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Digital Marketing Strategies for Electric Vehicle Adoption in India: The role of social media, influencer marketing, and online reviews in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

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Abstract
The rapid evolution of digital communication has transformed marketing practices and consumer decision-making in the Indian electric vehicle (EV) market. Despite growing environmental awareness and increasing interest in sustainable mobility, the adoption of electric vehicles in India continues to be influenced by consumer perceptions, technological awareness, perceived risks, and trust in emerging automotive technologies. In this context, digital marketing strategies have become instrumental in educating consumers, shaping brand perceptions, and influencing purchase intentions. The present study aims to examine the role of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online consumer reviews in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India. Social media platforms facilitate information dissemination, interactive engagement, and brand communication, while influencer marketing enables manufacturers to leverage perceived credibility, expertise, and relatability to establish consumer confidence. Similarly, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth provide prospective buyers with user-generated information regarding vehicle performance, battery reliability, charging convenience, maintenance costs, and ownership experiences. The study conceptualises consumer attitudes as an important psychological mechanism through which digital marketing activities may influence purchase intentions. It also recognises the potential significance of perceived credibility, information quality, consumer trust, and engagement in determining the effectiveness of digital promotional initiatives. A quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire and primary data collection from prospective and existing electric vehicle consumers is proposed to empirically investigate these relationships. Appropriate statistical techniques may be employed to assess the relationships among the identified variables. The anticipated findings are expected to provide insights into the effectiveness of digital marketing channels in reducing information asymmetry, strengthening consumer confidence, and encouraging EV adoption. The study may offer valuable implications for automobile manufacturers, EV marketers, digital communication professionals, and policymakers seeking to accelerate sustainable mobility through consumer-centric digital marketing strategies in India.

Keywords
Electric Vehicles; Digital Marketing; Social Media Marketing; Influencer Marketing; Online Consumer Reviews; Consumer Attitudes; Purchase Intention.

I. Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed marketing practices and consumer decision-making across industries, including the automobile sector. In India, the increasing emphasis on sustainable transportation, environmental protection, and technological innovation has created new opportunities for electric vehicle (EV) adoption. However, despite growing interest in electric mobility, consumer acceptance and purchase intentions remain influenced by several factors, including product awareness, perceived affordability, charging infrastructure, battery reliability, and confidence in emerging technologies. In this context, digital marketing

strategies have become important instruments for communicating the benefits of electric vehicles, addressing consumer concerns, and influencing purchasing decisions.

Social media marketing enables automobile manufacturers to communicate directly with potential customers through engaging content, interactive campaigns, product demonstrations, and targeted advertisements. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook facilitate the dissemination of information regarding EV performance, environmental benefits, operating costs, and technological features. These digital interactions can enhance brand awareness, encourage consumer engagement, and shape perceptions of electric mobility. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on the relevance, credibility, and authenticity of the information communicated.

Influencer marketing has also emerged as a significant promotional strategy in the Indian automobile market. Automotive experts, digital content creators, and technology influencers can demonstrate vehicle features, share ownership experiences, and provide comparative evaluations of electric vehicles. Their perceived expertise and credibility may influence consumer trust and attitudes towards EV brands. Similarly, online consumer reviews and electronic word-of-mouth provide prospective buyers with valuable information concerning battery performance, driving range, charging convenience, maintenance expenses, and after-sales service. Positive reviews may strengthen purchase confidence, whereas negative experiences can generate uncertainty and discourage adoption.

Understanding the relationship between these digital marketing strategies and consumer behaviour is essential for developing effective EV marketing initiatives. Consumer attitudes may serve as an important mechanism connecting digital promotional activities with purchase intentions. Therefore, the present study examines the role of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online reviews in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India. The findings may offer valuable insights for automobile manufacturers and marketers seeking to strengthen consumer confidence and accelerate electric vehicle adoption through effective, credible, and consumer-oriented digital communication strategies.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing promotion of electric vehicles (EVs) in India, their widespread adoption continues to face challenges related to consumer awareness, trust, perceived risks, and purchase intentions. Digital marketing strategies, particularly social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online consumer reviews, have emerged as important tools for communicating EV benefits and influencing consumer perceptions. However, the extent to which these digital marketing strategies shape consumer attitudes and translate into actual purchase intentions remains insufficiently understood in the Indian context. Concerns regarding information credibility, influencer authenticity, misleading promotional content, and negative online reviews may further influence consumer decision-making. Moreover, the relative effectiveness of these digital marketing channels in building consumer confidence and encouraging EV adoption requires systematic investigation. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the influence of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online reviews on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India.

Research Questions

1. How does social media marketing influence consumer attitudes towards electric vehicles in India?
2. To what extent does influencer marketing affect consumer trust, perceptions, and purchase intentions regarding electric vehicles?
3. How do online consumer reviews and electronic word-of-mouth shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles?
4. What is the relationship between consumer attitudes developed through digital marketing strategies and their purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India?
5. Which digital marketing strategy—social media marketing, influencer marketing, or online consumer reviews—has the strongest influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer attitudes towards electric vehicles in India.
2. To assess the extent of the influence of influencer marketing on consumer trust, perceptions, and purchase intentions regarding electric vehicles.
3. To analyse the role of online consumer reviews and electronic word-of-mouth in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles.
4. To determine the relationship between consumer attitudes developed through digital marketing strategies and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India.

5. To identify the digital marketing strategy—social media marketing, influencer marketing, or online consumer reviews—that has the strongest influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles in India.

Examining the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Attitudes Towards Electric Vehicles in India

Social media marketing has emerged as an important mechanism for influencing consumer awareness, perceptions, and attitudes towards electric vehicles (EVs). Its interactive nature enables automobile manufacturers to communicate product benefits, technological innovations, environmental advantages, and ownership experiences directly to potential consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Contemporary research indicates that social media marketing activities can strengthen consumer engagement, brand relationships, and purchasing intentions (Alves et al., 2016; Bartoloni et al., 2024; Vinodh et al., 2024).

In India, social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook provide opportunities to demonstrate EV performance, explain charging procedures, and address concerns regarding battery reliability, driving range, and maintenance costs. Research on Indian EV adoption highlights the importance of consumer attitudes, personal motivations, and social influences in shaping behavioural intentions (Kumar & Alok, 2020; An empirical study on consumer motives and attitude towards adoption of electric vehicles in India, 2022). Social media content may therefore help consumers evaluate the functional, economic, and environmental value of electric mobility.



The credibility and usefulness of digital information are particularly significant in consumer decision-making. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), including shared experiences, comments, and online discussions, can influence attitudes towards brands and purchase intentions (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). Information quality, perceived credibility, and information adoption contribute to the effectiveness of online communication (Cheung et al., 2008; Filieri, 2015). Furthermore, interactive brand communities can facilitate social learning and consumer engagement (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Dessart et al., 2015).

Theoretically, the Theory of Planned Behavior explains how attitudes contribute to behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991), while research on social influence highlights the importance of interpersonal and normative factors (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). Nevertheless, misleading claims, negative experiences, information overload, and limited consumer knowledge may weaken the effectiveness of digital campaigns (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Appel et al., 2020). Accordingly, this objective examines how social media marketing influences Indian consumers' perceptions, environmental consciousness, brand trust, and attitudes towards EVs, providing a foundation for understanding their subsequent purchase intentions.

Assessing the Extent of the Influence of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Trust, Perceptions, and Purchase Intentions Regarding Electric Vehicles

Influencer marketing has become an influential digital communication strategy for educating consumers and promoting electric vehicles (EVs). The effectiveness of this approach depends on influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, authenticity, and the relevance of promotional content (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Influencers can demonstrate vehicle features, explain battery technology, compare operating costs, and discuss real-world driving experiences, thereby helping consumers evaluate unfamiliar technologies (De Veirman et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019).

In India, influencer marketing is particularly relevant because prospective EV buyers may have concerns regarding driving range, charging infrastructure, battery safety, maintenance expenditure, and resale value. A 2026 empirical study involving 300 Generation Z consumers in Delhi-NCR reported that influencer marketing influenced EV awareness, consumer perceptions, and purchase intentions, highlighting the importance of influencer credibility and content quality (Qaim & Gupta, 2026).

Similarly, research on Indian consumers indicates that influencer trustworthiness and information quality contribute to perceived credibility and purchase intention (Saima & Khan, 2021).



The extent of influence can be explained through source credibility theory and the elaboration likelihood model, which emphasise the importance of credible information and persuasive communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Influencers perceived as knowledgeable and transparent may strengthen consumer confidence, while authentic product demonstrations can reduce uncertainty and improve brand evaluations (Audrezet et al., 2020; Liu & Zheng, 2024).

Furthermore, parasocial relationships and perceived similarity may strengthen emotional connections between influencers and followers, encouraging favourable brand attitudes (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Schouten et al., 2020).

However, influencer marketing does not automatically translate into vehicle purchases. Sponsored endorsements, exaggerated claims, inadequate technical knowledge, and undisclosed commercial relationships may undermine credibility (Evans et al., 2017; Weismueller et al., 2020).

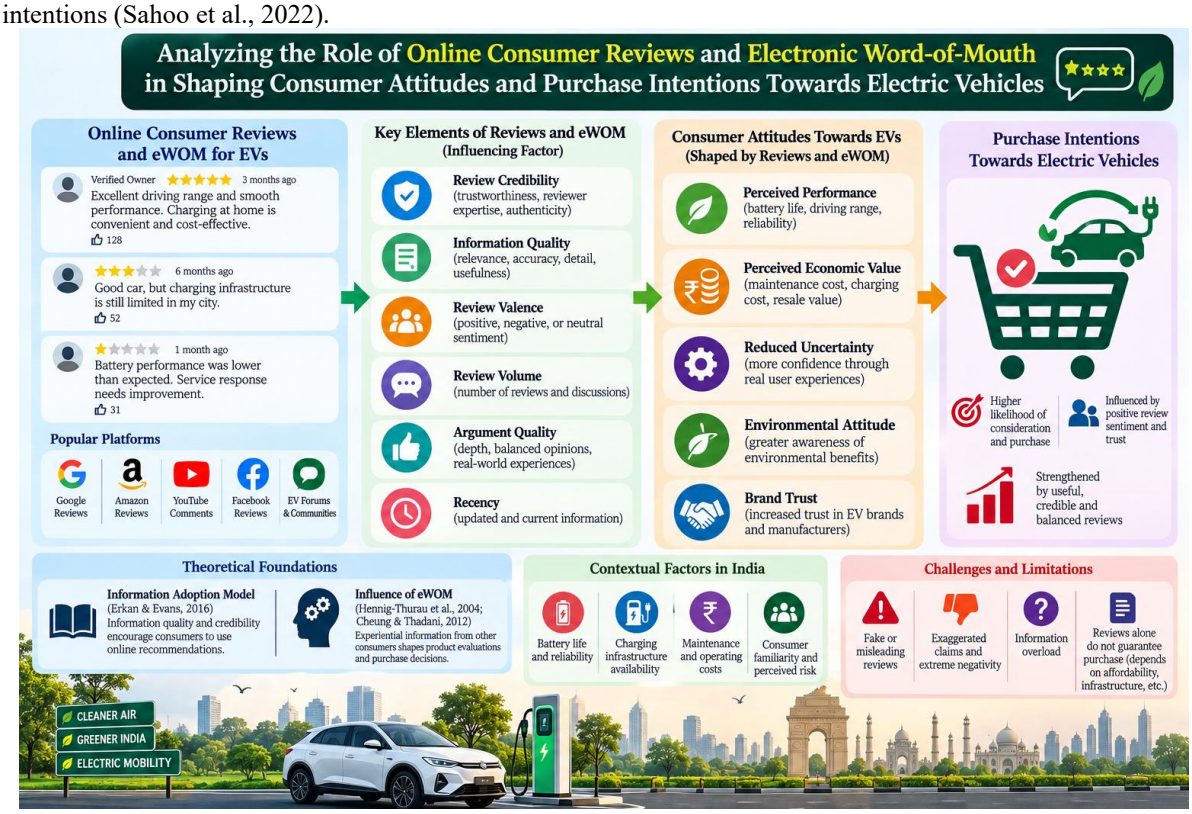
Purchase intentions may also depend on affordability, product availability, charging convenience, and individual environmental concerns (Rezvani et al., 2015; Kumar & Alok, 2020).

Therefore, this objective assesses the influence of influencer credibility, content quality, perceived authenticity, and consumer trust on EV perceptions and purchase intentions in India. The relationships should be empirically tested rather than assumed, particularly across different consumer segments and levels of EV familiarity.

Analyzing the Role of Online Consumer Reviews and Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Shaping Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intentions Towards Electric Vehicles

Online consumer reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) have become important sources of information for consumers evaluating electric vehicles (EVs). Unlike conventional advertising, these digital communications provide experiential information from existing owners and other consumers, influencing product evaluations and purchase decisions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Research suggests that online reviews influence purchase intention through review credibility, information quality, perceived usefulness, and consumer trust (Filieri, 2015; Ismagilova et al., 2020). A meta-analysis of 156 studies further found that review valence is an important determinant of purchase intention, although its influence varies across contexts (Qiu & Zhang, 2024).

In India, online reviews may be particularly influential because EVs represent a comparatively unfamiliar and high-involvement purchase for many consumers. Prospective buyers often seek information about battery life, driving range, charging convenience, maintenance expenses, resale value, and after-sales service. Research on Indian electric-car consumers identifies online reviews and accessibility among the factors associated with brand attitudes and subsequent purchase intentions (Trivedi & Kishore, 2020). Studies of Indian EV adoption also highlight the importance of consumer attitudes, perceived risks, and social motives in shaping behavioural intentions (Sahoo et al., 2022).



The influence of eWOM depends on both the content and the credibility of the message. Detailed, balanced, recent, and experience-based reviews can reduce uncertainty and help consumers compare EV models. Conversely, exaggerated claims, fake reviews, and highly negative accounts may weaken trust and discourage purchase consideration (Cheung et al., 2008; Filieri & McLeay, 2014). The information-adoption model explains how information quality and credibility encourage consumers to use online recommendations when making decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Furthermore, review volume, valence, and argument quality can affect product evaluations and purchase intentions (Park et al., 2007; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).

For EVs, online discussions about charging stations also matter because infrastructure accessibility influences consumer confidence. Recent evidence suggests that the sentiment expressed in charging-station reviews can be associated with EV adoption patterns (Lv et al., 2026).

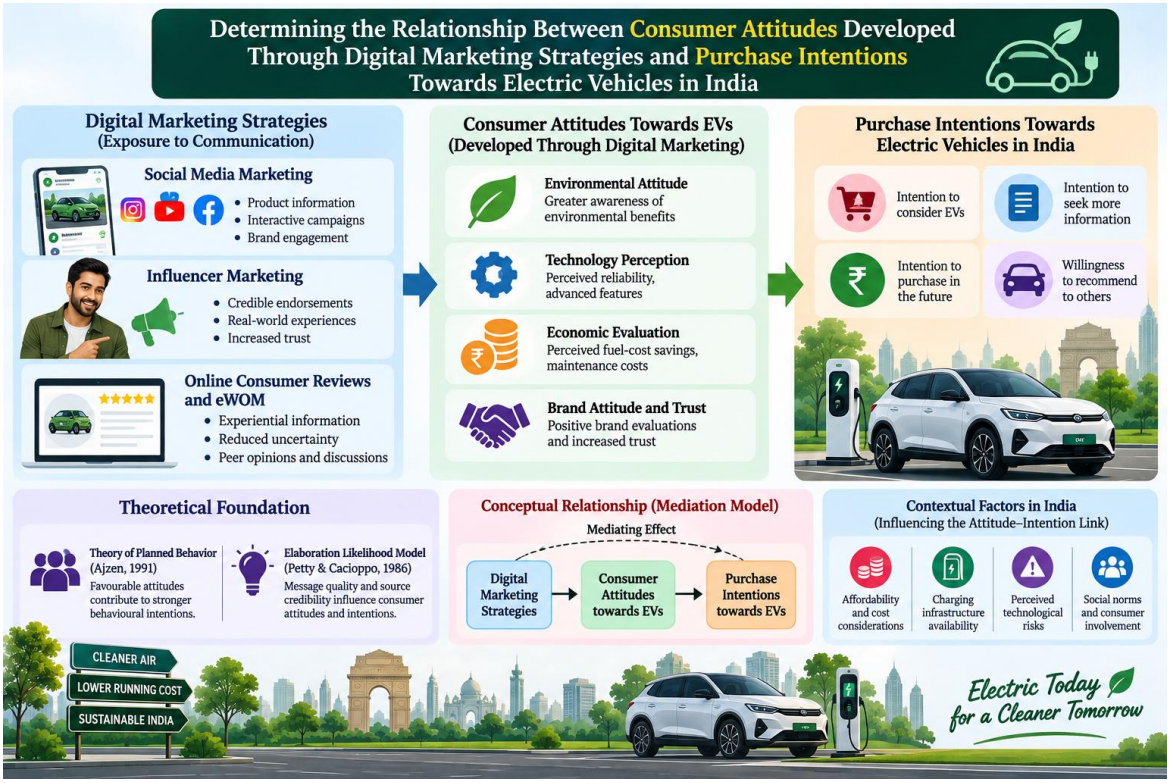
Therefore, this objective examines how review credibility, sentiment, usefulness, and eWOM influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards EVs in India. It also recognises that online reviews interact with affordability, perceived risk, and infrastructure availability rather than independently determining purchase decisions.

Determining the Relationship Between Consumer Attitudes Developed Through Digital Marketing Strategies and Purchase Intentions Towards Electric Vehicles in India

Consumer attitudes play a significant role in translating digital marketing communication into purchase intentions towards electric vehicles (EVs). The Theory of Planned Behavior establishes that favourable attitudes towards a behaviour contribute to stronger behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). In the Indian EV market, digital marketing strategies, including social media campaigns, influencer endorsements, and online consumer reviews, can shape perceptions of environmental benefits, technological reliability, affordability, and brand credibility. Empirical research in India identifies consumer attitudes as an important predictor of EV purchase intentions (Sahoo et al., 2022; Shalender & Sharma, 2021).

Social media marketing facilitates interactive communication and the dissemination of product information, potentially strengthening consumer engagement and brand evaluations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Influencer endorsements may increase perceived credibility and trust, while online reviews provide experiential information that reduces uncertainty about EV ownership (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Erkan & Evans, 2016). The effectiveness of these strategies depends on message quality, source credibility, consumer involvement, and the perceived relevance of the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Filieri, 2015). Research also suggests that digital brand communication can influence consumer attitudes through emotional engagement and perceived value (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014).

In the Indian context, positive attitudes may emerge when digital communications demonstrate potential fuel-cost savings, environmental advantages, improved technology, and convenient ownership experiences. Research on Indian consumers indicates that attitude, perceived behavioural control, social norms, and environmental considerations are relevant to EV adoption intentions (Pradeep et al., 2021; Deka et al., 2023).



Nevertheless, favourable attitudes do not always lead to purchase intentions or actual purchases, as affordability, charging infrastructure, and perceived technological risks may constrain consumer decisions (Rezvani et al., 2015; Kumar & Alok, 2020).

Therefore, this objective examines the relationship between attitudes shaped by digital marketing and consumers' intentions to purchase EVs in India. It seeks to establish whether favourable attitudes mediate the relationship between digital marketing exposure and purchase intention, while recognising that this mediating effect requires empirical testing.

Identifying the Digital Marketing Strategy—Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, or Online Consumer Reviews—that Has the Strongest Influence on Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intentions Towards Electric Vehicles in India

Identifying the most effective digital marketing strategy is essential for accelerating electric vehicle (EV) adoption in India. Social media marketing, influencer marketing, and online consumer reviews influence consumer decision-making through different mechanisms, including information dissemination, credibility, social interaction, and trust formation. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains the relationship between attitudes and purchase intentions (Ajzen, 1991), while the stimulus–organism–response framework explains how marketing stimuli influence psychological responses and behavioural outcomes (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

Social media marketing increases awareness through targeted advertisements, interactive campaigns, and educational content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Its effectiveness depends on content relevance, engagement, and perceived usefulness (Alves et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Influencer marketing can strengthen trust through perceived expertise, authenticity, and credibility (Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Recent Indian evidence indicates that influencer marketing can positively influence awareness, consumer perceptions, and EV purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers in Delhi-NCR (Qaim & Gupta, 2026).

Online consumer reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) provide experiential information about battery performance, driving range, charging convenience, maintenance expenditure, and ownership satisfaction. Review credibility and information quality can influence information adoption and purchase intentions (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016). A meta-analysis by Ismagilova et al. (2020) also demonstrates the importance of eWOM in purchase intention formation.

However, the strongest strategy cannot be established universally because its effectiveness may vary with consumer demographics, digital literacy, product involvement, and EV familiarity. A 2026 Indian automobile study found that eWOM was the strongest antecedent of brand trust among the digital marketing factors examined, while influencer credibility strongly predicted engagement (Kolapalli et al., 2026).



These findings concern automobile purchasing generally and should not automatically be interpreted as definitive evidence for all Indian EV consumers.

Therefore, this objective proposes a comparative assessment of the three strategies using consumer survey data and appropriate statistical techniques. Regression analysis or structural equation modelling can estimate their relative effects on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The strategy with the strongest statistically significant effect size should be identified empirically, considering affordability, perceived risk, and charging infrastructure as relevant contextual factors (Kumar & Alok, 2020; Rezvani et al., 2015).

II. Conclusion

The study highlights the significant role of digital marketing strategies in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles (EVs) in India. Social media marketing enhances awareness and engagement, influencer marketing strengthens credibility and consumer trust, while online consumer reviews provide valuable experiential information that reduces perceived uncertainty. Consumer attitudes emerge as an important link between digital communication and purchase intentions. However, the relative effectiveness of these strategies may vary according to consumer demographics, perceived risks, affordability, and charging infrastructure availability. No single strategy can be considered universally superior without empirical validation. Therefore, EV manufacturers should adopt an integrated, consumer-centric digital marketing approach that combines informative content, authentic influencer endorsements, and credible customer reviews to strengthen consumer confidence and encourage electric vehicle adoption in India.

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