

Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies to Increase Tourist Visits to Lembang, West Bandung Regency

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ABSTRAK

Pariwisata memainkan peran strategis dalam pembangunan ekonomi daerah dan daya saing destinasi. Sebagai salah satu destinasi wisata terkemuka di Jawa Barat, Lembang menghadapi persaingan yang semakin ketat, sehingga strategi pemasaran yang efektif menjadi sangat penting untuk menarik pengunjung. Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh Komunikasi Pemasaran Terpadu (IMC) dan Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) terhadap Kunjungan Wisatawan di Lembang, Kabupaten Bandung Barat. Pendekatan kuantitatif diterapkan dengan menggunakan survei terhadap 185 wisatawan yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel purposif. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur yang diukur dengan skala Likert lima poin dan dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 25 melalui validitas, reliabilitas, asumsi klasik, regresi berganda, koefisien determinasi, dan pengujian hipotesis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik IMC maupun e-WOM memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Kunjungan Wisatawan, baik secara individual maupun simultan. Koefisien determinasi ($R^2 = 0,667$) menunjukkan bahwa 66,7% variasi dalam Kunjungan Wisatawan dapat dijelaskan oleh kedua variabel tersebut. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya kegiatan promosi terintegrasi dan rekomendasi online yang positif dalam memengaruhi keputusan kunjungan wisatawan serta memperkuat daya saing destinasi di Lembang.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi Pemasaran Terpadu, Electronic Word of Mouth, Kunjungan Wisatawan, Pemasaran Pariwisata, Pariwisata Lembang

ABSTRACT

Tourism plays a strategic role in regional economic development and destination competitiveness. As one of the leading tourism destinations in West Java, Lembang faces increasing competition, making effective marketing strategies essential to attract visitors. This study examines the influence of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Tourist Visits in Lembang, West Bandung Regency. A quantitative approach was applied using a survey of 185 tourists selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using SPSS version 25 through validity, reliability, classical assumption, multiple regression, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing. The results reveal that both IMC and e-WOM have positive and significant effects on Tourist Visits, both individually and simultaneously. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.667$) indicates that 66.7% of the variation in Tourist Visits is explained by the two variables. These findings highlight the importance of integrated promotional activities and positive online recommendations in influencing tourist visitation decisions and strengthening destination competitiveness in Lembang.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication, Electronic Word of Mouth, Tourist Visits, Tourism Marketing, Lembang Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the most important sectors contributing to economic growth, employment generation, and regional development worldwide. In developing countries such as Indonesia, tourism serves as a strategic instrument for enhancing local economic activities, increasing government revenue, and strengthening regional competitiveness. The rapid development of tourism destinations has intensified competition among regions, requiring

destination managers to adopt effective marketing strategies capable of attracting and retaining visitors (Fadli et al., 2018). Moreover, the increasing digitalization of consumer behavior has transformed the way tourists search for information, evaluate destinations, and make travel decisions (Lin, 2015; Stevy et al., 2023). Consequently, tourism stakeholders are challenged to implement communication strategies that effectively integrate both traditional and digital marketing channels.

Lembang, located in West Bandung Regency, West Java, is one of Indonesia's prominent tourism destinations, attracting millions of domestic visitors annually. The area offers diverse attractions, including natural landscapes, culinary tourism, family recreation parks, agro-tourism activities, and outdoor adventure experiences (Hapsari et al., 2019; Zulfikri, 2023). These tourism resources have significantly contributed to local economic development through job creation, business expansion, and infrastructure improvement. However, the emergence of competing destinations and the evolving preferences of tourists have increased the need for more effective destination marketing strategies to maintain Lembang's attractiveness and competitiveness.

The advancement of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed tourism marketing practices. The widespread use of social media, online travel platforms, blogs, and review websites has shifted tourists' information-seeking behavior from traditional promotional sources toward digital channels. Tourists increasingly rely on online information and peer-generated content before making travel decisions (Carvalho et al., 2023; Crouch, 2021). This transformation has encouraged tourism marketers to move beyond conventional advertising and adopt integrated communication approaches that facilitate engagement, interaction, and relationship building with potential visitors.

One of the most widely recognized approaches in contemporary marketing is Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). IMC refers to the strategic coordination of various communication tools, including advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and digital marketing, to deliver consistent and persuasive messages to target audiences (Mulhern, 2013; Zuhria & Ratnaningtyas, 2023). Theoretically, IMC enhances communication effectiveness by ensuring message consistency across multiple channels, thereby strengthening brand awareness and influencing consumer decision-making. Within the tourism context, effective IMC enables destinations to communicate their unique value propositions, improve destination image, and encourage visitation behavior (Alwi et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2022).

Alongside organizational communication efforts, tourists are increasingly influenced by information shared by other consumers through digital platforms, commonly referred to as Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth communication, e-WOM can reach broader audiences and remain accessible over time through online reviews, social media content, travel blogs, and discussion forums (Cremonezi & Souto, 2023; Fadillah, 2015; Gupta, 2023). Because tourism products are intangible and experiential in nature, prospective tourists often depend on online reviews and recommendations to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk. Positive e-WOM can enhance destination credibility and attractiveness, whereas negative e-WOM may discourage potential visitors from selecting a destination.

Although previous studies have confirmed the significant role of Integrated Marketing Communication and Electronic Word of Mouth in shaping consumer behavior and tourism-related decisions, most studies have examined these variables independently or within different destination contexts. Empirical evidence investigating their simultaneous influence on tourist visits in Lembang

remains limited. Considering the increasingly competitive tourism environment in Lembang, understanding the combined effects of IMC and e-WOM is essential for developing effective destination marketing strategies. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of Integrated Marketing Communication and Electronic Word of Mouth on tourist visits to Lembang, West Bandung Regency, and to provide both theoretical contributions to tourism marketing literature and practical implications for destination managers and policymakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Tourism Marketing

Tourism marketing encompasses the activities undertaken by tourism organizations and destination managers to create, communicate, and deliver value to tourists while achieving organizational objectives (Fadli et al., 2018; Susanto et al., 2019). Given the intangible and experience-based nature of tourism products, effective marketing communication is essential for influencing travel decisions and enhancing destination attractiveness. According to (Bašan et al., 2021; Sutono, 2019), tourism marketing involves understanding tourist needs, developing appealing tourism offerings, and communicating destination value through various promotional channels. In the digital era, tourism marketing has evolved from traditional advertising toward more interactive and technology-driven approaches that emphasize customer engagement and experience sharing (Georgescu et al., 2021; Nabhan et al., 2023). Effective tourism marketing contributes to destination competitiveness by increasing destination awareness, strengthening destination image, enhancing tourist satisfaction, and ultimately encouraging tourist visitation.

B. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic approach that integrates various communication tools to deliver consistent, clear, and persuasive messages to target audiences. According to (Mulhern, 2013; Zuhria & Ratnaningtyas, 2023), IMC involves planning, implementing, and coordinating promotional activities such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, personal selling, and digital marketing to enhance communication effectiveness. In the tourism sector, IMC is essential because tourists rely on multiple information sources before making travel decisions. Consistent destination messaging across various channels helps strengthen destination awareness, build trust, improve destination image, and influence visitation decisions (Alwi et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2022). Previous studies have shown that effective IMC positively affects consumer awareness, brand image, purchase intention, and tourist behavior. Following (Alwi et al., 2022; Zuhria & Ratnaningtyas, 2023), the dimensions of IMC include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, interactive marketing, and personal selling.

C. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) refers to positive or negative information shared by consumers about products, services, brands, or destinations through internet-based platforms. According to (Arif, 2019; Cai et al., 2025), e-WOM enables customer opinions to reach a wide audience rapidly, making it a powerful source of information in the digital era. In tourism, where products are largely intangible and experience-based, potential visitors frequently rely on online reviews, ratings, social media content, travel blogs, and recommendations from previous tourists before making travel decisions. Positive e-WOM can enhance destination credibility, strengthen destination image, and increase visitation intentions, while negative e-WOM may discourage potential tourists. Consequently, effective management of e-WOM has become essential for destination competitiveness and tourism marketing success. Following (Gupta, 2023; Hamidun, 2018), e-WOM is measured through three dimensions: intensity, valence of opinion, and content.

D. Tourist Visits

Tourist visits refer to travel activities undertaken by individuals to destinations outside their usual environment for leisure, recreation, business, or other temporary purposes. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourist visitation is an important indicator of destination performance because it reflects a destination's ability to attract visitors and generate economic benefits (Putri et al., 2023). Tourist visits are influenced by various factors, including destination image, service quality, promotional activities, social influence, and information availability. In the digital era, marketing communication and online consumer recommendations play an increasingly important role in shaping travel decisions (Homer, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2022). For tourism destinations such as Lembang, increasing tourist visits is essential for supporting local economic growth and sustainable tourism development. Tourist visits can be measured through visiting intention, actual visiting decision, revisit intention, and recommendation intention.

E. Hypothesis Development

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) contributes to tourist visitation by increasing destination awareness, strengthening destination image, and delivering consistent promotional messages across multiple communication channels. Through the integration of advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and other promotional activities, destinations can communicate their unique attractions more effectively and influence tourists' travel decisions (Mulhern, 2013; Zuhria & Ratnaningtyas, 2023). Previous studies have demonstrated that effective IMC strategies enhance tourist engagement, improve destination recognition, and ultimately increase visitation rates. Therefore, Integrated Marketing Communication is expected to have a positive effect on tourist visits to Lembang.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) influences tourist visitation by providing credible information and experiences shared by previous visitors through online platforms. Reviews, ratings, recommendations, and social media content help potential tourists reduce uncertainty and evaluate destination quality before making travel decisions. Empirical studies have consistently shown that positive e-WOM enhances destination attractiveness, strengthens travel intention, and encourages visitation behavior (Prasetyo, 2020; Sahira et al., 2023). Therefore, Electronic Word of Mouth is expected to positively influence tourist visits to Lembang.

H1: Integrated Marketing Communication has a positive and significant effect on tourist visits to Lembang, West Bandung Regency.

H2: Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on tourist visits to Lembang, West Bandung Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research approach to examine the influence of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Tourist Visits in Lembang, West Bandung Regency. The quantitative method was chosen to objectively measure the relationships among variables using statistical analysis and produce findings that can be generalized to a broader population. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to tourists who had visited Lembang at least once within the previous twelve months.

B. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all tourists visiting Lembang, West Bandung Regency, which was treated as an infinite population due to the absence of an exact number of visitors during the study period. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select respondents who met the predetermined criteria, namely being at least 17 years old, having visited Lembang at least once within the last twelve months, willingly participating in the study, and having experience accessing tourism-related information through online or offline communication channels. Based on these criteria, a total of 185 respondents were selected, a sample size considered adequate for multiple regression analysis and behavioral research.

C. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study consists of two independent variables, namely Integrated Marketing Communication (X_1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (X_2), and one dependent variable, Tourist Visits (Y). Integrated Marketing Communication is measured through advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, interactive marketing, and personal selling, while Electronic Word of Mouth is measured through intensity, valence of opinion, and content quality. Tourist Visits are measured through visiting intention, actual visiting decision, revisit intention, and recommendation intention. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), which is considered effective for capturing respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies related to tourism marketing communication and visitation decisions.

D. Data Collection Technique

Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed directly and online to tourists who had visited Lembang. The questionnaire gathered respondents’ demographic information, including gender, age, education level, occupation, and visitation frequency, as well as their perceptions of Integrated Marketing Communication, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Tourist Visits. Secondary data were obtained from tourism reports, government publications, academic journals, books, and other relevant literature related to tourism marketing and consumer behavior.

E. Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25. Instrument quality was evaluated through validity testing using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, where items were considered valid if the significance value was below 0.05, and reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha, with values above 0.70 indicating reliable instruments. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to summarize respondent characteristics and variable responses through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were performed, including the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test, multicollinearity test using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser method. To examine the effects of Integrated Marketing Communication (X_1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (X_2) on Tourist Visits (Y), multiple linear regression analysis was applied using the model $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + e$. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the model, while hypothesis testing was conducted through partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) analyses with a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondent Characteristics

A total of 185 questionnaires were distributed and successfully collected from tourists who had visited Lembang, West Bandung Regency. All questionnaires were complete and eligible for analysis.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	92	49.7
	Female	93	50.3
Age	17–25 years	48	25.9
	26–35 years	71	38.4
	36–45 years	42	22.7
	>45 years	24	13.0
Education	High School	54	29.2
	Diploma	33	17.8
	Bachelor's Degree	78	42.2
	Postgraduate	20	10.8
Visitation Frequency	1–2 Times	81	43.8
	3–5 Times	68	36.8
	>5 Times	36	19.4

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the 185 respondents involved in this study. Based on gender, the respondents were relatively balanced, consisting of 92 males (49.7%) and 93 females (50.3%). In terms of age, the majority were between 26–35 years old (38.4%), followed by 17–25 years (25.9%), 36–45 years (22.7%), and over 45 years (13.0%). Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor’s degree (42.2%), followed by high school graduates (29.2%), diploma holders (17.8%), and postgraduates (10.8%). Based on visitation frequency, 43.8% of respondents had visited Lembang 1–2 times, 36.8% had visited 3–5 times, and 19.4% had visited more than five times, indicating that a substantial proportion of respondents were repeat visitors familiar with the destination.

B. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Integrated Marketing Communication	185	2.40	5.00	4.112	0.524
Electronic Word of Mouth	185	2.20	5.00	4.237	0.483
Tourist Visits	185	2.60	5.00	4.186	0.501

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the research variables based on 185 respondents. The results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has the highest mean score (4.237; SD = 0.483), followed by Tourist Visits (4.186; SD = 0.501) and Integrated Marketing Communication (4.112; SD = 0.524). The relatively high mean values indicate that respondents generally had positive perceptions of the marketing communication activities and online information related to Lembang, which were accompanied by a strong tendency toward visiting and revisiting the destination. Additionally, the relatively low standard deviation values suggest that respondents’ perceptions were fairly homogeneous across all variables.

C. Instrument Testing

1. Validity Test

Table 3. Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	r-count Range	r-table	Result
IMC	12	0.612–0.841	0.144	Valid
e-WOM	9	0.633–0.857	0.144	Valid
Tourist Visits	8	0.601–0.826	0.144	Valid

Table 3 shows that all questionnaire items used to measure Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), and Tourist Visits are valid. The calculated correlation coefficients (r-count) ranged from 0.612 to 0.841 for IMC, 0.633 to 0.857 for e-WOM, and 0.601 to 0.826 for Tourist Visits, all of which exceeded the critical value of r-table (0.144). These results indicate that each measurement item is capable of accurately reflecting its respective construct and is therefore suitable for further statistical analysis.

2. Reliability Test

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Standard	Result
Integrated Marketing Communication	0.886	0.70	Reliable

Electronic Word of Mouth	0.903	0.70	Reliable
Tourist Visits	0.875	0.70	Reliable

Table 4 presents the reliability test results, indicating that all research variables have Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Integrated Marketing Communication obtained a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.886, Electronic Word of Mouth recorded the highest value at 0.903, and Tourist Visits achieved a value of 0.875. These findings demonstrate that all measurement instruments possess a high level of internal consistency and reliability, confirming that the questionnaire items are suitable for measuring their respective constructs consistently and accurately.

D. Classical Assumption Tests

1. Normality Test

The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test show a K-S statistic value of 0.062 with a significance value of 0.200 based on 185 observations. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, the residuals are normally distributed, indicating that the normality assumption of the regression model has been satisfied and the data are appropriate for further analysis using multiple linear regression.

2. Multicollinearity Test

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
IMC	0.612	1.634
e-WOM	0.612	1.634

Table 5 presents the multicollinearity test results for the independent variables. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) each have a Tolerance value of 0.612, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.10, and a VIF value of 1.634, which is well below the maximum acceptable value of 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables, meaning that each variable contributes distinct information to the regression model and can be included simultaneously in the analysis.

3. Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 6. Glejser Test Results

Variable	Sig.
IMC	0.382
e-WOM	0.457

Table 6 presents the results of the Glejser test for heteroscedasticity. The significance values for Integrated Marketing Communication (0.382) and Electronic Word of Mouth (0.457) are both greater than the threshold of 0.05. These findings indicate that the regression model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity, meaning that the variance of the residuals remains constant across observations. Therefore, the heteroscedasticity assumption is satisfied, and the regression model is considered appropriate for further analysis.

E. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.845	0.291	—	2.904	0.004
IMC	0.376	0.067	0.392	5.612	0.000
e-WOM	0.451	0.072	0.438	6.264	0.000

The multiple regression analysis produced the equation $Y = 0.845 + 0.376X_1 + 0.451X_2$, indicating that both Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) have positive effects on Tourist Visits; furthermore, the t-test results show that IMC ($t = 5.612$, $p = 0.000$) and e-WOM ($t = 6.264$, $p = 0.000$) significantly influence Tourist Visits, thereby supporting both H1 and H2.

Table 8. ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.782	2	15.391	182.334	0.000
Residual	15.366	182	0.084		
Total	46.148	184			

The results of the simultaneous test show an F-statistic value of 143.267 with a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that Electronic Word of

The F-test result shows an F-value of 182.334 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value is below 0.05, Integrated Marketing Communication and Electronic Word of Mouth simultaneously affect Tourist Visits. Thus, H3 is supported.

F. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The model summary results show an R value of 0.817, indicating a strong relationship between the independent variables and Tourist Visits. The coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.667 and Adjusted R² of 0.663 indicate that 66.7% of the variation in Tourist Visits can be explained by Integrated Marketing Communication and Electronic Word of Mouth, while the remaining 33.3% is influenced by other factors outside the model. Additionally, the standard error of estimate of 0.291 suggests a relatively good level of predictive accuracy for the regression model.

Discussion

The findings indicate that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Visits to Lembang. The positive regression coefficient suggests that coordinated promotional activities implemented through various communication channels are effective in influencing tourists' visitation decisions. This result supports marketing communication theory, which emphasizes that consistent and integrated messages enhance destination awareness, strengthen destination image, and encourage consumer action (Mulhern, 2013; Zuhria & Ratnaningtyas, 2023). The findings are also in line with previous studies demonstrating that effective IMC strategies improve destination attractiveness and increase visitor engagement by delivering clear and persuasive information to potential tourists.

The results further reveal that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has the strongest influence on Tourist Visits among the independent variables examined. This finding reflects the

growing role of digital communication in shaping tourism behavior, where tourists increasingly depend on online reviews, recommendations, social media content, travel blogs, and ratings before selecting a destination (Gupta, 2023; Putra & Saputri, 2020). Positive information shared by previous visitors helps reduce perceived risk and uncertainty while enhancing trust and confidence among prospective tourists. Therefore, e-WOM has become a highly influential marketing tool capable of shaping destination perceptions and encouraging visitation decisions in the tourism sector.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.667$) indicates that Integrated Marketing Communication and Electronic Word of Mouth jointly explain 66.7% of the variation in Tourist Visits, highlighting the substantial importance of communication-related factors in attracting tourists to Lembang. However, the remaining 33.3% of the variation may be explained by other determinants such as destination image, service quality, accessibility, tourism facilities, tourist satisfaction, pricing, and perceived value. These findings suggest that tourism stakeholders should strengthen integrated promotional strategies while simultaneously encouraging positive online discussions through improved visitor experiences, active social media engagement, and collaborations with digital influencers. Such efforts can enhance destination visibility, credibility, and competitiveness, ultimately contributing to increased tourist arrivals in Lembang, West Bandung Regency.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Tourist Visits in Lembang, West Bandung Regency. The results indicate that both IMC and e-WOM have positive and significant effects on Tourist Visits, with e-WOM emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings suggest that coordinated promotional activities and positive online recommendations play important roles in increasing destination awareness, strengthening destination credibility, and encouraging visitation decisions. Furthermore, IMC and e-WOM jointly explain 66.7% of the variation in Tourist Visits, highlighting the critical importance of communication-related factors in tourism demand. Therefore, tourism stakeholders should strengthen integrated promotional strategies and encourage positive digital engagement to enhance destination visibility, improve destination image, and support sustainable growth in tourist arrivals. Future research may incorporate additional variables such as destination image, tourist satisfaction, service quality, accessibility, and perceived value to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tourist visitation behavior.

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