existing social practice. Therefore, CDA provides the criteria to consider the relationships between discourse and society, between text and context, and between language and

power (Fairclough, 2001; Society, 2020; Wing-Chun Ng, 2020). This in effect means that language has the power to change people's world view and that the power of ideology in certain cultures can influence the use of language. This makes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) a good means of examining the influence of social practice features and portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria.

The Magic of Meaning Theory opines that advertisements carry a strong message with a meaning infused in them. It makes it clear that advertisements don't simply promote things; they also provide their users a sense of purpose. According to cultural theorist Raymond Williams argues that advertising "has passed the frontier of the selling of goods and services. Advertising is planned magic that conceals the true purpose of the selling house, which is to utilize words and pictures with concealed meaning to sell a product in order to generate money. (Williams, 2000) continues by stating that advertising is a type of organized magic that hides the actual nature of consumerism and its consequences on societal aims and public attitudes. Advertising, which keeps the people away from unsatisfied inquiries, is more or less a component of the culture of a confused society. Ads affect our morals and fundamental ideas in this way. Adverts influence our values, emotions, and the very basis of beliefs. Adverts can be misleading and they unconsciously manipulate the viewer because of the obscurity of the messages. This approach clearly represents how the critical thinking of potential consumers can be manipulated with ads. Relating these theories of how advertisers load adverts with subtle hidden messages that may affect the perception, emotion and even behaviour of the target audience is relevant to this study because this is exactly how the casting of women in certain commercials works because, even when there is no direct connection, the physical and emotional image of the feminine gender is employed to drive brand message to target customers. This development draws a lot of concern from people who think that the feminine gender may not be appropriately represented in the contents of adverts and in the practice of advertising globally. Therefore, the Magic of Meaning Theory supports CDA and resonates with this study in that it relates to the strong message in the ads which obscures the fundamental nature of consumerism and its influence on public attitudes toward our values, emotions, and the very basis of beliefs in our society in order to sell products to make profits.

Susanti (2019) in its work using CDA states that different strategies are adopted towards promoting advertising products, such as, using words in cosmetic/beauty products and specific discourse strategies. Thus, advertisers tend to capitalize on the ideology beneath what a woman represents. Kaur Arumugam and Yunus (2013) posits that the issue of beauty comes as a result of advertising ideology. People tend to believe that whatever is attached to beauty products is accurate, so they keep patronizing it. The issue of cosmetics or beauty products cannot be overlooked in advertising because of the sociological perception that a woman wants to remain beautiful and young at any age. Thus, advertisers play on the female need to stay beautiful, which is expressed in media with youthful attributes that can be obtained by purchasing certain products dangled before them. Advertisers tend to ride on the worldview/beliefs of women, which is used to shape the reality of some tactics employed in advertising.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study examined social practice features and portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products in Lagos Nigeria. A mixed method design was adopted for this study using purposive sampling because this study was only to investigate cosmetic product advertisements. The data were collected from seven advertisements of popularly used cosmetic products in the form of videos taken from company websites, YouTube, ARCON and they were transcribed to ease the process of analysis. They were then analyzed based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. Data for the quantitative aspect data was collected using a questionnaire based on Likert-type scale questions ranging from 1-5 to capture the variables. The data was then analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis through SPSS.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study investigated the influence of the socio-cultural practice features on the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products. Data for quantitative analysis was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics and the findings and discussions are presented in this section. Also, the objective of this study was informed by the third level of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional view of CDA in that he sees language use as a social practice and that advertising's role in society is vital. Thus, this section also describes the broad societal issues that influence advertising. It is also concerned with intertextual understanding which helps to understand the broad societal currents which affect texts that are being studied. This includes views of beauty by people around the world with special interest to the Nigerian woman in practice. Fairclough's analysis based on three components - description, interpretation and explanation are described, that is, text analysis and the relationship between the productive and interpretative processes of discursive on the sociocultural context. The discursive issues in relation to the sociocultural context of ideology of beauty in societies and how it is impacted through advertisements in words depleting self-esteem and encouraging change of look through portrayal of beautiful models were examined.

Table 1: Response Rate

	N	N	Frequency	%
Response	636	214	119	92.99%
Non- response			15	7.01%
				100%

The population size for this study was 636 media practitioners and students while the sample size was 214. The study recorded a response rate of 92.9%. This is considered adequate since a response rate of 70% or higher is desirable according to Glasgow (2005). A lower response rates call into question the representativeness of the sample (Fonsnacht, 2013).

The study with a questionnaire based on Likert-type scale questions ranging from 1-5 indicating the extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement examined the effect

of sociocultural practice features on the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products and vice versa. Table 2 shows the frequencies of the responses on the statements on likely effect of the social practice feature such as the issues of self-esteem in women; the ideology of beauty and the need to appear beautiful leading to the impulse to buy the cosmetic products in advertisements.

Table 2: The Influence of the Social Practice Features on the Portrayal of Women in the Choice of Cosmetic Products

Aspects	Response (%)						Means	Std.Dev
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
The advertisements touch on my self-esteem and make me want to look more beautiful.	6.5	7.5	13.6	46.7	25.6	3.7739		1.11197
I am drawn to advertisements with beautiful but decently dressed models	8.5	8.5	15.6	42.7	24.6	3.6633		1.18586
I agree with the use of females in advertisements	3.5	4.5	10.6	47.2	34.2	4.0402		.97359
The use of the language of the advertisement is merely persuasive	7.0	6.5	8.0	54.8	23.6	3.8191		1.09056

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that about 6.5% (13) respondents chose strongly disagree that Ads affect their self-esteem while 7.5% (15) respondents chose disagree. The respondent that are neutral are 13.6% (27). However, about 46.7% (93) and 25.6% (51) respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that Ads affect their self-esteem so they feel the need to use the products and thus take action. It also shows that about 8.5% (17) respondents chose strongly disagree that they are drawn to advertisements with beautiful but decently dressed models while 8.5% (17) respondents chose disagree. The respondent that are neutral are 15.6% (31). However, about 42.7% (85) and 24.6% (49) respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that they are drawn to advertisements with beautiful but decently dressed models.

Table then shows that about 3.5% (7) respondents chose strongly disagree on the use of females in advertisements while 4.5% (9) respondents chose disagree. The respondent that are neutral are 17.6% (21). However, about 47.2% (94) and 34.2% (68) respondents agree and strongly agree respectively on the use of females in advertisements. Overall, a little over eighty-one percent (81%) agree to the use of females in advertising. It then reveals that about 7.0% (14) respondents chose strongly disagree that Ads use of language in advertisements are merely persuasive while 6.5%

(13) respondents chose disagree. The respondent that are neutral are 17.6% (35). However, about 54.8% (109) and 23.6% (47) respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that Ads use of language in advertisements are merely persuasive.

Results reveals that the advertisements touch on my self-esteem and make me want to look more beautiful (Mean=3.7739 and SD=1.11197), drawn to advertisements with beautiful but decently dressed models (Mean=3.6633 and SD=1.18586), I agree with the use of females in advertisements (Mean=4.0402 and SD=0.97359) and the use of language of their advertisement is merely persuasive (Mean=3.8191 and SD=1.09056).

Furthermore, hypothesis tests were carried out on research objective one if sociocultural practice feature has significant impact on portrayal of women using ANOVA, correlations and regression as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Anova Analysis Result on the Relationship Between Social-Cultural Practice Features and Portrayal of Women

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	225.991	1	225.991	2363.889	.000 ^a
	Residual	18.833	197	.096		
	Total	244.824	198			

Social-cultural practice significantly predicted portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product-, $F=2363.88$, when $p < 0.000$. This implies that there is high significance, which indicates that the social-cultural practice can play a statistically significant role in shaping portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis Result on the Relationship Between Social-Cultural Practice Features and Portrayal of Women

		I am drawn to advertisements with beautiful but decently dressed models.	The desire to look beautiful as the women portrayed in adverts makes me purchase cosmetic products.
Drawn	Pearson Correlation	1	.961 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	199	199
Portrayal	Pearson Correlation	.961 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

N

199

199

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the effect of the social cultural practice features on the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products and choice of cosmetic product influencers and consumer demographic factors with positive coefficients of 0.961 using Pearson Correlation. The table under regression shows the summary of these findings on the hypothesis tests

H₁: There is a significant relationship between influence of social-cultural practice and the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product.

The hypothesis tests if social-cultural practice carries as significant impact on portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product. The dependent variable portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product was regressed on predicting variable social-cultural practice to test the hypothesis H₁. Table 5 shows the summary of these findings on the hypothesis tests.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Result on the Relationship Between Social-Cultural Practice Features and Portrayal of Women

Hyp	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	Pvalue	Hypothesis Supported
H ₃	social-cultural practice and portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products	0.961	0.923	2363.889	0.000	Yes

Source: Data Analysis, 2023

Table 5 reveals social-cultural practice significantly predicted portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product-, F=2363.889, when P is 0.000 implies that there is high significance, which indicates that the social-cultural practice can play a statistical significant role in shaping portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic product (b=0.961, p is 0.000). The result shows direct positive of social-cultural practice. Moreover, the R²=0.923 depicts that the model explains 92.3% of the variance. The discussion on the main points in the findings affirms Hidayat, Kusuma, Alek Purwahida, and Defianty (2020) that the texts in the advertisements were formulated in such a way for the purpose of persuading and attracting potential buyers. The third level of Fairclough's CDA discussed below corroborates these findings on the social cultural features.

Through the words used in advertisement, the advertisers attract people to buy and become consumers. The example of the words used in the advertisements such as: "look fresh, beautiful, younger and radiant; my skin healthy and smooth; formulated to keep you clean, clear and confident" in Eva and "experience your real beauty with; soft glowing skin etc in Siri advertisement have social significance of beauty and added confidence imbued to people and it can be said that ads can affect the public in term of social interests. When people see/hear an ad many times, the

ads will influence the public in their way of thinking. People then begin to believe that those products in ads will enhance their appearance so they think of giving it a try. This way of advertisement creates some level of social wrong at times. It was found that the demands towards Nigerian women as related to beauty by the advertisers are oppressive, psychological, and socially inclined. Based on data classification, there are three social wrongs revealed in the advertisements namely 1) the issue of self-esteem in women; 2) the demand for women to continually look attractive through these products and 3) the need to appear beautiful leading to the impulse to buy these products. Self-esteem is related to confidence of the consumers and in the advertisement for cosmetic products issues of self-esteem in women are raised.

Consequently, the ideology of 'beauty' portrayed in the ads displayed tend to become a reality of aspiration. It tends to play on the self-esteem of the consumers making them discontent and seeking the products to have a "better" self-image that may not necessarily be resonate with their sociocultural environment. This goes in line with Romah (2020) that issues of having smooth skin, slim bodies, fair skin, and a beautiful appearance by women today have made the beauty products industry one of the fastest-growing industries and that beauty product advertisements can have control or power over consumers to the extent of being misled into believing that whatever is being advertised is true.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION Summary of findings

The results of the findings indicate that socio-cultural practice features significantly predicted portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products as the result shows direct positive of socialcultural practice. Most of the advertisements portray women as always slim and light complexioned to persuade the women on a certain form of beauty despite the Nigerian culture. As a result, many people believe what the advertisement says and choose to see themselves in the light of these advertisements. This is part of the effect on social change created by advertisements in the society. Thus, advertisers tend to change the way society views beauty by creating a new beauty ideology and a new standard of beauty derived from what their advertisement says.

Conclusions

Through this study, it was found that advertisers tend to influence the society in their way of thinking. The socio-cultural practice significantly predicted portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products as the result shows direct positive of social-cultural practice. Results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the effect of the social cultural practice features on the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products. Based on data classification, some social wrongs revealed in the advertisements include the issue of self-esteem in women; the demand for women to continually look attractive through these products and the need to appear beautiful leading to the impulse to buy these products. The self-esteem issue is related to the eroding of confidence of the consumers and in the advertisement for cosmetic products issues of self-esteem in women are raised.

Consequently, the ideology of ‘beauty’ portrayed in the ads displayed tend to become a reality of aspiration. It tends to play on the self-esteem of the consumers making them discontent and seeking the products to have a “better” self-image as the models portrayed. Though the advertisements do not directly state the problem they however by the texts, the iconic image of the product and models reveal the explanation of the problem which seems to give an extra layer to ideological position of the advertisement especially on the concept of beauty. Thus, it imposes a strength over the reader that beautiful women are supposed to be as what is portrayed in the advertisement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed, this study recommends that cosmetic advertisers take into cognisance the norms of the society and that advertising agencies dwell on the study, creation and formulation of new ideas to reflect women more as creatures of value in the society. The influence of social features in advertising discourse and the portrayal of women in the choice of cosmetic products helps understand the broad societal currents which affect texts being studied. Thus, cosmetic companies should learn to advertise their products with less manipulative words and unnecessary exposure as this is not appreciated by women - the main market for cosmetic products.

Moreover, since the research is interested in the socio-cultural influence, the family as the first point of socialization for the child and the government through development of new curriculums should emphasise the importance of both sexes so as to narrow the gap in gender segmentation by teaching girls to recognise their intellectual potentials. Also, girls are to be encouraged not to see themselves as inferior nor as objects of attraction and sexualization but to place value and selfesteem on themselves. The researcher also recommends that there should be further research in this area because advertising has an essential role in society.

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