



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## ANALYSIS OF JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS IN INDIAN RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES

<sup>1</sup>Sanjul Rastogi, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Manisha Raj,

<sup>1</sup>B.A (Hons.) Economics 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Student, <sup>2</sup> Professor,  
Amity School of Economics,  
Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, India

### ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationships of job security, working conditions and empowerment with respect to satisfaction levels among restaurant workers. A total of 53 employees from Lucknow, India were surveyed to judge their perceived job satisfaction levels at their workplace through the aforementioned explanatory variables. It has been established that job satisfaction has a direct correlation with empowerment, working conditions and security of employment within these workers. Enhanced relationship with employees from employer's point of view is necessary for improved service quality of the restaurant employees for which further recommendations have been made to increase employee retention.

**KEY WORDS:** Job Satisfaction, Job Security, Working Conditions, Empowerment.

### INTRODUCTION

The main focus of the study is to examine the three factors namely job security, empowerment, working conditions and their effect on the levels of job satisfaction of the employees working in the restaurant industry. This includes the various kinds of workers involved in the industry i.e. cooks, cleaners, waiters and any other staff.

The sensation of attaining a goal or an objective is the meaning of satisfaction in its simplest form. The degree which employees of an organization are inspired, content and satisfied with their duties refers to job satisfaction. It reflects on the achievement level of employees with respect to the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to them in their workstation. Since majority of an individual's life is concentrated around their career, it is a key measure for their career development in the long run.

Employment security to the employees translates to superior productivity and service quality since it provides stability to them, both in their professional and personal life. It would allow the person not to worry about their financial situation, encouraging a strong sense of corporate culture whilst boosting the reputation and image of the company.

Further a healthy working environment reduces costs related to absenteeism, medical leave or workplace accidents. Knowing that they are properly looked after, the employees are more probable to work diligently.

Greater happiness among the employees increases self-confidence, inspires greater performance and success for both employer and employee.

Employee empowerment plays a crucial part in decreasing the dependency of the workers, allowing them to work without constant micromanagement from the employer. It gives them the ability to make certain decisions when working independently rather than following the standard procedures.

The major obstacle in the restaurant business is retention of employees because these individuals are always looking to find better opportunities elsewhere as they are not happy with their jobs. Therefore increasing job satisfaction is much needed to increase the loyalty of employees because they contribute extensively to the productivity of the business. It goes hand in hand with customer retention, for example if the employers take good care of their employees, then the employees would take better care of customers, thus a win-win situation.

The significance of employment security is principal to the labour market but has vital effects on the whole industry. The success of a company is subject to the efficiency and work ethic of their employees because they are the ones that employers depend on for performing the everyday tasks related to the business. From an employer's point of view, the ability to get the maximum from their employees is essential for the company's long term growth. This profoundly makes it an essential aspect since the competence and contribution of a satisfied employee is much greater than their dissatisfied counterparts.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the job satisfaction levels of restaurant employees in Indian restaurants specifically in the Lucknow region.
2. To study the factors influencing employee satisfaction.
3. To provide suggestions to enhance employee engagement in the organization.

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of organizational work conditions on employee job satisfaction in the restaurant business in India. The study focused on working conditions, job security and employee empowerment as the elements that affect employee job satisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey research was utilized in which a questionnaire was prepared with 4 statements regarding job satisfaction. The main aim of the survey was to collect primary data from the respondents through the questionnaire.

For each question, the participants had to answer by demonstrating the level of agreement concerning each item i.e. statement. The interval level of measurement was provided by using the five-point Likerts scale as the following (in terms of satisfaction levels):

1- Highly Dissatisfied, 2 – Dissatisfied, 3- Neutral, 4 – Satisfied, 5 – Strongly Satisfied

The Indira Nagar area of Lucknow, India was chosen as the research site to collect data.

More than 200 surveys were distributed and 69 surveys were returned out of which only 54 were complete, for an overall response rate of roughly 27%.

In probability sampling, the simple random sampling technique was applied as so that each member of the population is chosen randomly such that it be a reliable method for obtaining the information.

In order to strictly maintain confidentiality, the respondents were guaranteed that their names would not be disclosed for any reason. In addition to that, the applicants were free to not reply to any of the question from the survey that they feel would disclose their identity and were overtly requested not to mention their names on the questionnaire.

To describe the relationship among the variables, inferential statistics which includes correlation and regression analysis were used from the data collected. Firstly the research hypothesis was tested using the Karl Pearson's Correlation. Then ANOVA tests were also conducted in the study to determine whether the model was a correct fit or not. Regression analysis was conducted to explain the degree to which the model explained the variable relationships.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Amarjit Gill et al (2010) talks about factors affecting the employee performance in Indian restaurants through empowerment and transformational leadership. In 2010, when the travel and tourism industry was on the rise, he analysed that the operators of the organizations in the hospitality sector had a high employee turnover due to job dissatisfaction, the highest being in the food and beverage sector. The main reason being that the employees were not given respect for the tasks they were involved in, because in India, people give more importance to the positions of the employees, than their work. If compared with the western culture, workers are given the right degree of admiration not only as an occupation but also as a profession which is independent of the position of the employee. This paper further made me realize that hitches in the performance of organization capabilities relate very highly to dissatisfaction of the employees that are the roots to the problems associated with high labour costs and low productivity. The best ways to tackle these complications is not only through empowerment of the employees by the organizations but even leadership in terms of better superior subordinate relationship.
2. Intrinsic motivational factors refers to when individuals are self-driven to achieve the company's goals and objectives whereas extrinsic factors refers to the behaviour of individuals to perform tasks in order to avoid punishment or for monetary gain. Employee turnover tends to be high in organizations where crucial factors like the training and development of the workers, reward for performance and sales are not accounted for. The workers in these places tend to leave the system in search for a better place where there is more importance given to the employees since they are a fundamental part of the system as per Samuel and Chipunza (2009). According to them, a respectable combination of both these intrinsic and extrinsic factors can influence employee retention in a promising way. Both public and private institutions try to achieve a competitive advantage in the market through the technical know-how of their employees. But if the situation is such that those highly skilled workers are induced to leave for better work opportunities, it is a major hindrance in the development of the organizations for the long run. For example, if employees are given freedom for innovative thinking such that they are able to make recommendations on some of the decisions the organizations take, it can have an inspiring upshot in their confidence.
3. Hechanova et al (2006) further elaborated the prominence of psychological empowerment in terms of how meaning, self-determination, competence and impact played a crucial role in attainment of Filipino employees working in various sectors from hotels, call centres to even food service. This kind of empowerment ultimately lead to a positive outcome in the satisfaction of the employees when compared to intrinsic motivation which did not lead to increase in performance, contrary to the hypothesis. This is because the act of doing work because it is enjoyable or interesting apart from the motive of rewards does not provide any incentive to Filipino employees in this part of the sector. The study gave insights to the different ways empowerment can be viewed at. Primarily organizations take the initial step for the inspiration of the workforce by providing regular feedback, commending the work they do whilst addressing performance issues before they grow to an extent that disciplinary actions would have to be taken. A level above this is when liberty is given to employees to make their own decisions regarding the solutions to the problems they face instead of asking the managers for directions, for example how to deal with situations when a customer is annoyed with a particular dish provided to them.

4. Kim (2005) compliments that organizational commitments has an indirect effect on the focus of customers such that the efficiency of the workers can be enhanced by providing motives to the employees through incentives, awards, promotions and recognizing those individuals who are not satisfied with their work. A greater customer satisfaction is attributed to higher employee satisfaction, corresponding to employees being aware of the objectives and goals of the company such that they have a strong desire to remain in the organization. With respect to customer service under pressure especially during the peak periods, the output of the workers is directly related to the training of the employees and sound communication skills between themselves and the manager for an efficient delivery system. The level of personal autonomy in these circumstances helps to streamline costs whilst reducing operational errors within the system. The consequences of a high turnover of the employees is a reduction in the company's revenues, because if employees tend to look for better opportunities elsewhere due to low satisfaction, they cannot be providing services efficiently to the customers. Poor communication between restaurant managers and employees further complicates the problem as employees tend to remain confused about their roles and responsibilities.
5. In a study by Derick and Kotie (2009), the basic working conditions and remuneration are the reasons that waiters in South Africa do not stay in the occupation for a long time. Along with that is the high risk of immediate dismissal which reduces the security that the occupation provides. The same was reflected through the large percentage of waiters who are not expected to work a notice period. It was specified that this sector was vulnerable for the employees as it is majorly an unorganised sector where there is an uneven negotiating power between the employer and labourer. Due to lack of unions and contract permits, the employers took advantage of their power to exploit the employees in different forms. Majorly, most of the restaurants depended on casual staff that provide their labour services on temporary work permits further inhibiting effective collective bargaining. On the other side, a minimum wage if introduced to regulate the income of these short term contract based workers would not necessarily lead to better standard of living for all. It would prohibit many of those waiters and waitresses as they are not able to meet the higher performance standards required by the employers leaving them unemployed, therefore increasing the unemployment rates. These minimum wages would hurt the employable predominantly the less skilled teenage workers since skill development is a major issue to these workers as per the feedback from the unions.
6. Furthermore, Feinstien (2006) asserted that employees that do not have much experience with the employer are unsure about the satisfaction levels of their jobs. Eventually, it leads to a dip in the transformational period, only to rise back after the 3 year tenure because by then, most of the skills or training required by the worker is mastered leaving no room for improvement. This is due to the high cost of training new employees complimented with the problem that the services are labour intensive and cannot be automated easily. It was seen that demographic factors like tenure, years in food service and education level significantly affect their job satisfaction. In accordance to level of education, the slope was downward from grade school till the 2 year degree, however, it was post the 4 year degree when these workers gained a larger satisfaction due to them being able to take over the position as managers in their respective work place. Although the level of satisfaction with respect to compensation was positively related, factors such as the years of experience and store location significantly affect their level of extrinsic satisfaction.
7. Alam Sageer et al (2012) in his study on the variables that affect satisfaction of employees emphasises that those workers that are pleased with their jobs tend to be more industrious and loyal which in turn positively affects the commitment to their organizations. In order to further enhance it, the staff on the front line who are interacting with the customers only a daily basis need to be satisfied themselves with the work they do as it acts a precondition for better customer service, higher responsiveness as well as productivity. Even the superior subordinate relationship with respect to the communication, the treatment and attention to employee's physical and socio emotional desires go a long way to influence employee's decisions to stay committed with the company. It made me recognise that the profit and growth of a business is primarily linked with customer satisfaction. The worth of the services

that the customer perceives to receive deeply impacts customer satisfaction. Value of these amenities is created by those employees that are dedicated, satisfied and invested into the businesses that they are employed with. Therefore in order to provide the results that the client anticipates, it is by those employees who not only have a strong commitment in communication but also feel a sense of co-operation with their team members. This is why if the turnover of the employees itself is high, then the loyalty of the customers tends to be low and vice versa.

8. According to S.O, Mokaya et al, he states that working conditions go a long way to retain employees in the long run which includes the environment they work in, the working relations with other staff members along with clear objectives of the hotel that they wish to achieve. Motivation of employees through regular praise which could be in the form of employee of the month or other incentives lead directly to productivity and competitiveness. However, decent working conditions may lead to satisfied employees but not necessarily lead to higher productivity because the personnel may be just putting in enough work to meet the demands of his responsibilities just to sustain in the market when compared to engaged employees who actually ensure higher productivities. He asserts that it is those workers who demonstrate a positive attitude that are actually engaged to express a higher commitment to their employers.
9. The engagement levels in Blessing White's (2011) report throughout the year of 2010 states that only 37% of the employees are engaged in India. Employee disengagement is negatively related to retention since these employees act as major liabilities to the company due to them not being able to connect appropriately with their leaders ultimately leading to lesser efforts in their duties.

## CONTENT

Although corona virus has directed a halt in international and leisure travel, people are locked in their homes and not being able to socialise for the past year had led to a lot of pent up demand. The general public's return to consumerism following a period of decreased spending has given a positive outlook to the restaurant business especially for takeaways if not dine out. India is known for its food worldwide which is why tourists from around the world visit to try out the various cuisines from diverse areas of the country from South to North India.

Due to the virus, the owners of the various organizations in the hospitality industry are facing major challenges in retention of employees due to low job satisfaction of workers. One of the reasons for this is that these workers are not given the due respect for their duties. This goes a long way in the Indian culture where every person looks at the designation of the employee rather than their work ethic. When compared to the western culture, the same cannot be said because each and every employee is given respect for whatever work they do regardless of the nature of the occupation. For example a carpenter in India is seen as a individual who is doing this work because they could not do anything better in life or they assumed to be uneducated meanwhile the same carpenter in Germany would not only be paid well but be seen as a respected professional in the industry.

Research in Indian work culture explicitly shows that those in the food service industry have poor working conditions due to the odd timings and shifts. Majority of the workers are not displeased with the long working hours but it is the timings of work that affects them adversely as eateries are known for being open late at night or even early mornings for additional sales. Further, because restaurants peak hours are during the busiest days of the week which is usually during the weekends, these employees have to work even harder when everyone else is enjoying their holidays. Taking a leave on these days is next to impossible due to high influx of customers around these times. Therefore the staff is occupied at abnormal hours of the day and week giving them less time to be with their families, which could be reason for low morale. Moreover, the interiors

and design tends to look great for majority of the restaurants where the customers dine but in the kitchen or staff area, the conditions are abysmal, as some employees do not even have designated places to rest during their breaks.

The superior subordinate relationship between the restaurant managers and staff also has a detrimental effect on the latter in some situations. For example when managers are working with those employees coming from a different background, cultural barriers come into play such as language, accent and terminology during communication. Besides that, the staff has to typically memorize the menu and prices of items, some are able to grasp the knowledge quickly whilst others are slow. In addition to that, due to the high turnover rate of employees, managers are required constantly to retrain the new workers. All these situations are tremendously exasperating to the managers which boils down to lower spirits of employees as they are the ones to whom the frustration is taken out upon in many of the circumstances.

Majority of workers in the restaurant business are part of the unorganised sector since they are working on temporary contracts or even word of mouth. For example many of the employees in the low end semi restaurants such as corner shops or tea stalls are working without any legal contract. There are rules and regulations but these are not followed leading to greater level of exploitation from the employers. There is no provision for overtime, paid leave, holidays, leave due to sickness etc. People can be asked to leave without any reason. When there is less work, such as during some seasons, some people may be asked to leave without any prior notification. The degree of exploitation is contingent upon the lack of knowledge of the employee, and due to low level of education, this usually tends to be high, especially for those working without contracts. The low level of job security for the majority of the sector is the reason why these individuals tend to look for better work opportunities elsewhere.

This is not the case for high end restaurants such as Pizza Hut, KFC or Café Coffee Day for example. Working in internationally recognized restaurants such as the ones mentioned above provides a sense of security to these workers due to various reasons. They are employed on a basis of legal contracts, are provided efficient training and even rewarded for their work through strategies such as employee of the quarter, achieving a particular sales target etc. In other words, they are invested by their employers through transformational leadership for the reason that there is a pure hierarchy structure and staff management policies.

An important role in optimising job satisfaction is through empowerment. If we have a glance at the Western cultures, the capability of the workers to have authority in their work and the feeling of empowerment through their roles over their lives defines job satisfaction. Workers in the customer service area, desire to find and implement the solutions to their problems by themselves such as in slow service or complaints related to quality of food. The main focus of empowerment refers to the opportunity given to employees to make decisions rather than always following commands. The flexibility and options experienced by empowered employees gives them a sense of fulfilment about their responsibilities and heightens job satisfaction.

Clarifying the organizational mission, goals and objectives through transformational leadership helps empower employees. Successful training programmes to bolster skills, offering team coaching to identify hindrances and making guidelines clear are all part of empowerment techniques that enables workers to work within and push their boundaries. Encouraging communication with restaurant managers, frequent feedbacks, and supplying information aids in recognizing employees for their empowered behaviour are the different practises that can be adopted.

Thus it is particularly imperative to tackle the problem of employee job dissatisfaction especially in the food service sector where employee turnover is massive. If the problem is not confronted, then organizational problems tend to occur as a repercussion because these discouraged workers will lead to low levels of competence, service and higher labour costs. If customer retention is the main objective of the organization, then quality of service has to improve which in turn depends upon the employee's job satisfaction and motivation to work efficiently.

# DATA ANALYSIS

Since it was not possible to collect data from the entire population, a sample data of 53 responses was collected through the questionnaire. Inferential statistics was applied by using the sample data to draw a conclusion for the population.

The data collected was subject to correlation and regression analysis to satisfy the objectives of the study.

Table 1: Correlation between factors of employee satisfaction and overall job satisfaction.

Correlation	Job Satisfaction
Job Satisfaction	1
Working Conditions	0.566491263
Job Security	0.753618908
Employee Empowerment	0.666463831

The above table shows the correlation between the 3 independent factors of employee satisfaction namely working conditions, job security and employee empowerment with respect to the dependent variable which is the overall job satisfaction.

As we can see from the above table, working conditions is 56% correlated to job satisfaction, employee empowerment is 66% whilst job security is the most highly correlated with 75%.

The above factors were then subjected to regression analysis to identify the influencing level of the factors of employee satisfaction on the overall job satisfaction.

In summary, the reviewed literature shows that working conditions, job security and employee empowerment are positively related to the job satisfaction of employees. Therefore the following hypothesis were formed that were to be tested using ANOVA analysis:

Ho (Null Hypothesis): The independent variables do not have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Ha (Alternate Hypothesis): The independent variables does have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Table 2

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.841684766
R Square	0.708433245
Adjusted R Square	0.690582219
Standard Error	0.762454707
Observations	53

In the Table 2 of regression statistics above, the Multiple R value comes out to be 0.841684766 so we can say that there is 84% relationship between the data.

Next, we can see that the R squared value comes out to be 0.708433245. So we can say that roughly 71% of the variability in the Job Satisfaction (dependent variable) can be explained by working conditions, employee empowerment and job security (independent variables).

Table 3

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	3	69.21259139	23.0708638	39.68585631	3.70076E-13
Residual	49	28.48552182	0.58133718		
Total	52	97.69811321			

From the above ANOVA table, it is clear that the Significance F value is much less than 0.05 meaning that the model is apt and therefore regression can be performed.

As Significance F value comes out to be less than 0.05, we will accept Alternate Hypothesis i.e. that the independent variables (Working Conditions, Job Security and Employee Empowerment) have a significant effect on the dependent variable (Job Satisfaction).

The independent variables do have an effect on the dependent variables, the following individual hypothesis are tested using regression analysis:

H1: The better the level of working conditions, the greater the level of job satisfaction.

H2: The greater the level of job security, the greater the level of job satisfaction.

H3: The greater the level of employee empowerment, the greater the level of job satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression Output

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	-0.315933416	0.323637526	0.976195252	0.333762711
Working Conditions (X1)	0.299796517	0.091410723	3.279664631	0.001917266
Job Security (X2)	0.555395985	0.101568076	5.46821409	1.52595E-06
Employee Empowerment (X3)	0.25535044	0.113556248	2.248669224	0.029063852

$P < .05$  significance level was used to accept or reject the null hypotheses.

We can interpret from the above table that at the ninety-five percent confidence interval, the three t values are statistically significant because their corresponding p-values is  $< 0.05$ . Therefore all three X1, X2 and X3 are individually useful in the prediction of Y.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings clearly show that all three of the variables are moderately correlated with job satisfaction. Job security has the highest amount of correlation, then empowerment and lastly the work place environment. Those business that have a high amount of employee turnover is majorly due to job security issues within the employees. Hiring these workers on a contract basis provides them the motivation to be efficient since it displays that they are valued by the company. It shows a mutual desire to work together to ensure the business continues to flourish in the future.

Employee empowerment through transformational leadership further increases the interaction level and communication between the employees. This helps in keeping the employees in contact with each other as well as their managers. Being able to take responsibility of their job fosters accountability, and builds a moral sense of belongingness in the employees. There can be other approaches as to how employee may feel



empowered which is through psychological empowerment. If they are determined and competent, they can be much more productive in their fields with some support from their managers.

With reference to working conditions, the same applies because those who work in environments where respect and dignity is offered along with their roles, output and service quality enhances. The thought of considering service related restaurant jobs as low-skilled or boring should be dropped. An approach to focusing on increasing the quality or skill of these workers will increase their output and develop their career, eventually benefitting both the parties in different contexts.

The regression function:

$$Y = -0.315933416 + 0.299796517(X1) + 0.555395985(X2) + 0.25535044(X3)$$

Job security has the greatest impact on job satisfaction as shown by the above function. It gives us a signal that these employees are more satisfied provided they are guaranteed to keep their jobs for longer periods. Lack of job security demotivates them to work proficiently because they constantly doubt their qualities and skills in their respective professional field. Working conditions and employee empowerment are similar in terms of their impact. However all of them play a role in enhancing the satisfaction level of the employees. Thus, restaurants should invest more on their employees to increase employee retention especially through these three factors.

## CONCLUSION

The results suggests that as an employee's working conditions, job security and empowerment improves, so does his or her overall job satisfaction. Therefore we can conclude that we accept the alternate hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 meaning that if job security, working conditions and employee empowerment are better, the greater the overall job satisfaction of the restaurant employees.

The R square value of this model is roughly 0.70, so the explanatory variables are able to explain 70% of the variability in the job satisfaction. Hence more variables such as compensation or years of experience as well as personal factors such as age or gender may further help establish the relationship with job satisfaction. It is evident that those who are valued by their employers tend to work much more efficiently than others.

The employee turnover rate in this industry is high due to lack of job security so more emphasis must be placed on employing workers with fixed or temporary contracts to give them financial security. Employees that settle down in their workplace for longer periods tend to achieve the organizational objectives more often, and in a resourceful manner.

The implementation of empowerment techniques have a positive effect on job satisfaction which amplifies perceived employee performance. For example, the ability to make on the spot decision without having every form of action go through the management empowers the employees. The motivation levels tends to increase provided they have a good team spirit and communication with the management.

Better conditions in the workplace such as creativity or cleanliness makes things interesting that helps the workforce break the monotonous work cycle. The ability to express their work in an eventful manner through innovative forms, helps restore their satisfaction.

The benefits of job satisfaction thus have a direct effect on the organization they work with. It helps lower voluntary turnover, reduces employee absenteeism and boosts productivity. Thus it is vital for any industry to avoid job dissatisfaction of their employees by reaching out to their employees through surveys. This would help them understand their workers closely and provide opportunities to enhance employee retention.

# SUGGESTIONS

Compensation, job involvement and work experience should be piloted in further research to analyse the employee's impact on the customer focus and service quality. The study revealed that these three factors enrich restaurant employees perceived job satisfaction levels, the scope of the participants can be broadened to any industry. Future research can focus on the changes in overall service quality as well. It can moreover explore the in depth effect on their productivity levels and quality of work.

Other research questions that can be addressed:

- The benefits of promotion and career development policies on restaurant employees.
- Benefits of transformational leadership on employee's motivation level.
- The increase in the quality of products and service.
- The role of education on the workers skill set.
- The perceived performance of employees due to healthier superior subordinate relationships.
- At what level employee retention influences organizational achievements.

Apart from organizational variables, more studies can be related to the power of personal variables. This can be through factors such as personality, gender, age and expectations of the workers. These different attributes of every individual have certain implications on their efficiency that directly has an effect on their service quality and sales of the product.

Lastly, more emphasis should be placed on leadership training programs on managers to improve their administrative skills. This will reduce the staff turnover rate by supporting the employee's performance. The extent to which managers comprehend the consequences of higher job satisfaction of employees is a noteworthy matter that should be focused upon. Further research on the relationship of managers and their contribution to the satisfaction levels of employees as they are the major individuals influencing the restaurant employee's decisions. A future project might benefit from comparing the satisfaction level of restaurant employees across different cities for prediction of performance, compare it with countries abroad and the policies undertaken by them for their high levels of employee satisfaction.

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