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**The Effect of Employee's Skills on Product and Service Consistency in Hospitality Industries (A Case Study of Two Hotels in Victoria Island, Lagos)**

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**BY**

**AKPAN, E. Ebenezer, *Ph.D, FCICN, AP, PPGDCA, PHDCDPM***  
**Corporate Institute of Research and Computer Science**  
**140 Ikot Ekpene Road**  
**Uyo, Akwa Ibom State**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study sought to access the effect of employee's skills on product and service consistency in hospitality industries: a case study of two hotels (Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel) in Victoria Island, Lagos. An Ex-post Facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in two hotels in Victoria Island, Lagos. The population of the study comprised all the staff of Glee hotel and Divine Fountain hotels in Lagos respectively. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents from the Divine Fountain Hotel and 30 from 30 from the GLEE Hotel, which constituted the sample size of 60 used for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Employees Skills, Product and Services Consistency Questionnaire (ESPSCQ)". The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.94, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as chi-square and regression analyses. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study reveals that various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos include: customer service skills, cultural awareness, communication skills, multitasking skills, work ethic, language skills, professionalism, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills and attention to detail. The results also proved that there is no significant difference in the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos as well as the extent of products and services consistency identified with them. Also, that there is significant effect of employee's skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. One of the recommendations was that since the goal of every successful business is to maintain a high level of customers' satisfaction the hotel should provide their client with value added transaction through positive customer interaction. In turn, the customer's will feel important and satisfied.*

**KEYWORDS: Employee's Skills, Product and Services Consistency, Hospitality Industries, Service Quality, Divine Fountain Hotel , GLEE Hotel.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Employees' behaviors are defined as various sequences of actions carried out by employees within the organization. Some of these behaviors may be positive and refer to the advantageous actions of employees on behalf of the organization, employees, and customers, while further behaviors may be negative and may destroy a productive work environment. The occurrence of negative behaviors can engender stress, incite negligible illnesses, and

even cause depression among employees (Hanna 2004). The threat is that these negative behaviors are contagion and spread to others like the flu, which is costly to the organization's productivity and eventually takes its toll on employees' health and performance.

A customer's perception is defined as the degree of concordance between expectations and experience. Where comparability is apparent, the customer is deemed to be satisfied. While customer satisfaction is viewed as the outcome of a comparison process between perceived product/service performance and previously held expectations, when performance exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs and leads to satisfaction, while performance below expectations results in negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction. Bei and Chiou (2001) looked at customer satisfaction as the function of perceived service quality, product quality, and price, and it is measured by the customer's overall judgment. Dimitris, Nikolaos, and Petros (2007) define customer satisfaction as a measure of how a product or service performs compared to a customer's expectations.

Customer satisfaction is the "holy grail" of success for businesses in the customer service industry. The goal of every successful business is to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction by providing their clients with value-added transactions through positive customer interaction. In turn, the customer's expectation is to feel important and assisted during the interactions that ultimately lead to the fulfillment of their desire and a positive end result. Customer service representatives are often trained to know the basic elements of providing excellent customer service. They are taught to listen, to be patient, tolerant and, above all, helpful. Organizations, especially hotels, often monitor their employees to make sure they consistently abide by and apply all the rules and customer service practices. A hotel is an establishment that provides paid lodging and feeding on a short-term basis. The provision of basic accommodation in the past consisted of only rooms, with modern facilities including a bedroom suit and air conditioning or climate control. Additional common features found in hotel rooms are a telephone, an alarm clock, television, and internet connectivity. Snacks, food, and drinks are supplied in a mini bar, and facilities for making hot drinks are available. Above all, the one thing that can make or break customers in hospitality is the ability to meet customer expectations. Whether it's simply serving drinks or running an entire hotel, it's the job of the employees to ensure that the customers are having a great time and that they have nothing to worry about.

Essentially, customer service is about being both positive and proactive. Even when dealing with difficult customers, it's important to smile, be polite, and remain professional. Alternatively, on certain occasions, it can also be about going that extra mile for a guest or patron. Considering the enormous advantages associated with establishing a hotel, Customer requirements for quality products and services in the hotel industry have become increasingly evident to professionals in the industry. In this context, a positive relationship can give customers a higher commitment and increase their return rate. In order to achieve customer satisfaction, service delivery is considered paramount in today's hospitality business and also in the promotion of tourism activities within a destination. This is because tourists are visitors who require hotel accommodation for their stay (Armando, 2005). In other words, for customers to continue to patronize any hotel, they must be satisfied with the service offered.

### **Statement of Problem**

Despite the relatively harsh business environment in which businesses are run in Nigeria, many hostels, including Divine Fountain Hotels Limited and GLEE Hotel, have a non-stop

development and proven track record of providing better-quality hospitality services to their customers. On the other hand, many hotels have failed in this direction, and this has caused a quick crumple in business. The hotels identified with a good and proven track record have effectively employed the ideas of employees' skills as needed in the hospitality industry. These skills include customer service skills, cultural awareness, communication skills, multitasking skills, work ethic, language skills, professionalism, teamwork skills, problem-solving skills, attention to detail and many more. It is rather worrisome that there is no existing research report that has evaluated the extent to which product and service consistency at various hotels has influenced customers' satisfaction in order to improve upon or maintain the tempo. The need to do this constitutes the focus of this study, which gave rise to the purpose of this research work, examining the effect of employees' skills on product and service consistency in the Divine Fountain Hotel and in Victoria Island in Lagos.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of employee's skills on product and services consistency in hospitality industries. Specifically, the following objectives were drawn:

1. To identify the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.
2. To find out the products and services rendered by Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.
3. To find out the effect of employees skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos?
2. What the products and services rendered by Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos?
3. What are the effect of employee's skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference on the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.
2. There is no significant difference in the extent of products and services rendered by Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.
3. There is no significant effect of employee's skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Skills Needed by Employees of Hospitality Industry

According to Kumar, Kee, and Manshor (2009), there are various skills needed by employees of the hospitality industry, such as:

#### Customer Service Skills

Above all else, the one thing that can make or break you in hospitality is your ability to meet customer expectations. Whether you are simply serving drinks or running an entire hotel, it's your job to ensure that your customers are having a great time and that they have nothing to worry about. Essentially, customer service is about being both positive and proactive. Even when you are dealing with a difficult customer, it's important to smile, be polite, and remain professional. Alternatively, on certain occasions, it can also be about going that extra mile for a guest or patron. Remember: the more positive the experience you provide, the more likely you are to receive good feedback – and a good tip, too.

#### Cultural Awareness

In hospitality, a large percentage of the customers you face (and, indeed, the people you work alongside) will be from abroad; this means working with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. As a result, your ability to be culturally aware and adapt to attitudes and norms that are different from your own is crucial to building a successful career.

Your customers will not always share the same values, belief systems, and perceptions, so it's important to take this into account when trying to help them feel more comfortable. As with all customers, the goal is to make them so happy that they'll want to come back, so ensure that you've taken all the measures required, whatever they may be.

#### Communication Skills

Strong communication skills are highly valued in every industry, but especially so in hospitality and tourism. Each day, you will be dealing with people from a variety of backgrounds, ages, nationalities, and temperaments, so it is important that you can communicate in a way that is both clear and understandable, as well as representative of your employer's brand. As already mentioned, you want your customers to come back, so the ability to build and cultivate relationships can make a big difference. It is also important to be able to communicate clearly with your fellow staff members, especially in busy, high-pressure environments like kitchens or nightclubs, where effective teamwork is crucial.

#### Multitasking Skills

One of the reasons why hospitality can be so difficult to work in is because it's almost always hectic. In most cases, there's no such thing as a quiet day in the office, and, therefore, the ability to multitask and handle several tasks at once will serve you well.

This means learning how to prioritise and manage your time effectively, while you'll also need to be able to handle pressure and remain calm when things get chaotic. Even if it's just a part-time role while you're studying, these are soft key skills that are highly sought-after in any workplace.

## **Work Ethic**

If you're going to work in hospitality, then regardless of your role, you're going to have to work hard. It's likely that you will be on your feet most of the time, working long shifts for little reward – all while maintaining a cheerful and friendly façade in front of customers.

Therefore, if you have a tendency to skive, or you're not willing to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in, it's likely that you will get found out – and dismissed – rather quickly.

## **Language Skills**

Although not necessarily a requisite, language skills are a huge bonus in this field because they allow you to communicate with a wider range of clients. They are particularly useful if you want to work in the tourism sector, where your knowledge of languages is useful on an in-person, day-to-day basis. Language skills can also benefit your career in the long term, too. If you speak French, for example, then there could be operations and/or management opportunities available to you at a more senior level, such as in a customer liaison or relationship management role.

## **Professionalism**

Most employers in the hospitality industry rely on their customer-facing staff to uphold the reputation of their brand. Therefore, it's important that, at all times, you remain highly professional. Usually, this means ensuring that you look tidy and well-groomed and that you are not caught doing anything you shouldn't be, such as smoking outside the main entrance or not washing your hands before handling food. It also means keeping your cool and not reacting negatively when dealing with an angry or irate customer, especially at the end of a long and tiring shift.

## **Teamwork Skills**

In hospitality, regardless of your role, you will not always be one cog in a much larger machine. Whether it's within a particular hotel department, in a busy kitchen or as part of the bar staff, you need to be able to work well with others, especially during busy periods. Given the high turnover rate within the industry, this can be challenging. After all, you'll have to adapt to new faces constantly and build relationships from scratch all over again. But if you're not working seamlessly in union, the whole operation can start to go south, which is bad for customers, for your employer, and, ultimately, for you.

## **Problem-Solving Skills**

Again, this is a skill that is highly valued in any industry; in hospitality, though, the ability to think on your feet and solve problems quickly can save you a lot of potential hassle. For instance, if a guest complains about their room, you could offer them complimentary drinks in the bar while you wait for another guest to check out. This keeps the customer happy, leaves a good impression of the hotel, and saves you the trouble of a potential conflict. Alternatively, if a customer has very specific dietary requirements, you could consult with the chef on their behalf to offer a tailored alternative solution. Remember, the easiest way to keep customers happy is to provide solutions to their problems, so if you are proactive and keen on getting issues resolved, hospitality could be a good fit.

## Attention to Detail

Although your attention-to-detail skills won't make or break your hospitality career, there are times when they can come in handy. Whether it's spotting billing or administrative errors at reception or noticing that a particular ingredient is past its best in the kitchen, it's the little things that can make a big difference. It can also help you develop relationships with customers and provide a more positive experience overall. For instance, suggesting a particular wine to accompany a dish, remembering how a certain customer prefers their drink to be made, or even noticing that somebody is struggling to carry their luggage and offering to help, are all small details that can leave a big impression on customers.

## Extent of products and services rendered

Customer satisfaction is often at least somewhat dependent on a specific relationship with a contact employee. Thus, the cost of losing such an employee includes the weakening, if not loss of key customers as well (Duboff and Heaton 1999). According to Armando (2005), successful service providers are able to meet and, whenever possible, exceed consumers' needs and wants in delivering services due to certain specific characteristics of services (e.g., intangibility, simultaneity, variability, and perishability) and the human element, in particular the "face-to-face" interaction with the customer. In addition, Kong and Jogaratnam (2007) confirmed the fact that employee personalization and courtesy were significant predictors of customer satisfaction. Mbungwana (2009) conducted a customer satisfaction survey in hotels in Cape Town. The research identified areas of satisfaction as wellness/spa experience, guest entertainment, maintenance of grounds, and swimming pool experience. Areas of dissatisfaction were identified as the delivery of luggage, switchboard and message service, attention to special requests, and dinner experience. Kangogo and Kagure (2013) studied the effect of customer satisfaction on the performance of the hotel industry in the western tourism circuit of Kenya. The customers reported being satisfied with the reservation, reception, food quality, and beverage quality. Costs, security, and hotel amenities, on the other hand, registered fair ratings, while the provision of personalized services registered dissatisfaction. The researcher also noted that customer satisfaction has positive impacts on market share, service quality, hotel image, and sales turnover, and that a lack of customer satisfaction results in customer and employee turnover.

Delivering good products and service to customers is the main goal that every service business strives to accomplish from time to time. The ability of a service provider to deliver quality service is considered an essential strategy for success and survival in today's competition. In this case, the service encounter is a critical part of the service delivery process because it gives impact to customers' evaluations of service consumption experiences (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1990). Therefore, there have been several studies and research focusing on service encounters as it is believed that there is a causal relationship between the customer's perception of service quality and the service encounter. Service encounters are one of the factors influencing customer perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and value.

## Effect of employee's skill on products and services consistency

Skills shortages in hospitality are increasingly seen in terms of generic rather than specific technical competencies. Studies of employer expectations of graduates (Tas, Baum, Christou, 2000) note demand for communications, people management, and problem solving as the priority in both the US and Europe. It is, of course, an issue that informs a debate across the

service sector – see, for example, as well as within the wider economy [Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), 1998; Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), 2000] with their development of core or key skills. QCA identifies key skills as: • communication; • application of numbers; • information technology; • working with others; and • improving one's own learning and performance. HTF's (2000) Delphi study of skills requirements in hospitality also reports that the skills gaps, as seen by the hospitality industry, focus on what can be called the generic agenda – communication, problem solving, and customer service skills, in addition to job-specific skills.

Empirical evidence from a study of front office work and skills requirements across a number of European countries (Odgers & Baum, 2001) shows clearly that this focus operates in practice. Hotels in all quality categories in seven European countries recruit on the basis of generic employability rather than specific skills and experience. Odgers and Baum noted that even 5-star hotels "accept the reality of the marketplace and are willing to recruit staff without front-office experience provided they have good general education and a willingness to learn." The same report also notes that a key evolving change in front office work is the integration of technical and interpersonal skills into all aspects of work. This is the result of a growing emphasis on the latter while technology has developed as a support for the delivery of service rather than as an objective in itself. In a technical sense, technology will continue to reduce the skill demands of front office work as systems become more user-friendly and share their basic operating features with widely used office and domestic computer software. Odgers & Baum further note the weakening of traditional workplace hierarchies in the front office, with a decline in the position of junior or assistant receptionist, so that given the "virtual elimination of traditional, routine office-related tasks such as basic typing, filing, and photocopying, it is, in any case, difficult to distinguish between the job content" of various levels of work within the area. They conclude that "in the absence of experienced, qualified staff, many hotels will increasingly look to generic, non-technical competencies (communication, problem-solving, customer service, and IT) in recruiting new personnel and within the induction phase."

In addition to these generic skills considerations, the work of Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, and Cullen (2000) suggests that aesthetic criteria also feature in the recruitment of front-line staff for hospitality work. Indeed, on-going studies in Glasgow suggest that recruitment criteria employed within the hospitality sector increasingly identify the triangular nature of skills—technical, generic, and aesthetic. The contemporary business environment in the hotel industry at the global level demands consistency in providing high-quality services to clients. The share of customer orientation within the hospitality business is the key element leading to higher levels of client satisfaction and a beneficial impact on the hotel's overall performance. It is essential for all hotel employees to understand the importance of customer orientation, especially the employees directly involved in the service provision process. Customer orientation can result in gaining a competitive advantage through securing high quality service that is unique and hard to imitate. Customer orientation can also be viewed as one way of obtaining important information about their preferences, so recognizing customers' needs and wishes will increase the perceived quality and value of hotel service.

## METHODS

An Ex-post Facto research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in two hotels in Victoria Island, Lagos. The population of the study comprised all the staff of Glee hotel and Divine Fountain hotels in Lagos respectively. A simple random sampling technique

was used to select 30 respondents from the Divine Fountain Hotel and 30 from the GLEE Hotel, which constituted the sample size of 60 used for the study. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Employees Skills, Product and Services Consistency Questionnaire (ESPSCQ)". The Cronbach Alpha Technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.94, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as chi-square and regression analyses. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Hypothesis 1

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. To test the hypothesis, chi-square analysis was performed on the data.

**Table 1: Chi-square analysis of difference in the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos**

EXTENT	DIVINE FOUNTAIN	GLEE	X <sup>2</sup>
Customer Service Skills	9(10)	11(10)	2.80 <sup>^</sup>
Cultural Awareness	5(5.5)	6(5.5)	
Communication Skills	4(4.5)	5(4.5)	
Work Ethic	3(2.5)	2(2.5)	
Language Skills	4(3)	2(3)	
Teamwork Skills	3(2.5)	2(2.5)	
Problem-Solving Skills	2(1.5)	1(1.5)	
Attention to Detail	0(0.5)	1(0.5)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	

<sup>^</sup>Not Significant at 0.05 level; df = 7; Critical-X2value= 14.07

Observed frequencies are those inside the bracket

Expected frequencies are those outside the bracket

Table 1 shows the calculated X2-value as (2.80). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical X2-value (14.07) at 0.05 levels with 7 degree of freedom. The critical X2-value (14.07) was greater than the calculated X2-value (2.80). Hence, the result was not significant. The result therefore means that there is no significant difference on the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos.



### Hypothesis 2

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the extent of products and services consistency identified with Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. To test the hypothesis, chi-square analysis was performed on the data.

**Table 2: Chi-square analysis of difference in the extent of products and services consistency identified with Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos**

EXTENT	DIVINE FOUNTAIN	GLEE	X <sup>2</sup>
VHE	12(13)	14(13)	<b>0.66<sup>^</sup></b>
HE	11(10)	9(10)	
LE	5(4.5)	4(4.5)	
VLE	2(2.5)	3(2.5)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	

**<sup>^</sup>Not Significant at 0.05 level; df = 3; Critical = 7.81**

**Observed frequencies are those inside the bracket**

**Expected frequencies are those outside the bracket**

Table 2 shows the calculated X<sup>2</sup>-value as (0.66). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical X<sup>2</sup>-value (7.81) at 0.05 levels with 3 degree of freedom. The critical X<sup>2</sup>-value (7.81) was greater than the calculated X<sup>2</sup>-value (0.66). Hence, the result was not significant. The result therefore means that there is no significant difference in the extent of products and services consistency identified with Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos.

### Hypothesis 3

The null hypothesis states there is no significant effect of employee’s skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. In order to test the hypothesis multiple regression was used to analyse the data.

**Table 3: Simple regression of the effect of employees’ skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.75a	0.57	0.56	1.31	0.57

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 58; N = 60; critical r-value = 0.279**

Table 3 shows that the calculated R-value 0.75 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.279 at 0.5 alpha level with 58 degree of freedom. The R-square value of 0.75 predicts 75% of the effect of employees’ skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. This rate of percentage is highly positive and therefore means that there is significant effect of employees’ skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos. It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each class of independent variable as responded by each respondent (see table 4).

**Table 4: Analysis of variance of the effect of employees' skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	130.36	1	130.36	76.08	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	99.38	58	1.71		
Total	229.73	59			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Consistency

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Skill

The above table presents the calculated F-value as (76.08) and the critical f-value as (000<sup>b</sup>). Being that the critical f-value (000<sup>b</sup>) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result means that there is significant effect of employee's skill on products and services consistency of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island in Lagos.

## CONCLUSION

The study observed that the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos include: Customer Service Skills, Cultural Awareness, Communication Skills, Multitasking Skills, Work Ethic, Language Skills, Professionalism, Teamwork Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, and Attention to Detail. It was also concluded that there is a significant difference in the various skills acquired by the employees of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos. Also, there is a significant difference in the extent of products and services rendered by Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos. Lastly, there is a significant effect of an employee's skill on the consistency of products and services of Divine Fountain Hotel and GLEE Hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the goal of every successful business is to maintain a high level of customers' satisfaction the hotel should provide their client with value added transaction through positive customer interaction. In turn, the customer's will feel important and satisfied.
2. Hotel managers should often monitor their employees to make sure they consistently abide by and apply all the rules and customer service practices.
3. In order to achieve customer satisfaction, building a positive relationship with customers is advised because this can create a customer's higher commitment and increase their return rate patronage to the hotel. Because in order for a customer to continue patronizing any hotel, they must be satisfied with the service offered.

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