

Investigating the Effect of Brand on the Export (Case Study: Amir Kabir Steel Company)

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Abstract: The study aimed to evaluate the effect of brand on export in Amirkabir Steel Company. Purpose of this study is causal and the method of research is descriptive. Research models are designed based on Aaker brand personality model is formed. The study population consisted of all customers in Amirkabir Steel Company (480 samples). Sampling was stratified sampling in this study included the number proportional to population size and sample size were selected based on a set formula (214 samples). In this study, standardized questionnaire brand equity (Aaker model) is used. Alpha coefficient obtained in this study for the total score variable of brand equity (0.823). In addition, for the dimensions of brand loyalty (0.674), brand association (0.798) brand quality (0.872) brand awareness (0.668) and willingness to accept the brand extension (0.847) have been obtained. The results show that brand equity impact on exports in Amirkabir Steel Company. Also according to the results of the research, brand loyalty, brand quality, brand association, brand awareness and willingness to accept brand extension has an impact on exports in Amirkabir Steel Company.

Key words: Brand, export, brand loyalty, brand quality, brand association, brand awareness and willingness to accept the brand extension

INTRODUCTION

Competitiveness, business strategies are developed for this purpose company set up to move out of their current competitive position stronger position to a new date. In the past decade, to achieve this goal, most famous of marketing concepts by academics and marketing research and brand equity is investigated. One of the reasons for its popularity, strategic role and importance of brand equity in achieving competitive advantage is strategic management decisions. When accurately measured brand equity is an appropriate measure to evaluate the effects will be long-term marketing decisions. Brand equity is defined in different ways for different purposes. However, so far no consensus has not been achieved (Keller, 1993). Definitions of customer-based brand equity are approaching the issue from the perspective of the customer, whether the customer is a person or organization. They claim to have the value of a brand that should be valued by customers. In this way, the brand strength of the brand is what customers have learned over time and experience, felt, seen or heard lies (Keller, 1993). If they have any sense for the customer none of the other definitions is not significant (Keller, 1993; Belen *et al.*,

2001). One of the most comprehensive and common definitions of brand equity (Motameni, Shahrokhi, 1998): “a set of capabilities and assets to attach a brand, the name and an indication that the value provided by a product for the company and its customers is added or subtracted from the value” (Aaker, 1991).

In the marketing literature on brand equity is classified into two categories: those involving the customer's perception, such as brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality and those involving behavior such as brand loyalty and customer focus on price differences. Aker two aspects of the few writers have combined their attitude and behavior. The advantage of combining these two dimensions is a measure of brand equity, which is so well defined that the index alone, determination of market behavior is weak. This means that these indicators are measured together extensively by Myers (2003). Brand equity is a multidimensional and complex concept that some aspects of it experimentally in some of the articles are examined. Among the various models of brand equity, we model Aaker (1991) is the most common and practical models were selected. On the other hand, brand value for companies that are active in the field of exports has been less studied.

Much of the economic development of a country, its international trade with other countries depend sales negotiations with foreign buyers is the major part of this business. Given the importance of this issue, we have in this article, the impact on exports of Amirkabir steel companies discussed. Development of non-oil exports to world markets and maintains steady and correct entry can be made in it but by creating a clear and sustained strategy that export unchangeable law accordingly. And each of the executive agencies associated with the non-oil exports as well as unions and export organizations and business service organizations such as banking, insurance, transportation, etc. to perform their duties in the community and cultural readiness produce the best product for export arise (Hillary, 2006). I must acknowledge that the studies about the brand, name and address, the importance and its dimensions in Iran is very limited and few.

However, global companies, more than half of its sales successes, especially among consumers in developing countries are due to its global brand name and logo. Perhaps the quality of Iranian products and services represent more than their foreign competitors are but the tendency of consumers to foreign brands more. These and many others have suggested that it is these brands that are sold in today's competitive world. Marketing managers need to be aware that in our country as well as the quality and service is critical, according to the brand and the brand is also important and to create competitive advantage and customer loyalty score is effective (Hillary, 2006). Brand equity, in turn, can lead to more revenue, lower costs and higher profits; direct impacts on an organization's ability to make appropriate decisions about the rising cost of services, the effectiveness of marketing communications and business development is successful (Keller, 1993). Topics are to determine the effect of brand on the export of Amirkabir steel companies is investigated in this study, therefore, in this study will try to answer this question that, brand on exports of Amirkabir steel companies is effective or not?

Literature review: Brand equity is defined from different perspectives and for different purposes but so far no common consensus that has been achieved. Some of these definitions are brand equity, value or reward for a product to a customer that can be attributed to the brand name (Yoo *et al.*, 2000). Brand value, added value is that by increasing due to the use of a brand attitude strength for a product is created. Keller (1993) brand equity as distinct effect brand knowledge on consumer response to marketing activities has taken to definitions. Among the various definitions that have been proposed for brand

value, define Aaker (1991) is more common. According to him, the brand value of a set of assets and liabilities bound with a brand. Selecting and implementing an appropriate strategy and brand development of a service organization such as a bank is considered the ultimate success. If a client that believes that there are significant differences between brands and this will lead to major purchase decision information, he relied on to make decisions based brand will increase. Brands, especially those of high value, can be considered as the most valuable and powerful assets. It is important to allow organizations to brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and transplantation and enjoy strong relationships with customers. In addition to the issues raised, creating a long-term loyalty for organizations with high value brand in customers can create a distinctive advantage. Anand emphasize that values the brand for services like banking and credit experience in their two properties is strong and very important. Characteristic features of the service credit to those customers even after purchasing or consuming the product indicates that a service or product, they are not able to define or evaluate it. There are two components of brand value, brand awareness and brand content. Brand content customer experience in the organization will be affected (Punj and Hillyer, 2007).

Definition of brand equity: Brand equity is defined in different ways for different purposes. However, so far no consensus has not been achieved joint (Keller, 1993). This concept from the perspective of the manufacturer, retailer or customer is discussed. While retailers and manufacturers to strategic functions tend to brand equity, financial concept defined more investors to show interest (Cobb, 1995).

Acres model: Among the various models of brand equity, Aaker (1991) model is the most common and practical models were selected. This model in a number of empirical studies (Eagle and Kitchen, 2000; Yoo *et al.*, 2000; Washburn and Planck, 2002) studied and researched.

Brand loyalty: In research on brand loyalty, the main challenge is to define the concept and measurement criteria. Javalgi Moberg in connection with the behavioral aspects of brand loyalty, attitudinal and choice have been defined. In this case, the behavioral aspects are based on the purchase a particular brand and attitudinal perspective on brands, consumer preferences and bind them together. Definitions associated with selective views on the reasons for the purchase or factors that may affect choices focused. Aaker defines brand loyalty as a

situation that shows how likely a customer will bring another brand, especially when that brand creates a change in the price or other aspects of the product (Keller, 1993).

Perceived quality: Perceived quality as “customer perception of overall quality or superiority of a product/service according to its intended purpose of the product/service and superior to other products/services on the market” is defined (Zeithaml, 1998). This is a competitive necessity and many companies today, customer-oriented quality to have made a powerful strategic tool. Their satisfaction and customer value through constant and profitable satisfy the needs and preferences of customers were satisfied about the quality.

Brand awareness: Brands have the power and value of the market are different. On one side are the brands that are not known by most consumers, on the other hand, there are brands that consumers have a relatively high level them (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness as “a potential buyer the ability to recognize and remember that a brand is a member of a certain product category” is defined. Keller (1993), brand awareness through three advantages plays an important role in customer decisions:

- Advantages of learning
- Attention and study advantage
- Selective advantage

Association, brand consistency: Everything associated with their brand associations in memory (Aaker, 1991:). Consistency and brand association may be all forms and features related to the product or aspects independent of the product itself (Chen, 2001).

For example, the importance of brand name associated with the acquisition of competitive advantages by Rio noted and investigated. According to related classifications association, are consistent in studies of Chen (2001), organizational two of the most referenced product associations and associations are brand association classes.

Research literature: The research also been conducted in this regard. Mari Juntunen *et al.* (2010) in a study of brand equity and brand loyalty in the market as the relationship between the companies concluded that customer loyalty is part of brand equity and brand image will result in loyalty. In addition, it should be considered from the perspective of brand equity brand products have been developed and the company’s brand equity as well as products to be developed. Baolong Ma and Lin

Zhang investigate the impact of the crisis losses are products on the effort to better understand the impact of the crisis on the performance of unprofitable products are achieved and market structure. This study is based on data collected from the sale of milk powder in China Nestle has been unprofitable. The results of this study showed that unprofitable customer purchase a product through behavior changes occurred. Kadivar (2014) study the impact on brand equity are perceptive consumers of the country of origin of goods is done.

The results show that the experts were agreed on the importance of every four hypotheses and the average of all four hypotheses showed moderate to high. Ranjbarian study entitled factors affecting the preferred brand has done from the viewpoint of consumers. Two brand studied in this research are Hakoopiyan and Maxim Iran are active in the apparel industry. The results also imply that the only structures associated equity (index of perceived value and satisfaction and brand loyalty) a positive and significant effect on the preferred brand. The positive effect of the preferred brand and decided to buy it been confirmed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Given that in this study to examine the impact of the brand on exports by implementing customer survey questionnaire and the results are expressed without manipulation, in this type of research is descriptive casual survey used. This particular application in exports due to the set of applied research together can be grouped. The study population consisted of all customers Amirkabir Steel Company which amounted to 480 people. To obtain the sample size in this study, Morgan, is used as the sample size of 214 patients were selected based on Morgan table. Then, using a random sample (stratified) data collection was done physically (Fig. 1). The hypothesis of the study include:

- The main hypothesis of the research: brand has significant impact on export in Amirkabir Steel Company

Research sub hypothesis:

- Brand loyalty among customers has an impact on exports in Amirkabir Steel Company
- Perceived quality by customers has an impact on exports Amirkabir Steel Company
- Brand association with the customers has an impact on exports Amirkabir Steel Company
- Brand awareness with the customers has an impact on exports Amirkabir Steel Company

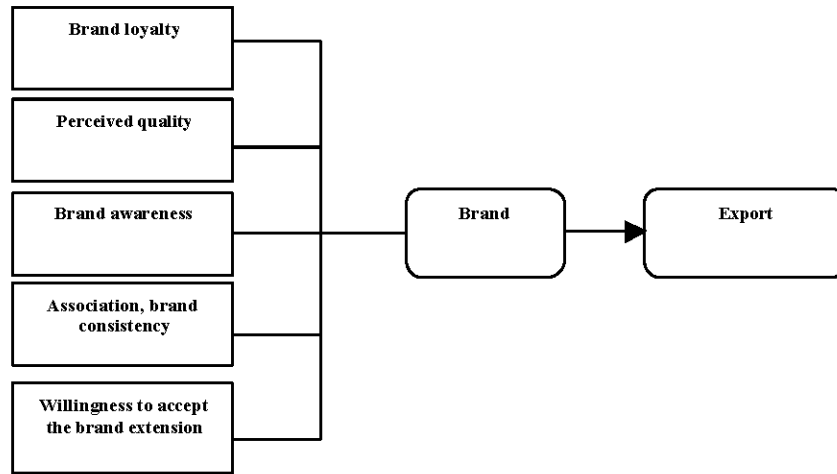


Fig. 1: The conceptual model (Aaker, 1991)

Table 1: Dimensions of questionnaire and questions related to each dimension

Dimension	Number of questions
Brand loyalty	1-6
Brand quality	7-13
Brand associations	14-18
Brand awareness	19-26
Willingness to accept the brand extension	27-31

Table 2: Study tool reliability

Dimension	Number of questions	Alpha coefficient
Total score of brand value	-	0.823
Brand loyalty	1-6	0.674
Brand quality	7-13	0.798
Brand associations	14-18	0.872
Brand awareness	19-26	0.668
Willingness to accept the brand	27-31	0.847

- Willingness to accept the brand extension with the customers has an impact on exports Amirkabir Steel Company

In this study, questionnaire brand equity (Aaker model) will be used. Aker questionnaire is standard. The validity consultation with advisors and experts in the field has been confirmed. In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used. For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed among the sample size. Alpha coefficient obtained in this study for the variable of brand equity score was 0.823. Also, for the dimensions of brand loyalty, brand association, brand quality, brand awareness and willingness to accept brand extensions, respectively, 0.674, 0.798, 0.872, 0.668 and 0.847 (Table 1-2).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the sample questionnaire distributed among the following results were obtained.

Descriptive results: Of the 214 male participants, most of whom (32.7%) in the age group 30-40 years have and the age group 41-50 years, <30 and 50 years, respectively 30.8, 23.8 and 12.7% are next in rank. In addition, most of the samples (36.4%) between 6 and 10 years have been in Amirkabir Steel Company and service records 1 - 5 years, over 10 years old and <1 year, respectively 25.8, 22.4 and 15.4% are next in rank. Higher education subjects with 43.9% of bachelor’s and associate degrees, bachelor and Diploma and lower, respectively with 28, 14.5 and 13.6% are next in rank. Finally, it was observed that the average of all dimensions and brand equity than the average total score (number 3) above.

Variables normality test: Normal distribution of the main variables for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. The results in the table below are shown.

Results of Table 3 shows the output of the p-value related to the KS test scores of all variables is < 0.05. Therefore, it follows that the distribution of all variables is abnormal. In order to test the research hypotheses rather than one-sample t-test parametric, non-parametric binomial test is used.

The research hypotheses

The main hypothesis: Brand equity has a significant impact on export Amirkabir companies steel. In Table 4, since the p-value is < the significance level 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at the 95% confidence

Table 3: Test to determine the normality of the main variables

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic	p-value*	Normal distribution
Brand equity	1.467		No
Brand loyalty	2.261	0.027	No
Brand quality	2.492	0	No
Brand associations	1.462	0	No
Brand awareness	1.982	0.028	No
Willingness to accept the brand extension	2.078	0.001	No

Scores

*p-value (significance)

Table 4: Binomial test for the impact of brand equity on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Brand equity	Group I	≥3	49	0.23	0.5	0
	Group II	>3	165	0.77		

Table 5: Binomial test to evaluate the effect of brand loyalty on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Brand loyalty	Group I	≥3	19	0.09	0.5	0
	Group II	>3	195	0.91		

level. Given that most responses (77%) in the second group (>3) therefore, the conclusion can be reached that the outcome of responses to the impact of brand equity option participants agree and strongly agree. In this way, they believe that brand equity has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. Therefore, the main research hypothesis is confirmed.

Research sub hypotheses

- First hypothesis: brand loyalty has a significant impact on export Amirkabir steel company

In Table 5, as the significance level of $p < 0.05$, therefore null hypothesis is rejected at the 95% confidence level. Given that most responses (91%) in the second group (>3) therefore, the conclusion can be reached that meet examples of responses to the impact of brand loyalty to agree and strongly agree option. In this way, they believe that brand loyalty has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. The first hypothesis is confirmed.

- The second hypothesis: brand quality has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir Steel Company

In Table 6, since the p value is less than the significance level 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at the 95% confidence level. Given that most responses (77%) in the second group (>3) in this way, they believe

Table 6: Binomial test to assess their impact on the brand quality of Amirkabir Steel exports

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Brand quality	Group I	≥3	49	0.23	0.5	0
	Group II	>3	165	0.77		

Table 7: Binomial test for the effect of brand associations on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Brand associations	Group I	3	51	0.24	0.50	0
	Group II	>3	163	0.76		

Table 8: Binomial test to evaluate the effect of brand awareness on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Brand awareness	Group I	≥3	68	0.32	0.5	0
	Group II	>3	146	0.68		

their quality has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. The second hypothesis is confirmed.

- The third hypothesis: brand association has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company

In Table 7, since the p value is less than the significance level 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at the 95% confidence level. Given that most responses (76%) in the second group (>3) therefore, the conclusion can be reached and the resultant response of the sample to the impact of brand association is the option to agree and strongly agree. In this way, they believe the brand association has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. The third sub-hypothesis is approved.

- The fourth hypothesis: brand awareness has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company

In Table 8, since the p value is less than the significance level 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected at the 95% confidence level. Given that most responses (68%) in the second group (>3) therefore, the conclusion can be reached that meet examples of responses to the impact of brand awareness is the option to agree and strongly agree. In this way, they believe that brand awareness has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 9: Binomial test to check the willingness to accept the brand extension on the export of Kabir Steel Company

Variable	Group	Class	Number	Observed		
				ratios	Test	p-value*
Willingness to accept the brand extension	Group I	≥3	58	0.27	0.5	0
	Group II	>3	156	0.73		

- Fifth hypothesis: the willingness to accept the brand extension has a significant impact on export Amirkabir steel company

In Table 9, p-value less than significant level since 0.05 is therefore null hypothesis is rejected with 95% confidence that-be. Given that most responses (73%) in the second group (>3) therefore, the conclusion can be reached that the outcome of responses to the impact willing to accept participants agree and strongly agree is the brand extension options. So that way inclined to accept the brand extension has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company. The fifth hypothesis is confirmed.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between brand value and volume of exports in the Amirkabir Steel Company. After analyzing the data collected through questionnaires and testing the assumptions underlying brand equity has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company. This result is consistent with the result of research Seyed and Shams (2007). In fact, they stated that the brand value of sales is impressive. Ibrahim Khalife, Samizadeh and Hussaini, Abbasi and Iranmanesh found similar results and found a significant positive relationship between export and brand equity. Finally, the result of research by Silverman *et al.* (1999) also is confirmed. According to the results, we can conclude the average impact of brand equity on Amir Kabir Steel Company exports significantly different between two groups of men and women. In addition, there is a significant difference in the average impact of brand equity on the export of Amirkabir Steel Company between the views of people with different age groups, serve with different backgrounds and different levels of education. Another finding of the research is that brand loyalty significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company. The result is consistent with the result of research Seyed and Shams (2007). In fact, they stated that brand loyalty could affect sales and exports. Silverman *et al.* (1999) have confirmed this finding. Javalgi Moberg in connection with the behavioral aspects of brand loyalty, attitudinal and choice have been defined. In this case, the behavioral aspects are based on the purchase a particular brand and attitudinal perspective on brands, consumer preferences

and bind them together. Definitions associated with selective views on the reasons for the purchase or factors that may affect choices focused. Aaker defines brand loyalty as a situation that shows how likely a customer will bring another brand, especially when that brand creates a change in the price or other aspects of the product. Keller (1993) according to others, the so-called brand loyalty, and brand resonance was based on the nature and extent of customer relations based on harmony and make customers feel they are being branded, was recovered. True brand resonance customers are very loyal, actively interact with the brand and share their experiences with others. These definitions of brand loyalty are a direct relationship between brand loyalty and brand equity notes (Aaker, 1991). When the company can provide its global customers loyalty, sales at the global level will increase naturally. The customers always are even more price shops company. So, companies can build loyalty in its global customers, the company will increase exports. It also concluded that their quality has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company. Ibrahim Khalife, Samizadeh and Hussaini, Abbasi and Iranmanesh also found similar results and found a significant positive relationship between export and brand quality. In addition, the result of research by Silverman *et al.* (1999) also is confirmed. Perceived quality as “customer perception of overall quality or superiority of a product according to its intended purpose product and superior to other products on the market” is defined (Zeithaml, 1998). This is a competitive necessity and many companies today, customer-oriented quality to have made a powerful strategic tool. Their satisfaction and customer value through constant and profitable satisfy the needs and preferences of customers were satisfied about the quality. Kotler (2000) and the relationship between product quality, customer satisfaction and profitability of the company is considered. So when the customer feels that the product than the products of other companies he excels according to the needs and requirements satisfies him more than other products, it is natural that comes into the company’s products and therefore do buy more of the company. In fact, when quality perceived by customers worldwide is at a high level, the company will increase exports.

Ibrahim Khalife, Samizadeh and Hussaini, Abbasi and Iranmanesh also found similar results. In other words, it stated that evokes the brand’s sales are impressive. Associations and readers represent a basis for purchase decisions for brand loyalty as well as the Maker of value for the company and its customers (Aaker, 1991).

It then lists the benefits: helping to process and retrieve information, differentiating the brand, generating

a reason to buy and creating positive feelings and attitudes and support for the promotion and development. Ryu brand associations as a key element in the formation and management of brand equity have raised. Therefore, strong brand equity illustrates that many customers consistent and positive relationship with the brand feel. Therefore, it is natural to associate actually represent the purchase decisions for brand loyalty, increasing sales and exports are increasing globally. Because when you associate the brand with a high level of customer benefit means the customer is willing to buy back the company.

The brand awareness has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company. Research result is consistent with Seyed and Shams (2007) to the present investigation. In fact, they stated that affects brand awareness on sales. Ibrahim Khalife, Samizadeh and Hussaini (2013) and Abbasi and Iranmanesh (2012) found similar results and found a significant positive relationship between export and awareness of brand equity. Silverman *et al.* (1999) found no relationship between these two variables. Brand awareness as “a potential buyer the ability to recognize and remember that a brand is a member of a certain product category” is defined. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer brand awareness and familiarity and some indication and unique associations, a strong and unique brand recall. In fact when brand awareness at a high level of component BE and is known globally and global customer more likely to come to the company and the company increased its purchases and thus increase export company. Finally, it was found that tended to accept the brand extension has a significant impact on export in Amirkabir steel company.

So that way inclined to accept that the brand extension has a significant positive impact on the export of Amirkabir steel company. The fifth hypothesis is confirmed. Silverman *et al.* (1999) found similar results and between exports and unwilling to accept the brand extension brand equity were positive and significant relationship. However, Abbasi and Iranmanesh between these two variables were not significant relationship. Willingness to accept the brand extension means that the customer tends to act as a marketing company and to attract customers to act now. In fact, the company can satisfy the needs of our customers as they have the vendors for their products. This naturally increases the level of exports. According to the results of research, organizations can use to create and maintain a clear, distinct and stable, thus creating a competitive advantage in the minds of customers and their loyalty to their brand. It is suggested that:

- Based on the interests and demands of customers according to their position in order to retain and attract brand equity of the company
- Marketing appropriate policies and programs appropriate to the situation and efforts to improve customer loyalty and brand equity
- Consideration of this important global customers evaluation of brand equity and compatibility traits and attribution of their mental perceptions, play an important role in the success of a company's brand and customer loyalty to its products
- The use of reference groups influence in the world to introduce a better brand to customers with brand loyalty
- Prevent magnification and create unrealistic expectations in the minds of customers through advertising
- Principles and moral standards in design manufacture and deliver products to customers in order to increase brand loyalty
- It due to a positive or a negative one brand of products supply of other company products
- Having differentiated product portfolio from competitors, key to company's success in promotes the company's brand association consumers to the brand
- New technologies in order to create competitive advantage, attract and retain loyal customers globally
- Try to establish brands and conviction that the students despite the propaganda and extensive efforts of competitors, customers continue to remain loyal to the brand
- Recognize the importance of managers to strengthen the position of the brand in the customers' perception maps, opportunities and threats competitors
- Company attention to the prominent role as a recommender, brand extension creates the willingness to accept for purchase. Therefore, in order to view the full results of the research community and other researchers in the future, it is suggested the subject of a comparative approach has been studied in different companies

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