

## Exploring destination marketing strategies and influencing tourist behavioral intentions in Batangas province

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### ***Abstract***

The Province of Batangas boasts numerous popular tourist attractions, including historical sites, stunning highlands, beautiful beaches, theme parks, scuba diving areas, majestic mountains, and a renowned volcano. These natural and man-made attractions consistently draw tourists to the area. This study aimed to assess the different tourist attractions in the province in terms of destination marketing, and tourist behavioral intention. Descriptive correlational was utilized with 400 local and foreign tourists who visited the top 10 attractions in the province as participants of the study. A modified questionnaire from various authors was used which underwent validation by the experts and passed reliability testing. The statistical tests utilized were weighted mean, ranking, and Pearson-r product moment correlation. Based on the findings, the tourists agreed on the marketing of the destination in terms of brand marketing strategies, brand position, service quality, and promotional of cultural events. When it comes to the tourist behavioral intention, tourists agree that they are satisfied with their visit, they have the intention to recommend the province to their friends and relatives and they have the intention to revisit the province.

***Keywords:*** destination marketing, behavioral intention, Batangas Province

## **Exploring destination marketing strategies and influencing tourist behavioral intentions in Batangas province**

### **1. Introduction**

The Province of Batangas comprises several popular tourist destinations in the Philippines. The historical sites, breathtaking highlands, beautiful beaches, theme parks, scuba-diving areas, art galleries, majestic mountains, and a famous volcano are some natural and man-made attractions that draw tourists every time. Since 2021, when restrictions on foreign travel redirected visitor flows to domestic travel as a response to the economic repercussions of the pandemic, domestic tourism has taken on a special significance for the nation. Hence, the DOT's policies and initiatives have since been oriented toward boosting domestic tourism activities to stimulate the national economy for the recovery, growth, and resilience of the Philippine tourism and hospitality industry.

Currently, the tourism and hotel industry continues to face obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Industry leaders and relevant government agencies are therefore called to reconsider their entrepreneurial and leadership methods. They are now required to respond imaginatively and ingeniously to the advent of new realities, such as the continued development of technologies and changes in customer preferences and lifestyles. As the industry landscape continues to shift because of the unpredictability of the economic, social, and psychological aspects of society, stakeholders are urged to adopt a more proactive business strategy to gain a competitive edge against such volatility.

Destination marketing involves promoting a tourism destination to attract visitors and encourage them to choose it over competing destinations. (de Souza, 2020). It encompasses various strategies and tactics, including advertising, public relations, digital marketing, social media, partnerships, and events. Effective destination marketing communicates the unique selling points of a destination, such as its attractions, activities, culture, cuisine, and hospitality. Tourist behavioral intention refers to the psychological factors that influence tourists' decisions and actions regarding destination choice, travel planning, and on-site activities (Platania, 2021). It encompasses attitudes, perceptions, motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes that shape tourists' behavior. Understanding tourist behavioral intention is essential for destination marketers and policymakers to develop targeted strategies that meet tourists' needs and preferences.

Anchored on the DOT's agenda to revitalize the domestic tourism and hospitality industry after the effects of the pandemic, the goal of this research is to assess the tourism infrastructure, destination marketing, and tourist behavioral intention in the Province of Batangas, test their significant relationships and differences, and propose a framework which can positively influence the behavioral intention of tourists in Batangas Province. The result of this study will be beneficial to the stakeholders such as tourism businesses, investors and developers, academic and research institutions, policymakers and government agencies, and local communities. It will also serve as a valuable tool for stakeholders across the tourism industry to make informed decisions, enhance competitiveness, and maximize the benefits of tourism for destinations, businesses, residents, and visitors alike. On this premise, the researcher determines if the current marketing strategies influence tourists' intentions to visit Batangas, as well as potential areas for improvement or enhancement in these aspects to better cater to tourist preferences and expectations.

**Objectives Of The Study** - This study aimed to assess the different tourist attractions in the Province of Batangas in relation to destination marketing, and tourist behavioral intention. Specifically, assessed the destination marketing of Batangas Province in terms of brand marketing strategies, brand positioning, service quality, and promotion of cultural events, determined the behavioral intention of tourists in Batangas Province in terms of tourist satisfaction, intention to recommend and intention to revisit; test the significant relationship

between destination marketing to tourist behavioral intention; and propose a framework to positively influence the behavioral intention of tourists in Batangas Province.

## 2. Method

**Research Design** - This study used the descriptive correlational research design to assess the tourism infrastructure, destination marketing, and tourist behavioral intention in the Province of Batangas. Correlational design is a statistical test to determine the tendency or pattern for two (or more) variables or two sets of data to vary consistently. The purpose of correlational research is to determine the relationship among two or more variables.

**Participants of the Study** - The participants of the study are 400 local and foreign tourists who visit the top 10 attractions in the Province of Batangas. The number of respondents was computed based on the recent provincial tourist arrivals of 4,103,367 day tourists. It was computed using Raosoft with a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error. There are a total of 867 attractions which are classified into 8 types of attractions. The researcher used the top 10 attractions per type of attraction with a total of 80 attractions. Five samples in each attraction answered the questionnaire.

**Instrument**- This study used a modified questionnaire. Part I contains the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, frequency of visit, reason for visit, travel companion, and mode of transportation; Part II contains the tourism infrastructure which was adapted from the study of Moon & Han, 2018; Part III contains the questions that will assess the destination marketing which was adopted from the study of Evangelista (2022); and Part IV contains the tourist behavioral intention which was adopted from the study of Barlan & Borbon (2022). The questionnaire underwent validation by representative/s from relevant government agencies and faculty expert/s in tourism. Pilot testing was conducted to the attractions not included in the top 10 attractions of Batangas. Statistical test for validity and the reliability of the items/indicators was tested using Cronbach Alpha

**Procedure** - The researcher visited the different attractions, and with the help of those working in these attractions, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the local and foreign tourists. The questionnaire was distributed on Saturdays and Sundays, the peak days of tourist visits.

**Data Analysis** - To perform data analysis, the following statistical tools were used. Weighted mean, ranking, and Pearson-R product-moment correlation. Weighted mean was used to assess the destination marketing, attributes, and behavioral intention. Pearson-r product moment correlation was used to test the relationship among variables. The Likert Scale was used in assessing the variables in the questionnaire: 4.50-5.00 for Strongly Agree; 3.50-4.49 for Agree; 2.50-3.49 for Moderately Agree; 1.5-2.49 for Disagree; and 1.00-1.49 for Strongly Disagree. In addition, all data was treated using the statistical software SPSS version 26.

**Ethical Considerations** - To observe the highly confidential nature of the survey, no particular names was mentioned in the report. No information about the respondents was revealed, aside from that they are tourists. No opinion was given by the researcher, only information and results based on the data gathered. The questionnaire includes a confidentiality agreement and consent form in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. In any case, participants have the right to withdraw from the process and were made aware of it from the start. The researcher has no commercial interests, and the study's findings will be used solely for academic purposes.

## 3. Results and discussion

Table 1 presents the destination marketing in Batangas Province in terms of Brand Marketing Strategies with the composite mean of 4.42 rated as agree. The marketing campaign of the tourist attraction includes the promotion of local products and business services (4.47) ranked first, followed by the tourist attraction uses effective means to promote its available facilities and/or activities (4.44), and the lowest was its marketing campaign also includes the recommendation of accommodations and other nearby tourist attraction/s (4.36). This

is the marketing campaign of a tourist attraction used in the province which includes the promotion of local products and business services. This is a great way to support the local economy and to give visitors a taste of the local culture. There are many ways to promote local products and business services as part of a marketing campaign. One of it is to feature local products and businesses in marketing materials. This could include brochures, websites, social media posts, and other promotional materials. A study by Ricafort (2020) found that Lobo, a municipality in Batangas, has the essential infrastructure and services that are important to tourists. These include electricity, water, telecommunications, good road infrastructure, and a communication network. These facilities and services make it easy for tourists to travel to Lobo and stay there, which can help to ensure the success of Lobo's tourism marketing strategy. According to Tarazona-Montoya (2020), small and medium firms utilize the most effective combinations of marketing tools and activities within a cluster to achieve optimal results. Consequently, winning awards for visitor attractions, hotels, and restaurants within a destination can serve as a foundation for co-branding marketing campaigns, which can enhance the destination's brand image (Paraskevaidis & Weidenfeld, 2019).

**Table 1**

*Destination Marketing in terms of Brand Marketing Strategies*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The marketing campaign of the tourist attraction includes the promotion of local products and business services	4.47	A	1
2. The tourist attraction uses effective means to promote its available facilities and/or activities	4.44	A	2
Its marketing campaign also includes the recommendation of accommodations and other nearby tourist attraction/s	4.36	A	3
Composite Mean	4.42	A	

**Table 2**

*Destination Marketing in Batangas Province in terms of Brand Positioning*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
The tourist attraction utilizes digital media (e.g., photos, videos, reels, blogs, vlogs, giveaways) to establish and build its brand or image	4.34	A	2
It uses tagline to increase awareness and assist recollection among tourists and prospective customers	4.35	A	1
The tourist attraction has an active and consistently present social media account/s	4.28	A	3
Composite Mean	4.33	A	

Table 2 shows the destination marketing in Batangas Province in terms of brand position with the composite mean of 4.33 rated as agree. It uses tagline to increase awareness and assist recollection among tourists and prospective customers (4.35) rated as the highest, followed with the tourist attraction utilizes digital media such a photos, videos, reels, blogs, vlogs, giveaways to establish and build its brand or image (4.34), and the lowest was the tourist attraction has an active and consistently present social media account/s (4.33).

The tagline “All Here, So Near” is a play on words that highlights two of the things that make Batangas Province a popular tourist destination: its diversity of attractions and its proximity to Metro Manila. The first part of the tagline, “All Here,” refers to the wide variety of attractions that Batangas Province has to offer. From beaches to mountains to volcanoes, there is something for everyone in Batangas. Visitors can go snorkeling in Anilao, hiking in Mount Makiling, or visiting Taal Volcano. They can also visit historical sites, such as the Taal Basilica and the San Juan de Nepomuceno Church, or cultural attractions, such as the Balayan Museum and the Batangas Historical Museum. The second part of the tagline, “So Near,” refers to the fact that Batangas Province is only a short drive from Metro Manila. This makes it a convenient destination for a weekend getaway or a day trip. Visitors can easily escape the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy the peace and quiet of Batangas.

Research into successful brand positioning strategies has demonstrated that it involves creating a unique image, distinctive attributes, positive associations, and values in consumers' minds. This process helps establish a sustainable brand image and fosters consumer attachment to the brand. Developing and implementing a company's positioning strategy is crucial for achieving these objectives (Fayvishenko, 2018). Market conditions

significantly influence the performance of visitor attractions, making it essential to understand the market environment in which they operate (Leask, 2022). Effective brand positioning can be achieved by enhancing positive experiences and addressing negative aspects of tourism (Taecharungroj, 2023).

**Table 3**

*Destination Marketing in Batangas Province in terms of Service Quality*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
The tourist attraction uses reliable and transparent marketing strategies to reflect the true experience of its services and facilities	4.53	SA	3
The quality of service is commensurate to price	4.57	SA	2
The service staff in the tourist attraction is attentive to tourist/guest needs	4.63	SA	1
Composite Mean	4.57	SA	

Table 3 reveals the destination marketing in Batangas Province in terms of service quality with a composite mean of 4.57 interpreted as strongly agree. The service staff in the tourist attraction is attentive to tourist/guest needs (4.63) ranked first, followed by the quality of service is commensurate to price (4.57), and the lowest was the tourist attraction uses reliable and transparent marketing strategies to reflect the true experience of its services and facilities (4.53). This means that service staff in tourist attractions in Batangas are generally attentive to tourist/guest needs. Service staff in tourist attractions are aware of the importance of providing good service to tourists because they are trained to be polite and helpful. There are many tourist attractions in Batangas Province, and the service staff in each attraction are competing to provide the best possible service to tourists. They are polite, helpful, and knowledgeable about the attractions they work at. They are also often able to speak English, which makes it easy for tourists to communicate with them. The study of Bichler, et al (2020) found that three service quality dimensions – reliability, attentiveness, and atmosphere – have a direct effect on revisit intention. According to Haarhoff et al. (2018) the probability of tourists revisiting a destination hinge on its comprehensive excellence in meeting a diverse array of tourist needs and expectations. It's not merely about excelling in one or two aspects, but rather about crafting a seamless and positive experience across multiple dimensions.

**Table 3**

*Destination Marketing in terms of the Promotion of Cultural Events*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
The tourist attraction promotes cultural events that entice more tourists	4.38	A	3
This promotion raised awareness on the cultural events of the destination	4.42	A	2
Festivals promote the tourism in the municipality and the province as a whole	4.45	A	1
Composite Mean	4.41	A	

Table 3 presents the destination marketing in Batangas Province in terms of promotion of cultural events having a composite mean of 4.41 rated as agree. Festivals promote the tourism in the municipality and the province as a whole (4.45) topped the rank, followed by this promotion raised awareness on the cultural events of the destination (4.42), and the lowest was the tourist attraction promotes cultural events that entice more tourists (4.38).

This means that tourists agreed that festivals are a great way to attract visitors to a municipality or province. They offer something for everyone, from cultural events to food festivals to sporting events. This can help boost tourism numbers and generate revenues, for the local economy. Festivals can also be a great way to highlight the local culture. They can showcase traditional customs, food, and music, which can help to educate visitors about the area's unique history and heritage. Festivals can also generate media attention, which can help to promote the municipality or province to a wider audience. This can lead to increased tourism numbers and economic benefits. Examples of Festivals are Sublian Festival, Ala Eh Festival and Calacatchara Festival.

A study by Drummond (2021) confirms that cultural events can significantly contribute to regional development through various means, including economic benefits (such as attracting tourism, marketing the area and its surroundings, and stimulating local businesses), social impacts, and intrinsic cultural impacts.

Mxunyelwa et al. (2018) highlight festivals as significant cultural attractions that draw tourists from diverse economic backgrounds, termed festival tourism. This phenomenon not only boosts local economies but also acts as a catalyst for increased economic activity, benefiting tourism businesses and the broader community through job creation, higher tax revenue, and overall economic growth. Additionally, festivals serve as gateways to introduce visitors to a destination's distinct culture, traditions, and attractions. The primary motivations for attending festivals include the desire to experience the local way of life, enjoy live entertainment, embrace the excitement of the event, and seek escape through social interactions. Furthermore, local festivals have proven to be effective in increasing travel to the host area.

**Table 4**

*Tourist Behavioral Intention in terms of Tourist Satisfaction*

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The destination is better than I expected	3.86	A	3
2. The destination is worth visiting for me	4.37	A	1
3. Overall, I was satisfied with spending my time/holiday in the destination	3.90	A	2
Composite Mean	4.04	A	

Table 4 shows tourist behavioral intention in Batangas Province in terms of tourist satisfaction with a composite mean of 4.04 interpreted as agree. The destination is worth visiting for me (4.37) got the highest mean, followed by I was satisfied with spending my time/holiday in the destination (3.90), and the lowest indicator is the destination is better than I expected (3.86).

According to the tourists, there are many great destinations in Batangas Province that are worth visiting, depending on the interests. First, Taal Volcano and Lake is one of the most iconic landmarks in the Philippines, and it's a must-see for any visitor in Batangas. Tourists can hike to the top of the volcano, take a boat ride on the lake, or visit the Taal Heritage Town, which is located on the shores of the lake. Second, Anilao is a world-renowned diving destination, with over 20 dive sites that offer stunning underwater scenery. If the tourist is a diver, this is a great place to visit. Third, Mount Pico de Loro is a mountain located in the town of Lian, Batangas which is a popular hiking destination, with stunning views of the surrounding area. Another is Caleruega Chapel of Transfiguration, is modeled after the famous pilgrimage site in Spain, and it's a beautiful place to visit. These are just a few of the many great destinations in Batangas Province. No matter what interests the tourists have, they will find something to enjoy in this beautiful part of the Philippines. According to Antara et al., (2018), travelers possess the most powerful tool available to them: the ability to choose. They go off on excursions to satisfy a wide range of desires and specifications, forming their dream locations. The decision-making process is heavily influenced by several important factors, including real interactions with friendly locals that enhance the visitor experience and leave lasting memories, the overall environment and climate of a destination, a destination with secured safety, and, finally, a destination that offers a wide range of exciting activities. Additionally, the likelihood of tourists to return a visit to a destination is determined by the overall excellence of a destination that caters to a wide range of tourist needs and expectations. It is not just about having one or two things right, but rather creating a seamless and positive experience across various aspects having a huge impact on the tourist's decision to revisit the destination making it worth (Antón et al., 2017)

**Table 5**

*Tourist Behavioral Intention in terms of Intention to Recommend*

Indicators	Mean	VI	Rank
1. I would encourage my friends and relatives to travel in this destination	3.86	A	3
2. I could say good things on social media about this destination	3.88	A	2
3. I would promote this destination to help tourism recovery	4.43	A	1
Composite Mean	4.06	A	

Table 5 reveals the tourist behavioral intention in Batangas Province in terms of intention to recommend with a composite mean of 4.06 rated as agree. I would promote this destination to help tourism recovery (4.06)

ranked first, followed by I could say good things on social media about this destination (3.88), and the lowest was I would encourage my friends and relatives to travel in this destination (3.86). The results mean that tourists will have the willingness to promote Batangas Province as a tourist destination because they are satisfied with their experience which is a key factor in determining whether or not tourists will return to a destination. If tourists are satisfied with their experience in Batangas, they are more likely to recommend it to others and to return in the future. Tourist behavioral intention is a critical topic in interdisciplinary research. It refers to a tourist's intention to revisit a destination based on their previous experiences and can also indicate the likelihood of them recommending the destination to others. Researchers have consistently regarded behavioral intention as one of the most reliable predictors of future tourist behavior (Nuñez & Borbon, 2022). According to Prayag et al., (2017) A visitor's overall perception and assessment of a place are greatly influenced by their emotional experiences and level of pleasure. Additionally, a favorable overall impression is very important in promoting visitors' desire to refer. Travelers who are happy with their experiences turn become advocates, ready to tell others about their wonderful time and suggest the location to friends, family, and acquaintances. In addition, if the tourist is pleased with their experience, they become devoted patrons who encourage other potential visitors to check out a particular site. This serves as a solid basis for marketing the destination and promoting customer satisfaction. To effectively impact more potential tourists, the place must also be able to build an exceptional performance in servicing the tourists. A thrilled guest's suggestion has a good effect on other travelers as it creates the perception that this is the primary motive to visit an attraction (Carino et al., (2019).

**Table 6**

*Tourist Behavioral Intention in terms of Intention to Revisit*

Indicators	Mean	VI	Rank
If given the opportunity, I am willing to travel again to this destination	4.42	A	1
I am planning to travel to this destination again soon	4.31	A	2
The likelihood of me revisiting this destination is high	4.29	A	3
Composite Mean	4.34	A	

Table 6 presents tourist behavioral intention in Batangas Province in terms of intention to revisit with a composite mean of 4.34 interpreted as agree. If given the opportunity, I am willing to travel again to this destination (4.42) ranked first, followed by I am planning to travel to this destination again soon, and the lowest was the likelihood of me revisiting this destination is high (4.29). This means that tourists are willing to travel again to Batangas because of its great attractions. The natural beauty of Batangas is stunning. From the Taal Volcano and Lake to the beaches of Laiya, there are many beautiful places to see in Batangas. The culture of Batangas is rich and diverse. There are many historical sites and museums to visit, as well as opportunities to experience the local culture through food, music, and dance. The people of Batangas are friendly and welcoming. Tourists will feel at home in Batangas because the people are always happy to help visitors. And the cost of travel in Batangas is relatively low which means that tourists can enjoy all that Batangas has to offer without breaking the bank. According to Barlan and Borbon (2022), tourists are eager to stay in and visit Batangas. They trust the enthusiasm of business operators and the local government in managing safety and health protocols. This indicates that visitors intend to return, and this commitment will be fulfilled if the destination meets their expectations. Tourist satisfaction results in a desire to recommend the location, driven by the high-quality services they experienced there. Additionally, destination familiarity significantly influences travelers' intention to visit a destination (Bianchi et al., 2017). Similarly, Sharma and Nayak (2018) discovered that a positive overall image significantly impacts tourists' intention to revisit a destination and recommend it to others.

Table 7 shows the relationship between destination marketing and tourist behavioral intention. The data shows that destination marketing and all its sub-variables (brand marketing strategies, brand position, service quality, promoting cultural events) are highly correlated with tourist behavioral intention and all its sub-variables (tourist satisfaction, intention to recommend, and intention to revisit) since all have p-values less than 0.05. Specifically, the higher the responses on the brand marketing strategies, the higher the scores in tourist satisfaction (0.117), intention to recommend (0.058), and intention to revisit (0.122). Destination marketing's

correlation with tourist behavioral intention means that tourists are more likely to be influenced by destination marketing that is well-executed and that focuses on the quality of the experience that tourists can expect. Tourists who are satisfied with their experience at a destination are more likely to recommend it to others and to return in the future. According to the study of Jimenez, et al., (2020) the influence of online destination brand experience and credibility on behavioral intentions varies based on visitors' prior visitation status. By understanding and addressing these differences, destinations can better engage with both potential and past visitors to effectively shape their intentions and promote sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, overall satisfaction had a greater influence on revisit intention than on the willingness to recommend. It also partially mediated the relationship between travel motivations and revisit intention (Bayih and Sing, 2020). This finding is significant for destination managers and researchers, as it highlights the importance of considering the effects of motivational factors on satisfaction and behavioral intentions when developing domestic tourism.

**Table 7***Relationship between Destination Marketing and Tourists Behavioral Intention*

Destination Marketing	Tourist Behavioral Intention											
	Tourist Satisfaction			Intention to Recommend			to Intention to Revisit			Overall		
	$r_{xy}$	p-value	I	$r_{xy}$	p-value	I	$r_{xy}$	p-value	I	$r_{xy}$	p-value	I
Brand Marketing Strategies	.117*	0.019	S	0.095	0.058	S	.122*	0.015	S	.118*	0.018	S
Brand Position	.150**	0.003	S	.162**	0.001	S	.161**	0.001	S	.168**	0.001	S
Service Quality	.405**	0.000	S	.445**	0.000	S	.323**	0.000	S	.418**	0.000	S
Promotion of Cultural Events	.237**	0.000	S	.244**	0.000	S	.205**	0.000	S	.244**	0.000	S
Overall	.281**	0.000	S	.293**	0.000	S	.252**	0.000	S	.294**	0.000	S

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendation

The tourists agreed that there are evident efforts in destination marketing in terms of brand marketing strategies, brand position, service quality, and promotion of cultural events. This means that the province is well-positioned to attract tourists and provide them with a positive and unique experience. This is a positive indication that the tourism industry in Batangas is likely to help the province continue to grow as a tourist destination. When it comes to tourist behavioral intention, the findings reflect that they are satisfied with their visit, they have the intention to recommend visiting Batangas to their friends and relatives, and they have the intention to revisit the province. This suggests that tourists are likely to return to Batangas in the future. A significant relationship exists between tourism infrastructure and destination marketing to tourist behavioral intention. This suggests that these are predictors in shaping a positive tourist behavioral intention.

Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office may create a tailored tourism marketing campaign that can help entice different tourist profiles in accordance with their needs, expectations, and what they deem to be significant. The campaign may include the predictors of tourist behavioral intention designed to target specific markets. By making thoughtful recommendations based on consumer preference, tourism marketers can ensure a positive tourism experience for the different types of tourists. Tourism operators may intensify their marketing campaign on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. In addition to these major social media platforms, managers of tourist attractions can also consider creating accounts on more niche platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat. These platforms can be a great way to broaden the reach on a specific audience, establish brand image and position, and generate buzz about a destination. This means posting new content regularly to increase awareness and engagement with followers. Future researchers may conduct a more in-depth study with a special focus on how the variables mentioned and measured in this study would promote and lend more value to the cultural heritage of the Province of Batangas. Future researchers are encouraged to further study and make sensible recommendations on sustainable tourism using the proposed framework.



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