

Analyzing and Reviewing Impact of Social Media Platform on Youth

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Abstract— The study seeks to understand how the various social media platforms affect the youth with regard to psychological, social and academic domains. The use of social media also has features like improved communication, Self-assertion and information. But it also has challenges like misuse or ‘cyber bullying’ which adversely affects emotions, ‘addiction,’ accelerated ‘short attentions spans’ and can take a toll on one’s health. In a survey of published articles and other research, this paper examines how over-usage or improper usage may act as a causal factor and affect behavior, social relations, and performance. The results reveal that targeted digital competencies as well as parental mediation and user control can significantly shape web behaviors. Some suggestions are made for authorities, schools, and families with regard to the protection of the benefits and minimization of the disadvantages of social media usage among young people.

Keywords- Social Media, Cyberbullying, Mental Health, Youth, Psychological impact

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rise of social media, one of the most revolutionary advancements of the 21st century. The platforms people around the world engage with everyday, from Facebook to Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, have changed how we exchange information in a matter of decades[1]. Social media is an ever addictive routine for the new generation. Over ninety-five percent of teenagers in first world countries possess smartphones, with an even higher number using a social media platform on a daily basis[2]. The prominence of such use has sparked the debate about what role social media can have on young people. There is no denying these platforms changed the face of communication, but with an emerging body of research examining their effects questions are being raised about youth and the consequences of them specifically as it relates to mental health, social development, education and behavior[3].

Imagine social media as an imaginary playground for adolescents where they can express part of their identities, socialize, give opinions and engage with interests. These provide ample team building, site production (creative output and self-expression) and digital literacy and media arts opportunities. For example, services such as YouTube and TikTok give my generation the tools to make and distribute original content while Instagram and Snapchat provide socializing space that allows MSyners to connect over sharing experiences[4]. Thus, social media can also function as a space for youth to discover communities that reflect positive aspects of their identity, expand their

networks or even participate in activism or political dialogue[5]. Information availability on social media also allows youth to learn about other cultures, gain new perspective and stay updated with current affairs contributing much to their intellectuals and social development[6].

Social media is also one of the main factors that influence youth in education and its cognitive development. Social media is the ultimate online platform, and its use in education has developed many channels for learning and communication. Online education platforms, collaboration tools, and the availability of vast resources can provide students with a better learning experience or environment. But, of course the negative impact of excessive social media use on academic performance cannot be neglected. These platforms can be very addictive and usually become a huge distraction that hinders focus on studies and schoolwork. A plethora of ongoing notifications and entertainment at their fingertips can distract our kids from longer attention demanding work, diminishing academic achievement.

In addition, the increase in misinformation and echo chambers or spreading harmful ideologies on social media is a topic of concern regarding the power of social media on critical thinking and decision- making[7]. Content is promoted on the basis of users liking it, which means that algorithms can create a filter bubble and preach to the choir; young people will be exposed only to information they agree with — losing out on hearing or even thinking about other perspectives. That can perpetuate cognitive biases and reduce their capacity to think critically about complicated problems. The increase in false news and deceptive stuff from social platforms also raises alarm bells, especially where it concerns young people access, digest or interact with content.

Research on the psychological and behavioral impacts of social media on children and adolescents has been conducted extensively, but with mixed results. Social media can provide social support to young people, more so than offline communities and organisations can (at least when we think of the ability do build connections with others across geographic boundaries). At the same time, it can increase solitude, particularly when communication via these platforms does not have the richness and closeness of human-to-human contact. Additionally, studies show that the constant engagement with social media can become addictive due to the immediate satisfaction provided by likes, comments and shares which keeps people coming back.

This research paper presents critical analysis and review of the impact of social media on youth—which is manifestation by addressing positive as well as negative outcomes through social media use. It will delve into the psychological, social, educational, and behavioral dimensions of these platforms to discern how social media is impacting youth across a variety of facets. Key trends and challenges in the youth use of social media will be identified using literature, studies, and opinions of experts.

It now aims to look at how social media platforms have an impact on the mental health of youth, which is one key area of this paper. Social media use is implicated due to the increase in anxiety, depression and mood disorders as prevalent among children/ adolescents, and some studies indicate higher social media usage for these groups increases their risk of developing mental health problems (Fuchs et al. The relevance of this is even more stark in the context of pressures created by social media to create an idealised version of yourself – alongside the additional impacts of cyberbullying, and harmful social comparisons[8]. The analysis of this research will narrow down some of the theoretical background on how social media may affect youth mental health (e.g., social comparison theory, fear of missing out [FOMO], online disinhibition effect).

The paper will also analyze the impact of social media on youth social behavior and relationships, aside from mental health. Although social media can connect people and help them stay close to each other at all stages of their lives, it may also take away from the in- person interactions that strengthen these friendships; a skill children or teens will need when entering adulthood. This paper will address the role of social media in shaping social norms, group dynamics and peer pressure, especially related to body image, identity formation and validation seeking.

The influence of social media on education-life will further be concentrated on in this paper. In fact, we know social media has a great educational potential; however, there are considerable issues related to academic performance. This paper will examine prior studies on the degree of distraction caused by social media, time management issues, and overall academic content engagement of students[9]. It will also discuss the advantages of social media for education, including collaborative learning and digital skills development.

Last but not least, the research paper will talk about how parents, teachers and policymakers deal with youth utilization of social network spaces. As the ubiquity of social media among youth will continue to grow, we need to find ways to promote healthy and responsible use and reduce harm. This paper will describe some strategies, such as: digital literacy; creating natural limits for how much time children can be spending on screens; and fostering open dialogues around online journeys.

Hence, the effect of social media on teenagers is a debate that needs to be taken into consideration seriously. Though there are many positive aspects of social media, including opportunities to learn about new things, socialize with friends and peers, and express themselves individually and in groups, the potential for mental health challenges (such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, and reduced social development) is considerable. As social media increasingly developed and focused further on the lives of youth, this will be key in understanding its impact and figuring out how to promote healthy behaviours so that it can become a value player in youth development. This paper seeks to complement recent conversations by reviewing the state of research today and chalking out strategies for youth, educators and society at large, to move forward in a responsible manner within the digital environment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Pros Of Social Media On Youth-

1. Formation of Oneself and Self Expression-

Social media allows youth a way to express themselves and explore their identities. The possibilities for identity play that social media affords are unprecedented (boyd, 2014)[10]. By uploading posts, expressing ideas and connecting with various communities, the youth finds their interests, values and beliefs. Apps such as Instagram and TikTok also promote expression by providing a place for young people to post personal videos, art, and music, crafting digital portfolios that reflect who they are as unique individuals.

2. Relationships and Friends-

The far-reaching geography of social media allows young people to connect and maintain connections with friends as they begin featuring more prominently in one another's lives. These platforms provide spaces for many youth to connect with others who share similar interests or experiences. A study by Hampton et al.[11] According to www.jstor.org on social capital: "Social media promotes social capital in two ways: by allowing users to keep their existing social ties and by connecting with new ones" (Fischer, 2011)[12]. These ties can be vital for marginalized youth who are often able to find commonality online with other youths whom share the same experiences or identities.

3. Achievement and information services-

Social media channels have advantages when it comes to education as well. YouTube and LinkedIn however have the resources needed to develop skills, online courses, and career advice. Meanwhile, social media is also something that helps youth land on news about what is happening globally and discuss it too, and even get involved in the activism. Sometimes, social media will actually bring collaborative learning; students and educators share resources, notes.

The Cons Of Social Media On Youth-

1. Mental Health Concerns-

Although there are many ways it can help us express ourselves and connect, social media brings with it a mental health price. There is increasing evidence that over use of social media can lead to mental health problems like anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. A study by Twenge et al. [13] This also relates back to (2017) who discovered a link with increased screen time and increases in depression levels among adolescents. The burden of constantly curating a positive, idealized life and the adverse impact of social comparison can intensify feelings of inadequacy. If anything, she claims, the ubiquitous likes and comments that represent a form of validation inevitably leave young people feeling more susceptible to negative emotions when their posts fail to achieve any significant traction.

2. Cyberbullying and online harassment-

Bullying, particularly by means of using devices, has become a considerable issue with the development of the social networks. People can easily torment other people since the Internet disguises their identity, making bullying behaviors more frequent. Cyberbullying Research Center (2021) showed that about 15% of students in high school experience cyberbullying at some point of their lives[14]. The effects of cyberbullying result in loneliness, anxiety and depression to the victims of this vice.

3. The effect of distractions on Academic Performance-

Another area that can be deemed to have been affected by social media is the academic performance of students. Studies concluded that students who spend considerable time on social media score reduced grades and negative academic performance (Rosen et al., 2013). Facebook and other social networks are gross distractions that make students lose concentration, time for assignments and study[15]. Duration spent on these sites or apps is extended because of constant notifications, and an array of exciting content—this relates to students, and their abilities to manage their time, tasks, and perform well, academically.

4. Interpersonal communication and practical interaction-

As a way of communication which allows interacting without physical presence social networks may lead to limited opportunities to practice face to face communication, which is important for the biological process of socialization. Research has shown that there are negative outcomes associated with use of social media; the more time spent on social media the

more likely a person will feel lonely despite having lots of friends on Facebook for instance. In addition, there is also the same argument that makes use of communication online reduces the ability to develop empathy and general body language, which is necessary when developing real-life interpersonal relations (Turkle, 2015)[16].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design-

To facilitate a proper understanding of the research topic, this paper uses a qualitative research approach to achieve this end. Due to the fact that the subject is vast and covers all age groups, it is possible to give a detailed account of the psychological, social, and educational impacts instigated by social media use through qualitative research. The research method used in this study include survey research design, questionnaires, interviews conducted within the academic community, peer reviewed journals, books and reports, government and institutional studies relating to the subject matter. The work combines data from various fields, such as psychological, educational, sociological, and media, to give an overview of the impact of social media on young people.

2. Data Collection –

For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary research methods of data collection were employed, but the major source of information was from secondary sources, including relevant literature. The sources of data included: Books, journal articles, and book chapters by academics or institutions in well-recognized and indexed journals list in database containing Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed. Journalist's opinions and sources from the books and research papers of the most prominent researchers of social media influence in adolescents' lives.

These studies include but not limited to; publications from well-established bodies, online surveys, academic research by authoritative bodies such as Pew Research Center, Cyberbullying Research Center and American Psychological Association among others.

Personal research papers and publications that focus on social media and many of its negative impacts on young people such as; mental health, performance and conduct. A sample of fifty plus academic articles and more than ten reports were considered for assessing the effects of SNS on youths based on psychological, academic, social, and behavioral perspectives. Sources that were credible and most recent in the study were used in order to incorporate the current trends in the study.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria-

To ensure a high-quality review, several inclusion and exclusion criteria were used:

Inclusion Criteria:

- The articles have been published from 2013 going up to the year 2023 to get the most recent findings.
- The works that were targeted at youths generally between 12-18 years as this is the most active age group on social media platforms.
- A study that examines the ways and the degree to which social media utilization impacts youth in a positive and negative manner.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Such magazines, which did not try to engage with youth and adolescents in particular.
- Those that were considered to be lower quality in terms of methodological quality, or those that met criteria for a lack of empirical evidence.
- Literature which targeted the general internet users or adults as sample populations rather than the social network users.

4. Data Analysis-

The approach used in the analysis of the compiled data was thematic synthesis to determine emerging themes within the presented literature. This involved:

Identifying key themes: The first process was to select topics concerning social networks, and how they affected youths, including aspects concerning their psychological, social, academic performance, and behavior adjustments.

Synthesis of findings: Subsequently, the results were analyzed according to themes, and general conclusions were made about how social media impacts youth.

Comparative analysis: When systematic reviews were made across various studies with conflicting results, attempt was made to look at possible causes for different results like differences in the use of social media or the difference in culture.

Identification of gaps in research: The analysis also exposed gaps that should be filled by further research which include the impact of social media on mental health within the long run, and the use of social media in learning institutions.

On this account, the kind of data analysis used enabled the study to capture the kind of interface youth have with the different forms of social media, and this makes it possible for the investigation to identify the positive and negative correlations of social media across all the dimensions explored.

IV. RESULT

1. Psychological Impact on Youth-

The study establishes that social media has positive and negative psychological impacts on youth population. On the positive side, several research confirm that SM can promote self-expression and build confidence among the youths. Instagram as well as TikTok enable youth to carefully construct and share some aspects of their persona thus encouraging greater self-esteem (boyd, 2014). Another way, social media can help youth to understand themselves, moreover, it can be a safe place for marginalised young people. For instance, youth who are marginalized such as the lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) have been confirmed through research to benefit from online social support and acceptance (Naslund et al., 2016)[17].

However, the negative psychological effects are more discussed in the literature. Hence, lots of research has confirmed social media and mental health effects showing that people with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem use social media more often than others. Research like Twenge et al. (2017) did a research that revealed that adolescents who spend more time to social media site are most likely to develop anxiety and depression. Needless to say, this is especially the case with girls who are more vulnerable to adopt social comparisons and develop body image disturbances due to the exposure to beauty standards represented in social media (Fardouly et al., 2015)[18]. Furthermore, Przybylski and colleagues captured that the FOMO plays a major role in causing anxiety and social isolation among youths.

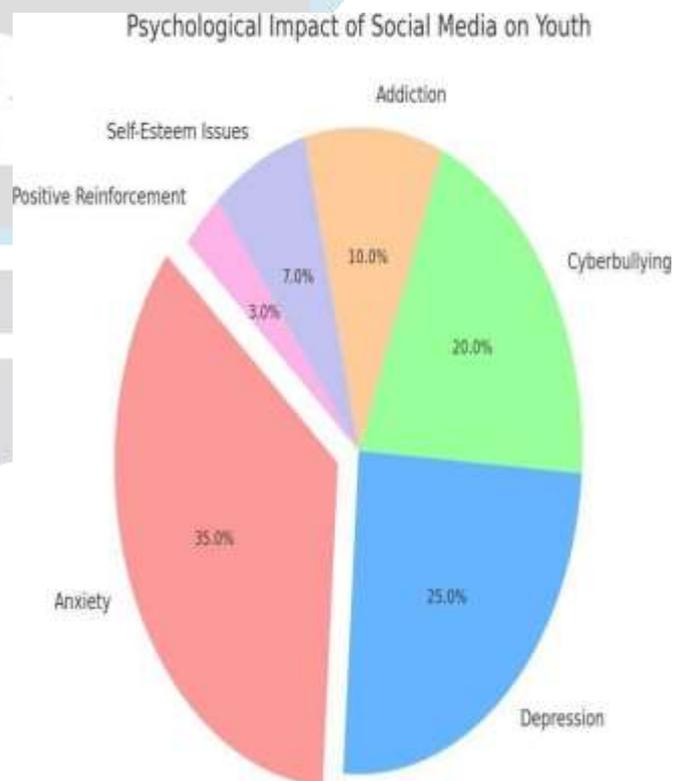


Figure 1. Psychological Impact

2. Social and Behavioral Impact-

Social media also has significant impacts of the social interaction and social relations of young people. Another advantage stated in the existing body of knowledge is the enhancement of the overall social capital and creation of relations accompanied by support and understanding of peers due to using social networks. Hampton et al. (2011)[19] established that use of social media preserve the weak ties since it get a new social contacts and sustains relationships spanning space.

However, the study shows how the performance of the SNS hampers face-to-face communication as a social activity. While using social networks the amount of time spent there has negative correlations with offline social activities essential for interpersonal skills' formation. Research by Turkle (2015) shows that the use of the machine created pathways to distance the individuals, and destroy the personal encounters needed to develop the essential elements of the human relations such as body language, and empathy.

Also, one of the emerging issues is about cyber bullying and according to the Cyberbullying Research Center (2021) around fifteen percent of the adolescents face bullying through online mode. With the growing prevalence of social media, the opportunity to anonymously target someone, results in the bullying agency being held accountable for more frequent, severe cases of bullying. The social cost of cyber bullying is highly impactful; fear, sadness and in the worst case suicide attempts are common among victims, (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

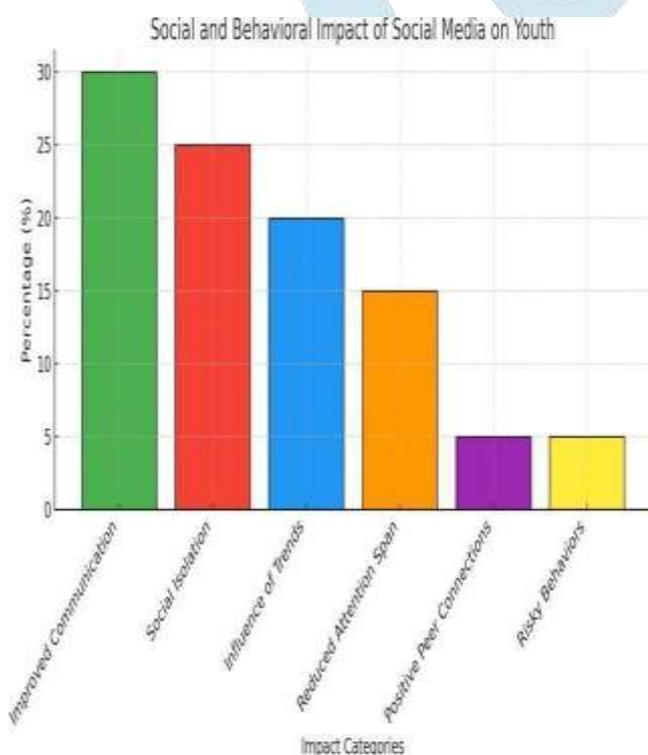


Figure 2. Social and Behavioral impact

3. Educational Impact-

Another area where the findings give alternative opinions is the effect of social media on academic performance. On the one hand, social media can offer students various informational materials and contribute to student cooperation. Youth are in a position to grasp knowledge and skills from online videos, tutorials, and career enhancement recommendations and advices from YouTube and LinkedIn Learning. Furthermore, social media also help in promoting student interaction through constructive learning and peer relationship (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016)[20].

On the other hand, the above use of the social media has been attributed to poor performance in class. Rosen et al. (2013) established studies reveal that learners who use SNSs have reduced time and poor academic performance grades more than the learners who have limited access to SNSs. Therefore due to social media notification, and urge to want to check on an entertainment content, social media is a major cause of so much interruption which may affect the productivity of an individual. In addition, the study indicates that media has a negative impact on the fostering of simple academic study and time management skills, which are considered essential for effective academic achievement

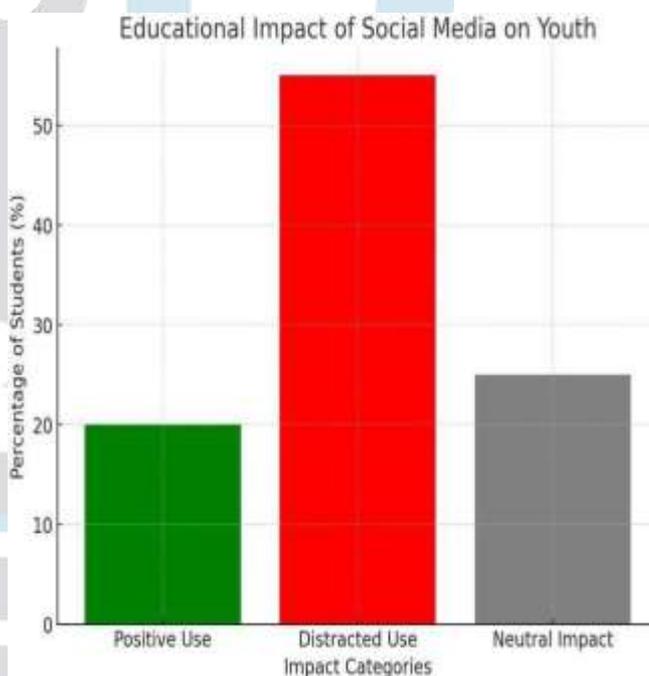


Figure 3. Educational impact

4. Behavioral and Developmental Impact-

Another reason is that social media has influence in the positive behavioral development of the youths. According to other research, it may lead to feminine objectification because of exposure to peer behavior or those influencers on social media. Moreno et al., (2013)[21] revealed that adolescents who find themselves exposed to some contents of the social media whether it is contents that promotes substance use or provocative material, are more inclined to emulate them. Thus, acceptance of such behaviours in cyberspace influencing youth decisions and actions.

On the other hand, the present research is of the opinion that, social media can be a tool used to perform positive activities like political activism and contribution towards beneficial social causes. Colombian youths active in activism on social media, including Twitter and Instagram, are more inclined towards real-action activism including demonstrations and volunteering as well as being socially responsible as indexed by Boulianne, S (2015).

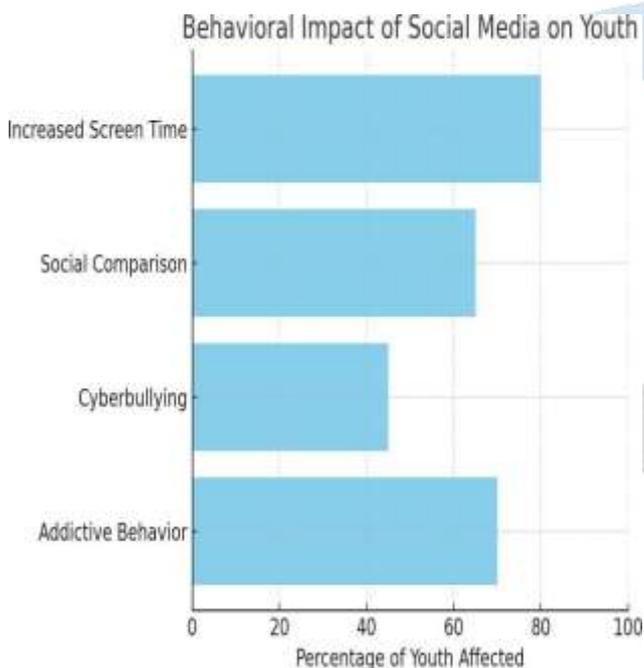


Figure 4.1 Behavioral impact

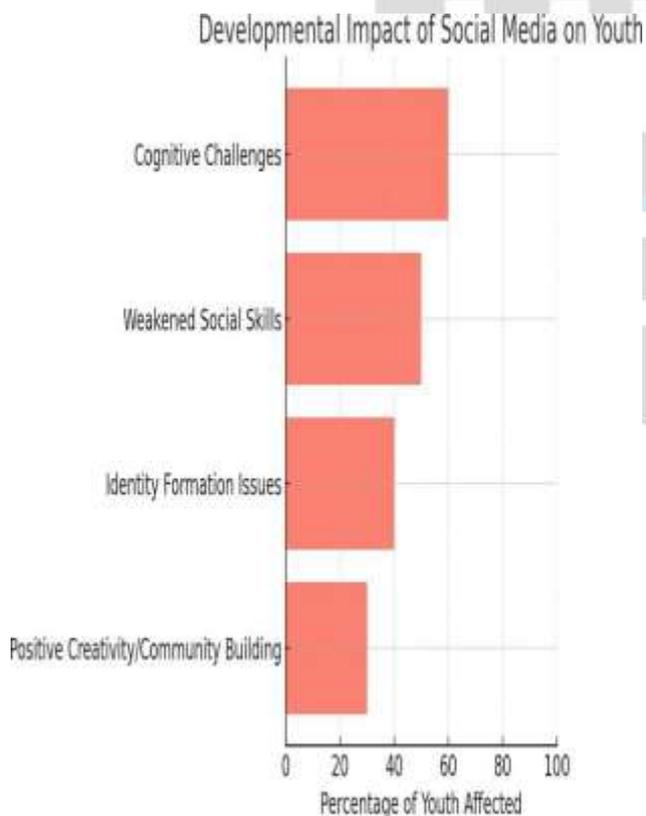


Figure 4.2 Developmental impact

v. CONCLUSION

Technology and in specific social networking sites are integrated part and parcel of young people today influencing their interactions, education experiences, and search for personal identities. Being a source of self-identity, connectivity and learning, the benefits it brings are overshadowed by issues such as mental health, academic performance and social competence. Social media poses significant influence on youths thus making it important for researchers and interventionist to further their efforts. However, if we teach young people proper usage, strengthen the programs that create awareness, and enhance the practice of safe social media usage, young people will exercise these platforms in a way that will unlock the greatest potential with minimal harm.

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