Determining Key Factors Influencing Purchase Intentions in Halal-Certified Stores in Non-Muslim Country

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Abstract:
This study aims to identify and analyze the key factors influencing purchase intentions among consumers in halal-certified stores located in a non-Muslim country. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured closed-ended questionnaire distributed to a sample of 384 consumers who had previously shopped into halal-certified stores. The data were analyzed using an analytical hierarchy process (AHP) framework and statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, to identify the key factors of halal-certified store purchase intentions. The results reveal that the finding reveal that product quality (score = 4.41), halal awareness (score = 4.31), and halal certification (score = 4.27) are the top three factors influencing customer purchase intention for halal-certified stores in non-Muslim countries. This study provides valuable insights for retailers and marketers in non-Muslim countries seeking to enhance the appeal of halal-certified stores. Focusing on improving product quality, halal awareness, and halal certification. businesses can better cater to consumers' needs and preferences. This study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the dynamics of halal consumption in non-Muslim contexts, highlighting the importance of understanding consumer behavior in multicultural environments.

Keywords: Halal Certification, Consumer Behaviour, Multicultural Market, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Halal Consumption

JEL Classification Code: L15, D12, M31

1. Introduction

The global halal market has witnessed substantial growth over the past few decades and has emerged as a significant segment of the retail sector (Salaheldeen et al., 2024). Valued at approximately two trillion dollars (Statista, 2024), the halal market now engages an increasing number of non-Muslim consumers drawn to the health benefits, ethical standards, and quality assurance associated with halal-certified products (Carrasco et al., 2022). While the primary consumer base for halal products comprises Muslim individuals, the increasing interest of non-Muslim consumers in the health and ethical aspects associated with halal products has prompted retailers to cater to this diverse demographic (Nugraha et al., 2021). This study focuses on understanding the key factors influencing customer purchase intentions in halal stores located in non-Muslim countries. By employing the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) framework, this study aims to systematically identify and prioritize these factors, thereby contributing to the body of knowledge on consumer behavior in multicultural settings.

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Understanding customer purchase intention is crucial for retailers, especially in non-Muslim countries, where halal products are relatively new and often misunderstood (Al-Ansi et al., 2022). Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product, influenced by various factors (Wilson et al., 2019; Keni et al., 2021; Novita & Rowena, 2019) such as perceived quality, brand trust, and ethical considerations (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). In the context of halal products, these factors become even more nuanced owing to cultural differences and varying levels of awareness among non-Muslim consumers. Thus, exploring these diverse motivations can provide retailers with valuable insights into effectively marketing halal products to a broader audience.

While much research has focused on halal supply chains in Muslim-majority countries (Kurniawati & Cakravastia, 2023, Ali & Suleiman, 2017), there is limited exploration into the key factors that influence purchase intentions in non-Muslim regions. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying the main factors shaping consumer purchase behavior in halal-certified retail outlets in non-Muslim countries. Using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), a structured decision-making tool, this study breaks down complex choices into simpler elements, enabling better prioritization of influential factors. The AHP framework helps systematically assess the significance of each factor, allowing stakeholders to make more informed decisions. The primary objective of this study is to identify the most significant factors that affect consumer purchase intentions in halal-certified stores located in non-Muslim countries. This study addresses the following question: What are the key factors influencing consumer purchase intentions in halal-certified retail outlets in non-Muslim countries?

By applying the AHP methodology, this study highlights the relative importance of different factors that guide consumer decisions. These findings provide practical insights for retailers and policymakers to enhance their marketing approaches and address the specific challenges of promoting halal-certified products in areas where knowledge of halal concepts may be limited.

2. Literature review

The global halal market has experienced significant growth, evolving from a niche segment primarily catering to Muslim consumers, to a substantial industry that attracts a wider audience (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016). This trend presents both opportunities and challenges for retailers in non-Muslim regions where halal offerings may be unfamiliar and misinterpreted (Al-Ansi et al., 2022). Understanding the consumer dynamics within this expanding market is crucial for developing effective strategies. While Muslims continue to be the primary consumers of halal products, research shows that a growing segment of non-Muslims are motivated by factors such as health consciousness, ethical sourcing, and perceptions of quality (Aslan, 2023). Many non-Muslim consumers view halal products as safer and healthier alternatives (Bashir et al., 2018). Studies

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suggest that halal certification serves as a quality assurance signal, with consumers linking it to higher hygiene standards and better processing practices—an important consideration in non-Muslim markets that is increasingly concerned about food safety (Aslan, 2023; Farhan & Sutikno, 2022).

Ethical considerations further influence non-Muslim consumers' preferences. As awareness of ethical consumerism grows, individuals seek products that align with their values, including the humane treatment of animals and sustainable practices (Rejeb et al., 2021). Research indicates that non-Muslim consumers often perceive halal products as embodying ethical principles, which drives demand not only among Muslims, but also among those prioritizing health and ethics in their purchases (Fajriyati et al., 2020). However, the expansion of the halal market in non-Muslim countries faces challenges, including misunderstandings and a lack of knowledge about halal concepts (Jeaheng et al., 2019). Many non-Muslims are unaware of halal certification and its benefits, which can lead to skepticism regarding the authenticity of halal products (Akhtar et al., 2020).

Retailers can leverage this opportunity by emphasizing the health and ethical aspects of halal products in their marketing strategies (El-Bassiouny, 2015). Community outreach and educational campaigns can enhance consumer awareness and foster trust in halal-certified goods (Olya & Al-Ansi, 2017). Clear communication regarding halal values, such as transparency in sourcing and ethical practices, can demystify halal concepts for non-Muslim consumers, encourage initial purchases, and promote customer loyalty (Ali & Suleiman, 2017). Additionally, the competitive landscape in non-Muslim markets necessitates halal retailers to differentiate their products. As competition intensifies, highlighting unique selling points, such as quality, safety, and ethical sourcing, becomes vital for attracting non-Muslim consumers (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). A nuanced understanding of their specific tastes and motivations is crucial to creating effective marketing strategies that resonate with this diverse demographic.

AHP serves as a robust decision-making tool that helps structure complex problems into a hierarchy of more manageable sub-problems (Karasan et al., 2022). This methodology has gained recognition in consumer behavior research, particularly in the analysis of factors that influence purchasing decisions. AHP enables researchers to prioritize various influencing elements based on their relative significance. By breaking down intricate choices into simpler components, AHP provides a systematic framework for evaluating consumer preferences and motivations (Tsai et al., 2023).

Several studies have successfully employed AHP to explore the purchasing intention context. For example, Kumar et al. (2017) used AHP to prioritize customer retention factors at authorized workshops, ranking them based on expert and customer input. This helps to identify key areas for improvement, guide strategies to enhance retention, and optimize AMC

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offerings. Gupta et al. (2024) employed the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP) to prioritize barriers to metaverse adoption in the service sector. The FAHP ranks six key barrier categories, with Security and Privacy identified as the most critical. By quantifying expert insights, FAHP helps prioritize challenges, guiding firms to address key issues for successful metaverse implementation.

Researchers have successfully employed AHP to explore diverse contexts, including sustainable consumer choices. For example, Huang et al. (2024) applied Fuzzy AHP to identify key factors influencing consumer behavior related to environmental labelling, highlighting product attributes and marketing as critical drivers. Additionally, Fuzzy WASPAS emphasizes eco-friendly packaging and product labelling as key strategies. These techniques help prioritize seven factors, twenty-one sub-factors, and six strategies, offering actionable insights for improving green marketing and promoting sustainable purchases. Additionally, AHP has been successfully employed to explore service quality assessments in several studies; for example, Kavus et al. (2022) employed the Interval-Valued Neutrosophic AHP to evaluate the newly identified dimensions of airline service quality within an extended SERVQUAL framework. By establishing a hierarchical structure of criteria through the Modified Delphi method, AHP allows for a detailed assessment of each dimension's importance, enabling airlines to prioritize the critical factors that enhance service quality and meet customer expectations effectively. Nojavan et al. (2020) presented a hybrid fuzzy approach for evaluating educational unit performance based on service quality by integrating the SERVQUAL, AHP, TOPSIS, and DEA methods. This involves assessing gaps using fuzzy SERVQUAL questionnaires, determining weights via fuzzy AHP, ranking units with fuzzy TOPSIS, and evaluating efficiency through fuzzy DEA. Applied to eight Iranian higher education institutions, this approach enhances the accuracy of service quality evaluations.

Several studies have successfully employed AHP in the halal market context, and Lari et al. (2020) used AHP to prioritize service quality dimensions in UAE theme parks from an Islamic perspective. It identifies four main criteria and 24 sub-criteria, with consumables quality and physical environment quality as the top factors, and halal food availability ranked highest. This study highlights the importance of Islamic attributes in managing the service quality of theme parks. This methodological approach allows researchers to quantify and compare the importance of various factors that affect consumers' decisions. The application of AHP in this research will enable a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior dynamics in multicultural settings. Identifying and prioritizing these factors are crucial for retailers and policymakers seeking to enhance their marketing strategies. AHP facilitates informed decision-making by systematically assessing the significance of each factor (Lahane & Kant, 2021).

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3. Research Methods

This research methodology used a quantitative design method utilizing the AHP framework to determine the factors influencing purchase intention in halal-certified stores in non-Muslim majority countries. In this study, variables from the halal purchase intention model from Aziz and Chok (2012) were used as the parameters of purchase intention in halal stores, as this model was specifically designed to measure halal-related factors influencing customer purchase intention. AHP has the ability to present various scenarios in the Multi Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) process qualitatively and quantitatively by conducting evaluations based on established criteria (Kriswardhana et al., 2025; Ksissou et al., 2024). In addition, AHP can provide a clearer picture of the priority factors in decision-making (Ho & Ma, 2018; Rozga et al., 2021). AHP is also effective for qualitatively understanding expert opinions qualitatively (Zhou et al., 2023). In addition, AHP can also minimize inconsistent assessments in qualitative arguments so that the decisions taken will be more reliable (Salomon & Gomes, 2024; Wiejak et al., 2023).

This model comprises of five factors. First, Halal awareness, namely, understanding and positive perception of halal principles and products, significantly influences consumers' intentions to choose and purchase halal items. Second, Halal certification is an official acknowledgment that food products comply with Islamic dietary laws, ensuring proper preparation and handling and signalling quality and safety to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. Third, product quality, namely the physical attributes of the product, such as taste and appearance, serves as a crucial differentiator in the competitive market, influencing customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Fourth, marketing promotion, namely various strategies, including promotional offers and packaging design, is aimed at enhancing brand awareness and stimulating purchase intentions. Fifth, brands embody consumer perceptions and sentiments, influencing preferences and purchase intentions through quality cues and value alignment, such as halal considerations.

The five factors above were broken down to determine specific attributes that can be used to measure purchase intention in halal-certified stores through a literature review. The identified attributes were then used as questionnaire items to collect the consumer perception data. The data were collected using a questionnaire survey with a 1-5 likert scale (1 = very not important, 5 = very important) from 384 Halal-certified store customers in Hungary, Central Europe. The sample size was calculated using the lemeshaw infinite population formula with a 95% confidence level and a 50% proportion that is normally used for perception analysis (Lwanga & Lemeshow, 1991; Nurfikri et al., 2024). Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, and convergent validity were used to assess the validity and reliability of each factor used in this research. The data collected through the questionnaire were then used to

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determine the importance level of each factor. The factors with the highest mean score are the priority.

4. Finding and Discussion

The data from 384 respondents showed diverse demographics; 53.6% were male, and 46.4% were female. The sample was dominated by the age group of 30–39 years (58.3%). The majority of the respondents (75.8%) had a university degree, as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Survey respondent demographic

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	206	53.6
	Female	178	46.4
Age	22-29	117	30.5
	30-39	224	58.3
	40-49	34	8.9
	>50	9	2.3
Education	University Degree	291	75.8
	Highschool or less	93	24.2

Statistical analyses were used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the survey items, utilizing Cronbach's alpha scores between 0.74 and 0.81. These scores surpassed the acceptable threshold (Malkewitz et al., 2022). Convergent validity was demonstrated through factor loadings, all of which exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.50. Additionally, composite reliability (CR) values range from 0.72 to 0.84, while the average variance extracted (AVE) values fall between 0.55 and 0.61. Discriminant validity was also supported, as the square root of each construct's AVE was higher than its correlations with other constructs, as outlined by Hair et al. (2019).

As outlined in the methodology, this study adopts the model of Aziz and Chok (2012) to examine the factors influencing purchase intentions in halal-certified stores. Five key factors were identified through literature review, and their respective items were coded and referenced, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Halal-certified store purchase intention factors

Factors	Item	Item code	Reference
Halal awareness	Understanding of halal principles with emphasis on significance.	HA1	Demirci et al. (2016)
	Knowledge of health benefits associated with halal consumption.	HA2	Herdiana et al. (2023)
	Familiarity with the halal certification process.	HA3	Marzuki et al. (2014)
	Recognition of the variety of halal products available in the market.	HA4	Ambali & Bakar (2014)

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Halal certification	Willingness to choose products based on halal certification status.	HC1	(Tedjakusuma et al. (2023)
	Trust in the authority that issues halal certifications.	HC2	Aslan (2023)
	Belief that halal certification ensures product safety.	HC3	Herdiana et al. (2023)
	Importance of certification in influencing food choices.	HC4	Ghazali et al. (2021)
Product quality	Satisfaction derived from the taste of halal products.	PQ1	Rahman et al. (2016)
	Consistency observed in the quality of halal-certified items.	PQ2	Rahim et al. (2016)
	Comparison of the quality of halal products with non-halal alternatives.	PQ3	Farouk et al. (2014)
	Importance of product origin in assessing quality attributes.	PQ4	Khatun et al. (2021)
Marketing promotion	Impact of social media campaigns on awareness of halal products.	MP1	Sandikci et al. (2024)
	Effectiveness of packaging design in communicating halal attributes.	MP2	Yeo et al. (2016)
	Relevance of marketing messages to consumer values.	MP3	El-Bassiouny (2015)
	Role of advertising in conveying benefits of halal options.	MP4	Ghazali et al. (2021)
Brand	Recognition of specific halal brands within the market.	B1	Lubis et al. (2016)
	Trust in brand claims regarding halal certification validity.	B2	Aslan (2023)
	Influence of brand reputation on purchasing decisions.	B3	Agmeka et al. (2019)
	Association of brands with high-quality standards.	B4	Lubis et al. (2016)

This study employs a factor importance score to evaluate the significance of each factor in influencing purchase intention in halal-certified stores. The top three factors with the highest scores were considered the most influential. The results showed that product quality (score = 4.41), halal awareness (score = 4.31), and halal certification (score = 4.27) were the top three factors influencing purchase intentions. This suggests that consumers, particularly in non-Muslim countries, place considerable importance on the intrinsic qualities of halal products, their awareness of halal principles, and the credibility of halal certification when making purchase decisions. The importance scores of the factors and items are listed in table 3.

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Table 3: Importance score and rank of the factors

Factors	Item code	Item importance score	Factor importance score	Rank
Halal awareness	HA1	4.42	4.31	2
	HA2	4.34		
	HA3	4.21		
	HA4	4.26		
Halal certification	HC1	4.14	4.27	3
	HC2	4.32		
	HC3	4.36		
	HC4	4.28		
Product quality	PQ1	4.38	4.41	1
	PQ2	4.47		
	PQ3	4.43		
	PQ4	4.37		
Marketing promotion	MP1	3.88	4.04	5
	MP2	3.91		
	MP3	4.25		
	MP4	4.11		
Brand	B1	4.04	4.12	4
	B2	4.26		
	B3	3.81		
	B4	4.35		

The highest factor scores of 4.41, product quality emerged as the leading determinant of purchase intention. Consumers associate halal-certified products with superior sensory and functional attributes such as taste, consistency, and authenticity. This finding reflects the importance of maintaining high production standards to build trust and foster loyalty. Aligning with the findings of Rejeb et al. (2021), this study confirmed the significant role of perceived quality in driving halal-related consumer trust.

The second most critical factor (score = 4.31) was consumers' halal awareness. This factor underscores the importance of educating consumers on halal principles, benefits, and processes. Non-Muslim consumers often require clarity to bridge gaps in understanding and overcome potential misconceptions. These findings align with those of Aslan (2023), who established a direct link between consumer knowledge and purchase intention. This suggests that targeted marketing and educational initiatives can broaden the appeal of halal-certified products.

Halal certification ranked third, with a score of 4.27, indicating its role as a critical trust signal for consumers. This assures consumers of product safety and adherence to halal standards. This finding aligns with that of Halim et al. (2024), who found that halal certification instills confidence among consumers regarding product safety and compliance with dietary laws. In a multicultural environment where consumers may not share the same religious or cultural

background, establishing trust through credible certification is essential for influencing purchase decisions. The emphasis on certification also suggests that regulatory bodies should ensure transparency and consistency in the halal certification processes to foster consumer confidence.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in multicultural settings, particularly regarding halal products. It extends the knowledge base by demonstrating how factors typically emphasized in Muslim-majority contexts are also relevant in non-Muslim countries, albeit with varying degrees of influence. This study highlights the dynamic nature of halal consumption, suggesting that retailers must adapt their strategies to cater to diverse audiences, taking into account both cultural differences and consumer motivations. Moreover, the methodological approach of utilizing AHP offers a structured framework for prioritizing factors influencing purchase intentions, contributing to the body of knowledge on consumer decision making. The systematic assessment of these factors can aid stakeholders in making informed marketing decisions, particularly in non-Muslim contexts where halal products are still gaining traction. The AHP framework used in this study is presented in Figure 1.
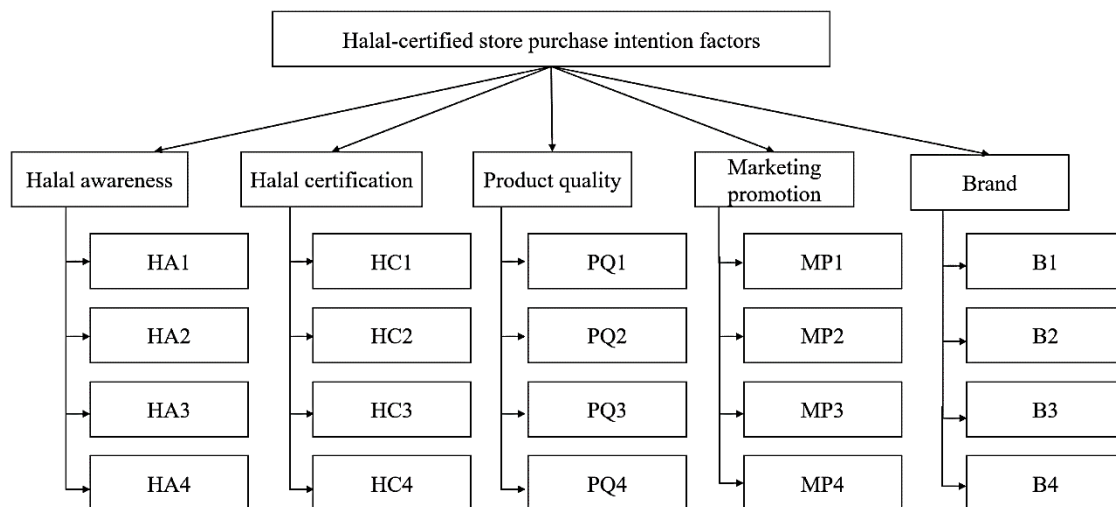

Figure 1: AHP framework of halal-certified store purchase intention

5. Conclusions

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the key factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions in halal-certified stores, particularly in non-Muslim countries. The findings emphasize the critical roles of product quality, halal awareness, and halal certification in shaping consumer behavior. These elements are essential for businesses that aim to enhance the appeal of their halal offerings and effectively reach a broader customer base.

Among the identified factors, product quality is the most influential. This indicates that consumers prioritize attributes, such as taste, appearance, and overall satisfaction, when making purchase decisions. This highlights the importance of retailers maintaining high standards for the quality of their halal products. Ensuring superior product quality not only attracts Muslim consumers, but also appeals to non-Muslim buyers, fostering long-term trust and loyalty across diverse customer segments.

Halal awareness emerges as the second most important factor, pointing to the significant impact of consumer knowledge and perception of halal principles on their purchasing decisions. Retailers are encouraged to invest in educational marketing strategies to explain the benefits and significance of halal products. By increasing awareness, businesses can challenge existing misconceptions and broaden the appeal of halal offerings, making them attractive to a wider multicultural audience.

Halal certification ranks third in the hierarchy of influencing factors and underscores its importance in building consumer confidence. The trustworthiness of halal certification bodies plays a vital role in consumer assurance of product safety and quality. Retailers must ensure the credibility and transparency of their certification processes to maintain consumer trust and drive purchase intention. Genuine and trustworthy certification not only reassures Muslim consumers but also boosts confidence among non-Muslim buyers seeking reliable and ethically produced products.

The findings of this study offer significant implications for retailers and marketers operating in non-Muslim markets. By focusing on improving product quality, raising awareness of halal principles, and ensuring the credibility of halal certification, businesses can meet the needs of both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers more effectively. These factors are not only crucial for satisfying current consumer expectations but also contribute to the growth and mainstream acceptance of halal products in diverse multicultural markets. Further research could expand these findings by exploring the influence of cultural factors, socioeconomic status, and regional differences on halal product purchase intentions. Additionally, studies examining the long-term impact of halal awareness campaigns and the evolving role of halal certification in global markets could provide deeper insight into how these factors interact over time.

This study enhances the understanding of consumer behavior in the context of halal-certified stores in non-Muslim countries. By identifying the key factors influencing purchase intentions, this study provides a clear view of how cultural and contextual elements shape consumer decisions. The application of AHP offers a structured method for prioritizing these factors, contributing to the theoretical frameworks surrounding halal consumption and marketing strategies. The findings suggest that cultural awareness and perceptions of quality are crucial for understanding consumer motivation in multicultural settings.

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The insights from this study can guide retailers in non-Muslim countries on how to improve their halal-certified product offerings. Focusing on product quality is essential because consumers prioritize taste and satisfaction when choosing halal items. Retailers should also invest in marketing efforts to enhance consumers' awareness of halal principles and benefits. Educational campaigns can clarify the significance of halal certification and help address misconceptions. By ensuring transparency in their certification processes, retailers can build trust in consumers and encourage higher purchase intentions.

The findings highlight the need for policymakers to support halal market growth in non-Muslim countries. Establishing clear guidelines for halal certification can enhance credibility and foster consumer trust. Policymakers should also promote initiatives to educate consumers about halal products and their benefits. Collaborating with halal certification organizations can facilitate better communication and understanding among consumers, ultimately leading to increased acceptance of and demand for halal-certified offerings.

Future studies should investigate additional factors that may influence purchase intentions in halal-certified stores, such as demographic differences and regional and cultural influences. Research could also focus on the impact of marketing strategies, particularly digital marketing, on consumers' perceptions of halal products. Longitudinal studies may provide insights into how consumer attitudes evolve as the awareness of halal principles increases. Additionally, exploring the role of social media and word of mouth in shaping consumer opinions about halal certification can offer valuable information for retailers and marketers.

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