Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communication and Brand Loyalty in Somalia

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication and brand loyalty in Somalia. **Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that effective communication of CSR initiatives enhances consumers' perceptions of a company's commitment to social and environmental responsibility. This perception, in turn, fosters trust and loyalty among consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty. Studies also indicate that transparent and authentic CSR communication strategies resonate more with consumers, contributing significantly to building a strong brand image and fostering long-term relationships with customers. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of genuine CSR communication in cultivating brand loyalty and enhancing the overall reputation of a company.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Stakeholder theory, social identity theory and signaling theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication and brand loyalty in Somalia. Companies should prioritize transparent and consistent communication of their CSR activities to build consumer trust and loyalty. Regular updates, detailed reports, and clear articulation of CSR goals and achievements are crucial for fostering long-term relationships with customers. Policymakers should establish clear regulatory standards for CSR reporting to ensure transparency and accountability.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Communication, Brand Loyalty*

INTRODUCTION

Brand loyalty, a critical determinant of business success, is measured through customer surveys and loyalty metrics such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) and customer retention rates. In the United States, brand loyalty has shown significant trends with an emphasis on personalized customer experiences and digital engagement. For instance, a study highlighted that 80% of consumers are more likely to purchase from a brand that offers personalized experiences (Smith, 2020). Similarly, in Japan, loyalty programs are a major driver of brand loyalty, with over 70% of consumers participating in loyalty schemes, resulting in high repeat purchase rates (Tanaka, 2019). These statistics underscore the importance of strategic customer engagement and personalization in fostering brand loyalty in developed economies (Kim & Kumar, 2021).

In developing economies, brand loyalty is gaining momentum as businesses increasingly focus on understanding consumer behavior and enhancing customer satisfaction. For instance, in India, a shift towards digital platforms has seen a 35% increase in customer retention due to improved accessibility and personalized marketing (Rao, 2019). In Brazil, loyalty programs have driven a 25% rise in repeat purchases, highlighting the effectiveness of incentives in building customer loyalty (Santos, 2020). These trends indicate a growing recognition of the value of customer loyalty in developing markets, where tailored marketing strategies and digital engagement are key (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2021).

In Mexico, brand loyalty has been significantly enhanced by the integration of social media and influencer marketing. Research indicates that 45% of Mexican consumers demonstrate strong loyalty to brands endorsed by influencers they follow on social media platforms (Garcia & Gonzalez, 2019). In Thailand, customer loyalty has increased due to the effectiveness of mobile apps, which provide personalized promotions and loyalty rewards, resulting in a 38% rise in repeat purchases (Wong & Li, 2020). Similarly, in the Philippines, brands that focus on community engagement and social responsibility have seen a 30% increase in customer loyalty, highlighting the importance of corporate social responsibility in retaining customers (Perez & Reyes, 2021). These trends illustrate how businesses in developing economies are leveraging digital platforms and strategic marketing initiatives to build and sustain brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2021).

In Indonesia, brand loyalty has been significantly influenced by the rise of e-commerce and mobile technology. Studies show that 40% of consumers exhibit strong loyalty to brands that provide seamless online shopping experiences and effective mobile applications (Putri & Wijaya, 2020). Similarly, in Vietnam, customer surveys reveal that 50% of shoppers remain loyal to brands that offer consistent quality and reliable customer service, underscoring the importance of product reliability in retaining customers (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). In Turkey, loyalty programs have driven a 30% increase in customer retention, demonstrating the effectiveness of rewards and incentives in maintaining consumer interest (Karakaya & Eksi, 2020). These trends highlight how businesses in developing economies are leveraging technology and strategic marketing initiatives to build and sustain brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2021).

In Argentina, brand loyalty has been positively influenced by the adoption of omnichannel retail strategies. Research indicates that 48% of Argentine consumers are more likely to remain loyal to

brands that provide a seamless experience across both online and offline channels (Martinez & Ramirez, 2020). In Egypt, customer loyalty has increased due to effective use of social media marketing, resulting in a 32% rise in customer retention as brands engage consumers through interactive and personalized content (Hassan & Mahmoud, 2021). In Malaysia, brands that emphasize quality and innovation have seen a 37% increase in customer loyalty, as consumers prioritize these attributes in their purchasing decisions (Lim & Teo, 2019). These trends highlight how businesses in developing economies are utilizing diverse strategies to enhance brand loyalty and customer retention (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2021).

In Ghana, brand loyalty has been positively impacted by the integration of loyalty programs and customer feedback systems, leading to a 28% increase in repeat purchases (Mensah, 2019). This trend reflects a growing emphasis on customer satisfaction and engagement in the region. Similarly, in South Africa, the rise of e-commerce platforms has facilitated personalized marketing efforts, contributing to a 33% boost in customer loyalty (Nkosi, 2021). These examples illustrate how businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa are leveraging technology and strategic initiatives to foster stronger customer relationships and loyalty.

In Uganda, the rise of mobile money services has significantly impacted brand loyalty, with a 35% increase in customer retention for mobile network operators due to the convenience and reliability of these services (Kisakye & Tumusiime, 2020). Similarly, in Zambia, customer surveys indicate that 40% of consumers are loyal to brands that engage in community development projects, underscoring the importance of corporate social responsibility in building loyalty (Mubiana & Chanda, 2021). In Ethiopia, the use of loyalty cards and rewards programs has driven a 28% increase in repeat purchases, highlighting the effectiveness of incentives in retaining customers (Getahun & Fikadu, 2019). These examples illustrate how businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa are leveraging technology, social responsibility, and rewards programs to enhance brand loyalty and customer retention.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, brand loyalty is evolving as businesses adopt more customer-centric approaches to compete in dynamic markets. In Kenya, the adoption of mobile technology for customer engagement has led to a 40% increase in customer loyalty, driven by convenience and real-time interactions (Mwangi, 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, loyalty programs have contributed to a 30% increase in customer retention, demonstrating the impact of strategic incentives on consumer behavior (Ogunyemi, 2019). These developments highlight the critical role of technology and tailored loyalty initiatives in enhancing brand loyalty in Sub-Saharan economies (Njenga & Kamau, 2021).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication is essential in shaping a brand's image and fostering customer loyalty. The extent of CSR communication often includes detailed reports, social media updates, community engagement events, and partnerships with non-profits. Effective CSR communication involves transparency, authenticity, and consistency, ensuring that the company's CSR activities are well-documented and communicated to stakeholders (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009). For instance, detailed sustainability reports that outline a company's environmental impact can enhance customer trust and loyalty, as consumers appreciate transparency and commitment to ethical practices (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). Similarly,

regular social media updates about CSR activities help in engaging with consumers directly and fostering a sense of community and shared values, leading to increased brand loyalty (Kim & Ferguson, 2019).

Types of CSR communication can include sustainability reports, social media campaigns, community involvement initiatives, and cause-related marketing. Sustainability reports provide indepth information about a company's environmental and social impacts, which can significantly enhance customer loyalty by demonstrating accountability and progress (Lock & Seele, 2016). Social media campaigns are effective in reaching a broader audience and promoting CSR activities in real-time, which helps in building an emotional connection with consumers (Wang & Huang, 2018). Community involvement initiatives, such as volunteering and local partnerships, showcase a brand's commitment to social causes, which can lead to higher customer retention and loyalty (Nguyen & Doan, 2020). Lastly, cause-related marketing aligns a brand with social causes that resonate with consumers, enhancing brand perception and loyalty metrics (Deng & Xu, 2017). These various forms of CSR communication not only build a positive brand image but also foster deeper customer loyalty through consistent and meaningful engagement.

Problem Statement

The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication and brand loyalty remains a critical yet underexplored area in contemporary marketing research. Despite increasing investments in CSR initiatives by companies worldwide, there is still limited understanding of how effective communication of these activities influences customer loyalty. Recent studies suggest that transparent and consistent CSR communication can significantly enhance brand loyalty by fostering trust and positive brand perception (Kim & Ferguson, 2019; Lock & Seele, 2016). However, the extent to which different types of CSR communication (e.g., social media updates, sustainability reports, community engagement) impact customer loyalty metrics is not fully understood (Nguyen & Doan, 2020; Wang & Huang, 2018). Addressing this gap is essential for companies to strategically align their CSR communication efforts with their brand loyalty goals, ensuring that their investments in social responsibility translate into tangible business benefits (Deng & Xu, 2017).

Theoretical Framework Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory posits that organizations should create value not only for shareholders but also for all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, and the community. This theory emphasizes the importance of addressing the interests and needs of these groups to achieve longterm success. Introduced by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, Stakeholder Theory is highly relevant to the study of CSR communication and brand loyalty. By effectively communicating CSR initiatives, companies can build trust and loyalty among their stakeholders, particularly customers, who are increasingly concerned about ethical practices and social responsibility. Transparent and consistent CSR communication aligns with the principles of Stakeholder Theory, helping organizations demonstrate their commitment to all stakeholders and thus fostering stronger brand loyalty (Jones, Harrison & Felps, 2018).

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory suggests that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem based on their membership in social groups. Developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, this theory explains how people are likely to support and show loyalty to organizations that reflect their values and social identities. In the context of CSR communication, Social Identity Theory is particularly relevant as it highlights the importance of aligning CSR activities with the values and identities of consumers. Effective CSR communication can enhance customers' identification with the brand, leading to stronger loyalty and support. By promoting CSR initiatives that resonate with their target audience's values, companies can strengthen their brand loyalty (Kim, 2020).

Signaling Theory

Signaling theory deals with how information asymmetry between parties can be reduced by sending credible signals. Formulated by Michael Spence in 1973, this theory originally applied to job market signaling but has since been expanded to various fields, including marketing and CSR. Signaling Theory is relevant to CSR communication as it suggests that companies can signal their commitment to social responsibility through transparent and consistent CSR communications. These signals can build consumer trust and enhance brand loyalty by demonstrating that the company's values align with those of its customers. By effectively communicating their CSR efforts, companies can reduce information asymmetry and foster stronger relationships with their customers (Connelly, Certo, Ireland & Reutzel, 2018).

Empirical Review

Kim (2019) investigated the impact of CSR communication on customer loyalty in the Korean retail sector. The study employed a quantitative approach using surveys to gather data from a sample of retail customers and applied structural equation modeling to analyze the relationships between variables. The primary aim was to determine how transparency in CSR activities influences brand loyalty among consumers. The findings revealed that transparency in CSR communications significantly enhances brand loyalty, as consumers value honesty and commitment demonstrated by the retailers. Furthermore, the study found that CSR communication positively affects brand trust and brand identification, which are crucial mediators in the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty. The study highlighted that customers who perceive a brand as transparent in its CSR efforts are more likely to develop a stronger emotional connection with the brand. This emotional connection, in turn, leads to increased loyalty and repeated patronage. The study also noted the importance of consistency in CSR messaging, as inconsistent messages can undermine trust and loyalty. Recommendations included maintaining clear, honest, and consistent communication about CSR initiatives to foster stronger customer relationships. The study emphasized that companies should not only focus on the breadth of CSR activities but also on how these activities are communicated to the public. It suggested integrating CSR communication into the overall branding strategy to enhance its impact. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into the mechanisms through which CSR communication can build and sustain brand loyalty.

Du and Vieira (2018) analyzed CSR communication in the European automotive industry. The study utilized a content analysis method to examine CSR reports from leading automotive

companies in Europe. The primary objective was to assess how the detail and consistency of CSR communication influence customer retention and brand loyalty. The analysis included evaluating the extent of information disclosure, the use of multimedia elements, and the frequency of updates in CSR reports. The findings indicated that companies that provide comprehensive and consistent CSR information experience higher customer loyalty. Detailed CSR reports that include measurable goals, progress updates, and impact assessments were found to be particularly effective in building trust among consumers. The study also highlighted the role of storytelling in CSR communication, noting that narratives that connect CSR activities with the company's core values and mission resonate well with customers. Recommendations for automotive companies included enhancing the detail and consistency of their CSR communications, utilizing a mix of traditional and digital media to reach a broader audience, and incorporating storytelling to make CSR activities more relatable. The study underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in CSR communication, suggesting that these elements are key to fostering long-term customer loyalty. Additionally, the research emphasized the need for companies to align their CSR initiatives with their brand identity to maximize the impact of their CSR communication. The study provided a comprehensive framework for companies to enhance their CSR communication strategies and build stronger customer relationships.

Jones and Rupp (2020) examined the influence of CSR communication on brand loyalty in the U.S. technology sector. This study employed an experimental design to explore how different types of CSR messaging impact consumer trust and brand loyalty. Participants were exposed to various CSR communication scenarios, including messages emphasizing environmental sustainability, community engagement, and ethical labor practices. The findings revealed that authentic and sincere CSR messages significantly boost consumer trust, which in turn enhances brand loyalty. The study identified authenticity as a critical factor, noting that consumers are adept at distinguishing between genuine and superficial CSR efforts. Messages that demonstrated a clear connection between the company's values and its CSR activities were particularly effective in fostering loyalty. The study also explored the role of emotional appeal in CSR communication, finding that messages that evoke positive emotions, such as pride and hope, are more likely to enhance brand loyalty. Recommendations for technology companies included focusing on delivering authentic and emotionally engaging CSR messages, ensuring that CSR activities are well-aligned with the company's core values and mission, and utilizing a variety of communication channels to reach diverse audiences. The research highlighted the importance of transparency and consistency in CSR communication, suggesting that these elements are essential for building and maintaining consumer trust. Additionally, the study emphasized the need for ongoing engagement with consumers to sustain the positive effects of CSR communication on brand loyalty. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into how technology companies can leverage CSR communication to strengthen their brand loyalty.

Lee (2021) conducted a case study on CSR communication in the Chinese banking sector. The study used a qualitative approach, combining interviews with key stakeholders and document analysis of CSR reports and public communications. The primary aim was to explore how customer engagement in CSR activities affects brand loyalty. Findings revealed that customer involvement in CSR initiatives positively influences their loyalty to the brand. The study

highlighted that active participation in CSR activities, such as volunteering and community projects, helps customers develop a stronger emotional connection with the brand. This engagement fosters a sense of belonging and shared values, which are crucial for building longterm loyalty. The research also found that transparency in CSR communication enhances customers' perceptions of the brand's authenticity and commitment to social responsibility. Recommendations for banks included increasing opportunities for customer involvement in CSR activities, maintaining clear and transparent communication about CSR initiatives, and aligning CSR efforts with the core values and mission of the bank. The study emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to CSR communication, suggesting that banks should integrate CSR activities into their overall business strategy to maximize their impact. Additionally, the research highlighted the need for banks to continuously engage with their customers and keep them informed about the progress and outcomes of CSR initiatives. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into how banks can leverage CSR communication to enhance brand loyalty and strengthen customer relationships.

Sharma and Bansal (2018) explored the relationship between CSR communication and brand loyalty in Indian FMCG companies. The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. The primary objective was to assess how social media updates on CSR initiatives impact customer loyalty. Findings indicated that regular updates on CSR activities through social media significantly enhance customer loyalty. The study found that social media platforms provide an effective channel for engaging with customers and building a community around CSR efforts. Additionally, the research highlighted that customers appreciate the immediacy and interactivity of social media updates, which help them feel more connected to the brand. Recommendations for FMCG companies included leveraging social media to communicate CSR activities, ensuring that updates are frequent and engaging, and using multimedia elements to enhance the impact of the messages. The study also suggested that companies should encourage customer participation in CSR activities through social media, such as by sharing stories and feedback. The research emphasized the importance of consistency and transparency in social media communication, noting that these elements are crucial for building trust and loyalty. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into how FMCG companies can use social media to enhance their CSR communication and build stronger customer relationships.

Wang and Huang (2020) examined CSR communication in Taiwanese manufacturing firms. The study employed a quantitative approach using surveys to gather data from customers of various manufacturing firms and applied regression analysis to assess the effects of interactive CSR communication strategies on brand loyalty. The findings revealed that interactive CSR communication, such as engaging customers through social media and online platforms, fosters greater brand loyalty. The study found that customers value the opportunity to interact with brands and provide feedback on CSR activities. This interaction enhances their emotional connection with the brand and increases their loyalty. The research also highlighted the importance of transparency and authenticity in CSR communication, noting that customers are more likely to trust and remain loyal to brands that are open about their CSR efforts. Recommendations for manufacturing firms included adopting interactive CSR communication strategies, utilizing a variety of online platforms to engage with customers, and ensuring that CSR messages are clear and authentic. The

study emphasized the need for ongoing engagement with customers, suggesting that regular updates and interactive features can help sustain customer interest and loyalty. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into how manufacturing firms can leverage interactive CSR communication to build stronger customer relationships and enhance brand loyalty.

Nguyen and Doan (2021) conducted a longitudinal study on the long-term effects of CSR communication on brand loyalty in Vietnamese hospitality businesses. The study used a combination of surveys and follow-up interviews over several years to assess how consistent and culturally relevant CSR communication impacts customer loyalty. Findings highlighted that sustained and culturally adapted CSR communication significantly enhances long-term customer loyalty. The research revealed that customers value consistency in CSR messaging, as it demonstrates the company's ongoing commitment to social responsibility. Additionally, culturally relevant CSR communication that resonates with local values and traditions helps build a stronger emotional connection with customers. The study emphasized the importance of aligning CSR activities with the cultural context of the target market to maximize their impact. Recommendations for hospitality businesses included maintaining consistent and culturally relevant CSR communications, engaging with customers through various channels, and continuously monitoring and adapting CSR strategies to meet customer expectations. The study also suggested that businesses should involve customers in CSR activities, such as through community projects and events, to foster a sense of belonging and loyalty. Overall, the research provided valuable insights into how hospitality businesses can leverage CSR communication to sustain long-term customer loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: The current body of research has predominantly focused on transparency, consistency, and authenticity as key components of CSR communication that influence brand loyalty. Kim (2019) emphasized transparency and consistency in the Korean retail sector, while Jones and Rupp (2020) highlighted authenticity and emotional appeal in the U.S. technology sector. However, there is limited exploration of the role of digital and interactive elements in CSR communication across different industries. For instance, Sharma and Bansal (2018) pointed out the effectiveness of social media updates in Indian FMCG companies, but there is a need for a deeper understanding of how interactive digital platforms and multimedia elements specifically impact brand loyalty across various sectors and contexts. Additionally, the emotional and psychological mechanisms through which CSR communication influences brand loyalty, such as the role of consumer identity and perceived corporate sincerity, require further investigation.

Contextual Gaps: While several studies have examined CSR communication in specific industries, such as retail, automotive, technology, and banking, there is a noticeable lack of

research in other critical sectors like healthcare, education and agriculture. For example, Lee (2021) focused on the banking sector in China and Du and Vieira (2018) analyzed the automotive industry in Europe. These sector-specific studies highlight the contextual differences in how CSR communication strategies are implemented and perceived. However, understanding how CSR communication affects brand loyalty in under-researched sectors, which have unique stakeholder dynamics and CSR expectations, remains a gap. Expanding the contextual scope of research could provide more comprehensive insights into the generalizability and sector-specific nuances of CSR communication strategies.

Geographical Gaps: The existing research has predominantly concentrated on developed and emerging economies, such as South Korea, Europe, the United States, China, India, Taiwan, and Vietnam. There is a significant research gap regarding CSR communication and brand loyalty in less-studied regions, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and smaller developing nations. Studies like those by Nguyen and Doan (2021) and Wang and Huang (2020) provide valuable insights into Asian markets, but similar comprehensive studies are needed for African and Middle Eastern markets. Exploring how cultural, economic, and regulatory differences influence CSR communication and its impact on brand loyalty in these regions would fill a critical gap and enhance the global understanding of effective CSR strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS Conclusion

The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication and brand loyalty is a dynamic and multifaceted one, significantly influencing how consumers perceive and interact with brands. Effective CSR communication, characterized by transparency, consistency, authenticity, and emotional appeal, has been shown to foster trust, enhance brand identification, and ultimately increase customer loyalty. Studies across various sectors and regions, such as retail in Korea, automotive in Europe, and technology in the United States, consistently highlight that clear and honest CSR communication strengthens consumer trust and loyalty. Moreover, interactive and digital CSR communication strategies, including social media engagement and multimedia elements, play a crucial role in building stronger emotional connections with consumers, as evidenced in studies from India and Taiwan. However, significant research gaps remain, particularly in understanding the impact of CSR communication in under-researched sectors and regions, such as healthcare, education, Africa, and the Middle East. Addressing these gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the universal and context-specific elements of effective CSR communication. Overall, strategically aligning CSR initiatives with transparent and engaging communication efforts is essential for companies seeking to build and sustain brand loyalty in an increasingly socially-conscious market environment.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Future research should expand theoretical frameworks to incorporate additional perspectives, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Relationship Marketing Theory, to explore the diverse psychological and social mechanisms through which CSR communication influences brand loyalty. By examining how attitudes, intentions, and relationship dynamics mediate this relationship, scholars can gain deeper insights into consumer behavior. Additionally, investigating mediating factors such as corporate transparency, consumer empowerment, and emotional engagement will provide a more comprehensive understanding of their roles in enhancing brand loyalty through CSR communication. Theories should also be adapted to account for cultural and regional differences in consumer perceptions and responses to CSR communication, ensuring that the models developed are applicable across different contexts. This adaptation will help in developing a more nuanced understanding of how CSR impacts brand loyalty globally.

Practice

Companies should prioritize transparent and consistent communication of their CSR activities to build consumer trust and loyalty. Regular updates, detailed reports, and clear articulation of CSR goals and achievements are crucial for fostering long-term relationships with customers. Businesses should also leverage digital and interactive platforms, such as social media, to engage with consumers in real-time. Interactive CSR communication, including live updates, multimedia content, and consumer feedback mechanisms, can significantly enhance brand loyalty by creating a more dynamic and engaging consumer experience. Moreover, it is vital for companies to ensure that their CSR initiatives align with their core values and mission. Authentic and sincere CSR messages that resonate with the company's identity are more likely to foster consumer trust and loyalty.

Policy

Policymakers should establish clear regulatory standards for CSR reporting to ensure transparency and accountability. This can include mandatory disclosure of CSR activities, impact assessments, and third-party audits, which will help to build public trust and ensure that companies are genuinely committed to their CSR initiatives. Governments should also provide incentives for companies to engage in meaningful CSR activities, such as tax benefits, subsidies, and public recognition, to motivate businesses to invest in socially responsible initiatives. Additionally, policymakers should support the development of digital infrastructure to facilitate effective CSR communication. Funding for digital tools, platforms, and training programs will enable companies to engage with consumers and stakeholders more effectively, promoting greater corporate accountability and social responsibility.

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