

# A Study of Influential Factors on Consumers' Purchase of Milk Tea

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**Abstract**—Milk tea has become an essential drink in people's daily lives. With the fire of milk tea, more and more milk tea industries have developed different marketing strategies to build milk tea to gain more profits. Everyone wants to find out the secret behind the milk tea fire. Based on this research topic, the paper analyses in depth the factors influencing consumers to purchase milk tea, and based on the literature, hypotheses are formulated. This study first read relevant papers and conducted interviews to determine why milk tea became popular. In addition, I distributed questionnaires to collect data. SPSS was used to analyze the data and correlation analysis and factor analysis were used to find out the relationship between the factors. It was found that the more people purchased various kinds of milk tea, the more people drank milk tea; the more people used takeaway services, the more frequently they purchased milk tea; the more they liked promotional activities to increase the number of times they buy milk tea, the more people like milk tea; the more they like to drink milk tea, the less they think it will influence their health.

**Keywords**—milk tea, consumer, marketing strategy, promotion

## I. INTRODUCTION

Milk tea refers to several forms of beverages found in many cultures, consisting of some combination of tea and milk (De Jesus, 2020). Today, milk tea has become one of the most popular drinks in the overall beverage market. According to research, the market for ready-made tea drinks will reach \$142.3 billion by 2022. Nowadays, with the development of the economy and the rise of chasing trends, a large number of milk tea shops have appeared in China's beverage market. Many merchants are targeting the sale of milk tea and making profits from the milk tea market. To gain more profits, businessmen must find out why people like milk tea and then develop a series of strategies to attract more people's attention according to their responses. This paper will find out the factors that affect people's liking of milk tea and the frequency of milk tea purchases. Once the factors that influence the purchase of milk tea have been identified, it will be able to develop strategies for businesses rationally and effectively to help them increase their revenue.

This paper will use a questionnaire to determine consumers' preference for buying milk tea and the relationship between the factors, and will then use SPSS to find out the relationship between the factors and which factors are related to the purchase of milk tea. In this paper, questionnaires will be given to consumers who have consumed milk tea and are not averse to milk tea. The data will be collected and statistically analyzed using SPSS software, and finally, based on the results of the analysis, we will propose how the milk tea industry should improve consumers' enjoyment of milk tea. Through previous reading

and research, this paper had the hypothesis that: the more likely they are to buy new products, the more people like milk tea; the more they like takeaway delivery of milk tea, the more people like drinking milk tea; the more they like promotional activities to increase the number of times they buy milk tea, the more people like milk tea; the more they like to drink milk tea, the less they think it will influence their health.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Introduction about Milk Tea

Milk tea first appeared in Taiwan, China, it does not contain milk or tea, but is made from milk tea powder (Ferruzzi & Green, 2006). It tops the list of junk food. However, with the development of China's economy and the increase in consumers' disposable income, meanwhile, the milk tea industry started to use pasteurized milk and tea as ingredients instead of milk tea powder. The milk tea market has returned to consumers with green, high quality, fashionable, and healthy as the keywords for the retail market (Nelson, 1974), and healthy and youthful as the upgraded labels. With the development of the milk tea strategy, more and more merchants tend to use different kinds of famous tea as the base, for example, black tea has many varieties such as Ceylon black tea and Wuyishan black tea; oolong tea can be classified into Dahongpao and Freezing Top Oolong. These special categorizations of milk tea make the variety of milk tea richer and more relevant to consumers. In addition, with the development of milk tea, the variety of milk tea has increased rapidly. Milk tea shops provide consumers with different choices so that they can customize milk tea according to their tastes (Liu *et al.*, 2020). Personalization has fully satisfied consumers' needs and brought about more demand. In addition, the ingredients of milk tea are no longer limited to milk and tea. More and more ice cream, pudding, milk cover, and other ingredients are added to the milk tea market. Black tea macchiato is a combination of black tea and cream, which has captured the taste of consumers. With the different combinations of milk tea, many merchants have introduced combination hidden menus for more consumers trying to find out the best flavor of milk tea, which also brings them many promotional possibilities.

### B. Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is a process in which an enterprise takes customers' needs as its starting point, obtains information on customers' demand and purchasing power based on experience, and the expectations of the business community, organizes various business activities in a planned manner, and provides customers with satisfactory

goods and services to achieve the enterprise's goals through coordinated product strategy, pricing strategy, channel strategy, and promotional strategy (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). Common marketing strategies include product strategy, pricing strategy, sales channel strategy, and promotion strategy (Narasimhan, 1988).

### 1) Promotion

Sales promotion refers to the promotional activities of enterprises that use various short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of the enterprise's products or services (Cummins & Mullin, 2010), which is characterized by the desire to stimulate consumers to buy large quantities of goods in a short period, to achieve the purpose of prompting a rapid increase in sales, and so the preparation for the "sales promotion".

Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson & McKenzie (2008) pointed out that there are many ways to promote a product, the most common is to reduce the price of the product and sell it to the consumer at a lower price than the normal price. For example: half price of the second cup, coupon reduction, limited 9.9, by reducing the price of milk tea to attract consumers to buy, to create the atmosphere of buying is very effective promotional methods.

Another common means of discount offers, generally in the new shop opening the whole field of milk tea buy one get one free (Ferrell *et al.*, 2021), milk tea shop anniversary celebration of the whole field 20 off, through the beginning to capture the attention of consumers can be for the subsequent development of a good foundation.

According to the American writer Jerome McKenzie's "Basic Marketing", the various factors in marketing are reduced to a combination of four aspects, Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, which is the famous 4Ps marketing strategy, promotion is one of the important links means that the important information to inform the target customers, to stimulate their desire to consume and persuade them to buy. Promotion, as one of the important links, means to inform the target customers of important information, stimulate their desire to consume, and persuade them to buy (Varadarajan & Jayachandran 1999). The use of the 4Ps marketing strategy in milk tea shops can be reflected in the release of innovative product research, the reasonable price of milk tea, the online and offline publicity and purchasing methods, the important information about the milk tea activities to the target customers and stimulate consumers to buy through the price reduction and discounts and other ways.

### 2) Advertising

Advertising is defined as a means of communicating information openly and widely to the public for a specific need, through a certain form of media, and at a certain cost (Bagwell, 2007). The advertising campaign for milk tea explains well the essential characteristics of advertising: communicative, persuasive, and valuable (Cespedes & Piercy, 1996).

Milk tea companies use advertising to promote their businesses, spreading the message of milk tea to consumers and subsequently persuading them to make consumer purchases through the messages sent out through advertising. Although companies use advertisements, different milk tea companies choose different advertisements that vary quite a

bit. Businesses will vary in their creativity as much as they will choose different advertising spokespersons to enhance their brand image and awareness (Tuten, 2011). This also has a lot to do with the market positioning and brand positioning of the milk tea companies. For example, the target group of Lipton Milk Tea is working people and middle-aged families, so they invited ordinary people such as white-collar workers and children to be their spokespersons, and through the image of children and workers to bring the milk tea closer to life, and bring the distance with consumers closer. The target consumers of Unimix are high school students, college students, and other young people, so they hired Jay Chou, a youth idol, as their image representative, which attracted consumers and some of Jay Chou's fans.

Milk tea advertising belongs to the category of retail advertising, which is divided into commodity advertising and reputation advertising (Bettman, 1986). Commodity advertisements provide consumers with the characteristics of the product such as new milk tea products, raw materials used to make milk tea, and the price of milk tea. Or by informing consumers of the benefits of buying milk tea, such as buy one get one free, so that consumers have the feeling of "value for money", thus stimulating consumers to come and spend money in a short period.

Reputation advertising is used for the long-term development of the enterprise, the purpose is to let consumers know the uniqueness of the enterprise and can stand out among peers, reflecting the advantages and status (Gorsuch, 2014).

Milk tea companies, such as the recent Lemony Snacks, promise that all milk tea is made from fresh milk and that a cup of milk tea has the calories of an avocado, thus contrasting with other milk tea shops that use phyloxxera, winning consumer recognition and paving the way for future marketing.

### 3) Social media online marketing

According to Wikipedia, social media marketing is a marketing strategy in which a company, to achieve marketing objectives, creates specific messages or content on social networking services to attract consumers' attention, generate discussion among online netizens, and encourage netizens to spread and disseminate such marketing content through their social networks, thus enhancing the key and satisfaction with customers.

As a populous country, China also has a large number of users active on social media, and common social platforms include WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Zhihu, Taobao, and a circle of friends.

Common social media marketing is divided into the following steps: First of all, analyze the target customer's special name, and through the contact can get the consumer's explicit and invisible characteristics. After analyzing the profile of the target customer, the brand's target customer characteristics and the user profile of different platforms will correspond to the user profile to choose the most suitable platform (Chanthinok *et al.*, 2015). Next, goals and objectives are set and targets are defined. Companies need to understand the objectives and targets of each platform and use the SMART rule to define goals and targets. This is followed by defining the content strategy, identifying the challenges faced by audiences and prospects, and

understanding how to address them to form the basis for the selection of topics for the content strategy (Chanthinok *et al.*, 2015). Companies also need to understand the algorithms on social media, figure out the mechanism of distributing social media content, and choose the content formats preferred by social platforms as well as the timing conducive to better reaching users. Defining a paid social media strategy is also a more important task, with larger goals set, companies also need to consider paid social media advertising to increase app downloads, generate leads, and increase awareness through different types of adverts on social media to directly generate sales. It is best that businesses monitor the measurement data changes tracking effective methods and continuously optimize the program to get better marketing results.

### C. Consumer Psychology and Consumer Behavior

Consumer psychology refers to the psychological activities of consumers and the behavioral actions driven by them, including consumer observation of commodities, collection of commodity information, selection of commodity brands, decision-making to buy, use of commodities to form the formation of psychological feelings and psychological experience and provide information feedback to the production and management units (Foxall, 2004). Consumption behavior is the consumer in the heart of the activities under the domination of a variety of reactions, movements, activities, and actions to achieve the intended consumption goals.

The study of the psychological process of consumption of milk tea can be started from the process of purchase decision. East, Singh, Wright & Vanhuele (2021) said that the common purchase decision process includes cognitive needs satisfaction, gathering information, evaluating choices, purchasing decisions, and post-purchase evaluation of consumption effects.

#### 1) Herd consumption (Follow the crowd)

Subordinate purchasing behavior refers to purchases made under the influence of others or factors close to them. Subordinate consumption generally occurs because of the following two situations:

(1) Consumers do not need and do not understand the products purchased on their own, and there is no purchase plan, their purchasing behavior is due to other people's purchasing behavior; (2) consumers have some kind of need for a certain kind of goods and also have the intention to buy, but in the brand choice, they are not through the choice of the more appropriate brand after analysis but choose their The brand that is frequently used by the team or members to which they belong (Mak, 2021).

The phenomenon of crowd-sourcing is a fast and effective means of marketing a product. Crowd-sourcing usually starts with a group of people using and promoting a product that influences a group of other people. Milk tea companies can promote mass consumption by hiring celebrities as spokespersons or using advertisements to make consumers believe that the company's products are in vogue.

#### 2) Irrational consumption

Irrational consumption refers to the irrational consumption decisions made by consumers under the influence of various factors, which is generally manifested in the fact that

consumers do not pursue the maximization of the effect to consume, or consume without taking into account the constraints of income, or consume without disturbing the law of diminishing marginal effect, or do not have enough knowledge of the judgment of consumption, and so on.

Research has found that customer needs are the essential motivation for irrational consumption behavior. A large number of studies on irrational consumer behavior have revealed the relationship between many external stimuli and irrational factors. The special customer needs affecting irrational consumption behavior include social needs, pressure relief needs, and the need for honesty, which have a direct effect on irrational consumption behavior (Feigenbaum & Caliendo, 2010).

Social need, pressure release need, and cheap-seeking need are the important driving forces for the generation of irrational consumption behavior (Gorsuch, 2014). The social need has a significant positive effect on irrational consumption behavior. Customers with strong social needs will spend irrationally to maintain and expand social relationships. When shopping in a group, they will follow the advice of their friends and buy products irrationally. As a result, service enterprises can increase social links and social experience activities to stimulate target customers to produce irrational purchasing behavior and enhance the effect of promotional activities (Choi & Lee 2019). The need to release pressure has an important impact on irrational consumption behavior. Customers with pressure release needs take irrational consumption as the main way to release pressure, and they achieve the purpose of releasing pressure through the instantaneous pleasure brought by impulsive or blind purchases (Feigenbaum & Caliendo, 2010).

## III. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

### A. Questionnaire Design

To better design the questionnaire and better understand what people care about and what the company's goals are, some research have been done before designing the questionnaire. This paper first interviewed consumers of well-known milk tea brands in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. When the interviewer asked consumers what would affect their consumption of milk tea, it was understood that consumers pay more attention to the taste of milk tea, the diversity of milk tea, the environment of milk tea stores, the popularity of milk tea, and the experience of tasting milk tea. Based on their answers, the interviewer wrote the above factors into the questionnaire. In addition, the interviewer also interviewed some managers working in well-known milk tea stores. They said the main factors affecting people's consumption of milk tea were the health benefits of drinking milk tea, the source of milk tea ingredients, the innovation of milk tea stores, and the services provided by merchants. As a result, they set "meeting consumer needs, strengthening milk tea quality assurance, quality, and convenient service, innovative products, and perfect dining experience" as their ultimate business goals. To further understand the elements that determine milk tea consumption, this paper also found the research of scholars who had previously studied the reasons for the popularity of milk tea. It was found that the flavor of the milk tea, the environment of the milk tea store,

the design of the milk tea packaging, and the story behind the milk tea are the keys to the success of a milk tea brand.

The questionnaire for this study was divided into two parts with 28 questions, including single-choice, multiple-choice, open-ended, scale, rating, and attention test questions. Single-choice questions are used to investigate consumers' tastes; multiple-choice questions may represent consumers' way of getting information and consumers' perspectives of considering businesses; open-ended questions are used to look for other aspects that we may not have concluded in the study and some suggestions from consumers about the milk tea industry; scale questions are based on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating not at all important or disagreeing, and 5 indicating extremely important or completely agree. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part, included the taste, marketing, innovation, service, environment, and convenience of milk tea; the second part was a personalized survey of consumers. To make sure that the subjects complete the questionnaire carefully and attentively, the investigator uses an attention check question, which is simple but can be used to find out whether the subjects are serious about the questions or not. Samples that do not pass the attention check will not be included in the study. To ensure that the subjects were eligible for the study, had drunk milk tea, and did not hate milk tea, the subjects were first asked to answer semi-open-ended questions to verify experiences related to purchasing milk tea and attitudes of not hating milk tea, such as, "Have you ever purchased milk tea?" and "How much do you like milk tea?" etc., and questionnaires without relevant experiences were excluded.

### B. Questionnaire Distribution and Sample Selection

Once the questionnaire was completed, the investigator posted it on social media recruited subjects, and eventually received 437 samples. To make sure that the subjects answered the questions carefully and that the sample fit the research topic, the investigator did the following three steps to screen the sample. Firstly, consider whether or not they passed the attention check. If they did not pass the attention check, the sample and their data would be discarded. The research subjects the investigator was looking for were people who had purchased milk tea and were not averse to milk tea. Therefore, the investigator set up skip logic based on whether the research subjects had purchased milk tea and how much they liked it, and if the research subjects had not purchased milk tea or had an aversion to milk tea, then their responses would be terminated. Through the above three steps of screening, 300 valid samples were finally got to continue the study.

### C. Data Analysis

#### 1) Descriptive statistical analysis

The descriptive statistical characteristics of the samples

show that: 32.7% are male and 67.3% are female, with the ratio of male to female close to 1:2; the age of consumers who are not averse to milk tea is mainly between 10–20 years old, accounting for 58.7%, between 30–40 years old accounting for 15.7%, and between 20–30 years old as well as 40 years old and above accounting for 12.7% each; in terms of occupations, the majority of the consumers who have an attitude towards milk tea and not averse to it are students, followed by the majority of the consumers who are students, and the majority of the consumers who are not averse to it are students. Most of the consumers are students, followed by office workers, accounting for 61.3% and 28.3% respectively. In terms of household income, 43.3% of the respondents have an annual household income of more than 300,000 yuan, 23.3% have an annual household income of 100,000–200,000 yuan, and 22% have an annual household income of 200,000–300,000 yuan, which is an inverted triangular distribution, with young people predominating among the respondents.

Table 1. Results of descriptive statistical analysis

Demographic Variable	Level	Percentage
Gender	Male	32.7
	Female	67.3
Age groups	Under 10	0.3
	Under 10–20	58.7
	Under 20–30	12.7
	Under 30–40	15.7
	Over 40	12.7
Careers	Students	61.3
	Office worker	28.3
	White collar worker	2.7
	Common labors	1.3
	Other occupations	6.3
Annual household income	Less than 100,000	11.3
	Less than 100,000–200,000	23.3
	Less than 200,000–300,000	22.0
	More than 300,000	43.3

#### 2) Correlation analysis

To explain the research question of this paper: what are the factors affecting consumers' purchase of milk tea, we try to find out the factors affecting consumers' liking of milk tea and the frequency of purchase. Since all factors are always interrelated and constrained (Senthilnathan, 2019), we can explore the factors associated with consumers' liking of milk tea and consumers' frequency of purchasing milk tea through correlation analysis. SPSS was used to put into the correlation analysis the consumers' liking for milk tea (Ezekiel, 1930), the frequency of consumers' milk tea purchases, and the possible 28 continuous variables derived from the previous analyses. We filtered out the following factors that have a very significant correlation with the dependent variables of how much they like milk tea and how often they buy milk tea, which are available in the Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation analysis

	Liking	Frequency	Milk tea variety	Seasonal specials	Promotions	Takeaway delivery	Health
Liking	1	0.503** (0.000)	0.285** (0.000)	0.171** (0.003)	0.196** (0.001)	0.216** (0.000)	–0.184** (0.001)
Frequency	0.503** (0.000)	1	0.240** (0.000)	0.040 (0.495)	0.131* (0.023)	0.220** (0.000)	–0.208** (0.000)

The following conclusions can be drawn from all the data generated in the correlation analysis table:

H1: The more people like milk tea the more frequently they buy milk tea.

H2: The more they think product variety is important in milk tea shops, the more people like to drink milk tea.

H3: The more I believe that promotional activities in milk tea shops will increase the frequency of my purchase of milk tea, the more I like to drink milk tea.

H4: The more I buy milk tea through apps for takeaway and delivery, the more I like milk tea.

H5: The more I think milk tea has little effect on my health, the more I like drinking milk tea.

H6: The more they think variety of milk tea is important, the more frequently they like purchasing milk tea.

H7: The more likely they are to buy milk tea through apps for takeaway delivery. The more often people are likely to consume milk tea.

H8: The less likely they are to think that milk tea has a significant impact on their health, the more frequent purchasers of milk tea.

Using the findings from the correlation coefficient table, we further analyzed the factors affecting the degree of consumers' enjoyment of milk tea and the frequency of purchase, and came to the following conclusions:

The diversity of milk tea types has a positive and significant correlation with the degree of love for milk tea and the frequency of purchasing milk tea, indicating that this is a factor that consumers are more concerned about, and through this conclusion, we can analyze that milk tea shops can attract more consumers to consume by launching some new milk tea products at the right time.

The more people like to drink milk tea and buy milk tea

more frequently, the more people use the app to order takeaway delivery to buy milk tea. This shows that takeaway ordering is considered more convenient and a service that consumers like. Milk tea companies can strengthen the system of takeaway service and ensure the quality of takeaway service to attract more consumers.

The more consumers like to drink milk tea, the more they think that the promotional activities of the milk tea shop will increase their purchase of milk tea, which shows that the milk tea shop can appropriately use promotional means to increase the degree of consumers' love for milk tea.

### 3) Factor analysis

As this study explores more and more heterogeneous factors affecting milk tea liking, this study used factor analysis to test the original variables to detect the magnitude of the correlation between variables (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Speaking of the strong correlation between the variables as a strong factor extraction. In this paper, two methods, KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test, are used to test the correlation coefficients between variables. Bartlett sphericity tests the correlation between the variables in the correlation array, that is, to test whether the variables are independent, if the significant value is less than 0.05, which indicates that there is a significant correlation between the two variables. The KMO test is used to compare the correlation coefficient and bias coefficient of the variables, with the usual value of the value of between 0–1. The closer the value of the KMO is to 1 indicates that the more suitable to do factor analysis, vice versa. As can be seen from the factor analysis in the figure below, the significant value of Bartlett's test of sphericity is close to 0.000, which is much less than 0.05, and the value of the KMO test is 0.735, both of which indicate that the data can be analyzed for factor analysis in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor analysis

	<b>Factors</b>								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Popularity	0.828								
Location	0.778								
Co-branding	0.687								
Environment	0.66								
Service	0.528								
New products		0.899							
Seasonal products		0.852							
Promotional activities		0.602							
Variety		0.427							
Discounts			0.715						
Buy one get one free			0.689						
Takeaway delivery fee			0.653						
Temperature				0.715					
Sweetness				0.689					
Price				0.528					
WeChat recommendation					0.862				
Poster recommendation					0.844				
Good taste but the high price						0.745			
Price						0.66			
Pack it up							0.758		
Kind of milk tea cups								0.7	
Temperature								0.571	
Physical shop									0.628

Through the study, this paper proposes nine factors that influence consumers' preference for milk tea and names each factor according to the significance it represents: Factor 1 is named as the degree of popularity of the milk tea company, Factor 2 is named as the innovative activities of the milk tea shop, Factor 3 is named as the preferential activities of the milk tea shop, Factor 4 is named as the flavor choices of the milk tea, Factor 5 is named as the promotional means of the milk tea company, Factor 6 was named as the price of milk tea, Factor 7 was named as the drinking habit of milk tea, Factor 8 was named as the consumer's consumption habit of milk tea, and Factor 9 was named as the purchase method of milk tea. In other words, the influencing factors that affect the consumers' preference for milk tea are the popularity of milk tea shops, innovative activities, special offers, flavor choices, promotional means, the price of milk tea, consumers' consumption habits, and the way of purchasing milk tea.

#### D. Result Discussion

After the practice of questionnaire tuning method and data analysis, on the contrary, our hypothesis that the more consumers like to buy new products the more they like milk tea was validated by correlation analysis. This may be related to the freshness, innovative flavors, or unique experience brought by new products. The milk tea market is highly competitive, and the constant introduction of new products can attract consumers' attention and satisfy their pursuit of freshness and change. Consumers are looking for personalized embodiment, the influence of social media, and trust in the brand drives them to consume. Another hypothesis is that the more people like takeaway service milk tea the more they like milk tea. This hypothesis suggests that takeaway service is a favorite way and means for consumers to purchase milk tea and companies can attract more consumers by enhancing the quality of takeaway service. The last hypothesis, the more consumers like promotional activities the more they like to buy milk tea. Promotional activities, to a certain extent, give consumers the psychology of buy or lose which stimulates them to consume. Finally, consumers who purchase milk tea more frequently will believe that drinking milk tea has little effect on their health condition. This is a subconscious comfort that increases consumer purchases of milk tea.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The data collected from my questionnaire shows that 32.7% of the respondents are male and 67.3% are female. From the data, it can be seen that females are more invested in milk tea consumption. The age group of 10–20 years old accounted for 58.7% of the entire respondents. Young people are more inclined to buy new products and follow new trends. As for their occupations, students are the most common occupation, as the respondents are generally aged 10–20. As for their annual household income. The most common answer is more than 300,000, which means that most of the families participating in the survey can afford to consume milk tea.

After the questionnaire and SPSS analysis, I found a series of interesting results. The types of milk tea, seasonal specialty products, promotional activities of milk tea companies, and takeaway services all contribute to people

being more willing to drink milk tea. The more people enjoy drinking milk tea, the less they think milk tea will affect their health condition. As for the factors affecting how often people buy milk tea, the variety of tea plays a crucial role. People who buy milk tea frequently will have trust in the brand and are willing to try new products and drink them. In addition, the more people prefer takeaway services, the more frequently they buy milk tea. From this, we can see that takeaway service will become a convenient way for people to buy milk tea and companies can improve their profits by improving the takeaway service system.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author claims that no conflict of interest exists.

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