

An Analysis on Challenges Faced by Students and Professionals amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented crisis and uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that if mankind didn't stop deteriorating the mother Earth, they shall not be spared from nature's rebutting. It has advised us that change is inevitable and should be incorporated in the lives of each and every individual. The government in almost all the countries around the world had announced a social lockdown to reduce the spread and impact of the virus. However, where some businesses have faced a massive downfall in their businesses like the travelling sector, some other sectors like telecom and hyper-local markets have only increased enormously. However, this current situation provides unique insights and opportunities that even working from home works, and may play a vital role in formulation of future policies that reshape and reorganize the current structure of working environment, possibly allowing for more flexibility and simplicity. Covid-19 has worked as a stimulus for the various institutions to grow and adopt online platforms and techniques, which have not been used before. This research paper endeavours to look into these aspects through a primary survey. It's high time to survive the crisis with a different approach by switching our lifestyle into the new normal mode and digitizing the challenges to wash away the threat of the pandemic.

Keywords – Coronavirus, Online platforms, Digital learning, New normal

INTRODUCTION

About a year ago, Coronavirus had begun in a small, town market of Wuhan, China and in no time had captured the entire world in its destruction. The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced uncertainty into major aspects of the society where

every individual witnessed change in their lives. It adversely affected almost the entire world: the salaried lost their jobs; the businessmen had to shut down their business for months. No one ever realized that such a microscopic size organism can wreak such havoc in the entire world. It is proving to be a constructive disruptor and became the reason for lacs of deaths. These unprecedented challenges were altogether a new experience for mankind and had economic ripple effects all around the globe. A long-lasting impact has been created by the notorious virus from which it will take many months to recover. Covid-19 lockdown and the dire need to continue has certainly benefited online alternatives as the demand for them has grown leaps and bounds during this pandemic. The quick and rapid transition to the online mode assisted in keeping continuity of work but also has created a momentum in this new normal situation wherein, work from home is adopted by almost every institution to tackle with the ongoing condition. From groceries to learning to work meeting to gaming, every recreational activity has been digitized. The rapid growth in virtual teams offers an opportunity to develop interventions to help improve teamwork in virtual settings.

The main centre of focus in this project will be: “Adverse impact faced by the students and the employees during the course of pandemic”. Herein, we shall see how each sector has been adversely affected due to the Covid-19 outbreak, wherein the education sector and working environment was no exception.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Covid-19 pandemic created a large amount of disruption in the lives of each and every individual all around the globe. The educational institutions had no set up for online classes at that moment. Many examinations had to be postponed or cancelled multiple times due to the unavailability of the exam centers or due to the compliance of the government-imposed regulations. Therefore, there was an urgent need to innovate and implement alternative educational and assessment strategies. Thus, the concept of digital learning came into the picture (Dhawan,2021). But on the other hand, Fandino-Perez (2020) a Spanish secondary school teacher demonstrated the importance of physical classes wherein, students get a chance to interact and socialize with their teachers which helps them to enhance their communication skills and makes them confident and smart in their approach.

Also, Founaud and Gonzalez-Audicana (2020) very nicely elaborated on the concept of physical classes as it helps teachers to understand their students in their different dimensions. It helps the teachers to better assist and modify the student for his future challenges.

The dependency on Internet rose astronomically as everything was being done online. The worst problem was faced by the young children as they are the most difficult age group to tackle with. They are not acclimatized with the situation and making them understand is really a tough job. Moreover, for the special children, the situation became even worse. Also, there were many children who had to altogether leave their education as his parents could not afford his fees during this outbreak. Even many had no smartphones or laptops which also added to the already existing feelings of vulnerability among students due to their different socio-economic background which hampered their education (Sarkar,2020).

According to the QS-Indian student's mobility report (2020), Covid-19 had an impact on the decision of 48.46% of students who aspired to study abroad in the recent past. Liu et al. (2020) threw light upon those children whose parents either got infected or have died in this outbreak of Covid-19. There were many individuals who altogether gave up with the situation and committed suicide. The suicidal rates have gone very high in the recent past which includes many students mainly belonging to the age group of 15-25 years. This has also led to the destruction of many homes and families.

(Krepelka,2020) highlighted the impact on people's lives as domestic incidents and divorce filings upsurged to a great extent during this pandemic leading to a bad atmosphere for the children and other family members and ultimately, losing the essence of living together under one roof.

In a nutshell, Covid-19 pandemic killed many people and destroyed many lives and families. It is one of the worst pandemic mankind would ever experience. The unemployment and poverty rates have gone up drastically posing a serious threat upon the future generations where getting a job would not be an easy task. These staggering levels represent serious economic concerns with far-reaching implications (Kochhar 2020). The entire atmosphere has been affected but if we all determine ourselves to stay motivated during these difficult times, then we all would definitely win this battle against the Coronavirus outbreak. We all just need to keep working and put forward our diligent efforts by helping each other in every possible manner while maintaining all the safety protocols necessary.

METHODOLOGY

This is a research based mainly on primary data collection wherein, a questionnaire was prepared and circulated among different individuals. A Google Form was created in order to understand the adversities faced by the students and the working people in this new era of Covid-19 pandemic where, new concepts of Digital Learning and Work from Home has come into the picture. The Google Form integrated various graphs along with different Bar Charts and other statistical tools in order to analyze the present situation. The resultant outcomes have been mentioned below each graph with due emphasis on the impact it has created amongst the individuals. This research also includes some secondary source data collected using various journals and cited articles. Based on the analysis from the existing facts, suggestions and scope has also been described in the project. The conclusion report has been framed on the basis of how the different institutions have accepted and adopted the present situation in order to continue with their smooth functioning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 108 responses have been received via the questionnaire circulated amongst different individuals which includes 81 students belonging to the age group of mainly 18-23 years and 27 working people of various age groups who are either self-employed or salaried persons working in different organizations all around the country. The various responses catering to different questions have been recorded and subsumed under one place for the purpose of this project. The collected responses are explained and analysed in two different dimensions using various statistical tools as follows:

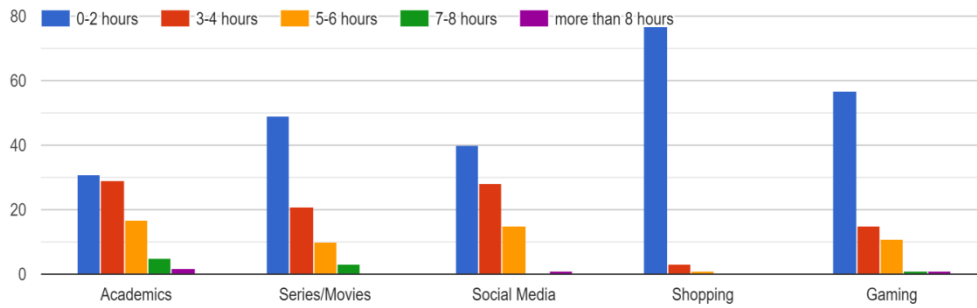
ANAYSIS 1: An analysis on impact of Covid-19 outbreak in student's life

A very new concept of DIGITAL LEARNING has approached in the lives of the students where students are sitting at their homes and continuing with their learning process.

Due to the strict protocols that were mandated in order to curb the spread of the virus, students got very little chance or no chance at all to stay outdoors. It is clearly seen from the above graph that about 60.5% of the students got themselves involved into indoor gaming with their family. The students were able to spend quality time with their family members which they were unable to in the pre-Covid-19 situation due to their hectic schedules and other commitments. Apart from that, 48.1% of the students engaged themselves into Digital Gaming

and other social media platforms which affected their education in a negative manner. A total of 28.4% of the students had a chance to hang out with their friends followed by just 13.6% students who went out for the purpose of outdoor activities as shown in the above graph.

Time spent on: (per day)

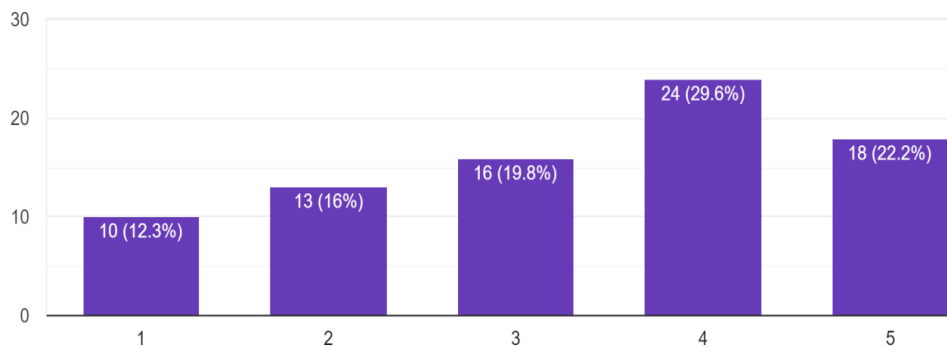


However, this era of pandemic even led to boredom and monotony for the students as there was a lack of activity and exposure through which they could pass their time. This period helped them to become more technology-driven by accepting and doing every work via online mode which would lead them to become smart men and women of our nation. It is evident from the above graph that different student has different interests and aspirations. Every student gets attracted and fascinated towards things of his own choice. As seen in the graph, most of the students spent most of their time in either academics or various other social media platforms. Shopping could not attract much of the attention of the students. Rather, they desired to remain occupied in series/movies or online gaming.

Moreover, with the onset of the pandemic, the educational institutions had to prepare themselves and set up the requisite technology in order to continue with the smooth and effective process of learning.

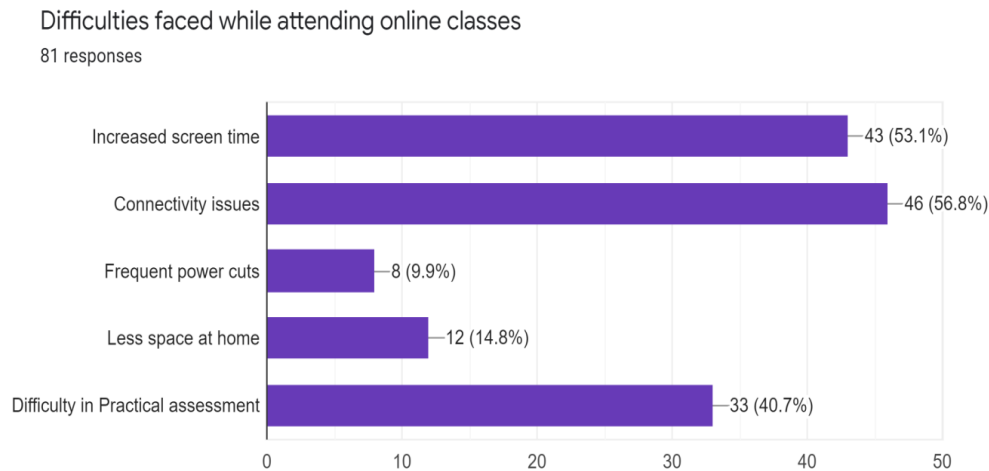
Assistance provided by the college for online learning

81 responses



Every organization required a considerable amount of time in order to accept the change and apply the same into their working environment conditions. Therefore, there has been mixed responses regarding the assistance provided for online learning.

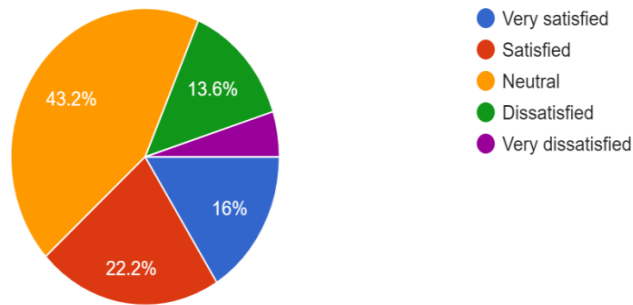
As seen in the above graph, only 22.2% students agreed that they were provided with very satisfactory assistance needed during the new normal situation. 29.6% students were satisfied followed by 19.8% students who were neutral regarding the said question. But, due to resource-deficit constraints and several other factors, there were institutions who could not implement the new change and resulted in a sort of dissatisfaction amongst the students. 16% of the students were dissatisfied followed by 12.3% of students who were highly dissatisfied with the initiative undertaken by their institution for the conducting of online classes.



It is evident from the above graph that with the switching of online mode of learning, there has been a huge upsurge on the usage of the Internet. Everyone demanded adequate speed and server for their work purpose which led to huge connectivity issues as reported by 56.8% of the students. Sitting and learning in front of the laptops and desktops led to increased screen time affecting their health adversely has been brought into notice by 53.1% of the students. 40.7% of the students brought into consideration the concern towards the conducting of practical assignments. These assignments are being experimented in various laboratories by experts and made properly understood to the students so that they could comprehend with the same which was not possible in the ongoing situation. Moreover, there has been a serious concern regarding the problem of less spacing at home which makes learning difficult as everybody is stuck at a particular place

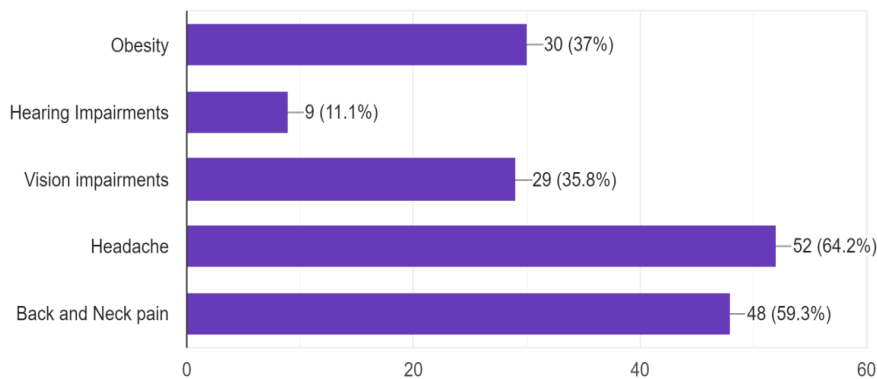
as referred to by 14.8% of students followed by 9.9% of students who faced problems during their classes due to frequent power cuts.

How satisfied are you with the online mode of learning in your institution
81 responses



It is very clear from the above discussion that due to several difficulties and constraints faced by the students in the course of their academic life, their education has been obstructed and affected leading to their reduced concentration and interest for the same. Therefore, only 16% of the students welcomed the change and gave a very satisfactory response towards the online mode of learning. 22.2% students gave a satisfactory report followed by 43.2% students who were neutral about the present condition. Due to several hurdles and challenges paving its way in the student’s life, there have been many repercussions being faced by the students which led to a sense of dissatisfaction amongst 13.6% students followed by 5% students who literally disliked and were highly dissatisfied with the ongoing time frame.

Adverse impact on health due to increased screen time
81 responses



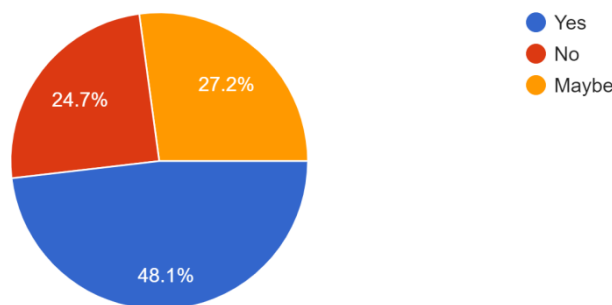
With the arrival of Digital Learning, it’s gaining acceptance and useful approach in the lives of the individuals, there has been a negative impact hampering and affecting the health of the students as there has been a pause in the movement of people from one place to another. Travelling, running and walking make people fit and helps them to respire and grow faster, soothes their mind and helps in

developing their skills and temperament which ultimately results in efficient and effective performance leading to reduced errors and mistakes. Sitting and learning via homes makes learning monotonous as there is no face-to-face interaction and communication taking place between the teacher and the student. Also, it leads to difficulties in the doubt session programmes often conducted by various institutions at regular intervals.

There has been a report of headache by 64.2% of the students which they witnessed while attending their classes. Also, back and neck pain due to continuous sitting at one place has been brought into picture by 59.3% students. Obesity is yet another major concern complained of by 37% of the students. Eyes, which constitutes one of the most important organs in a human body is also getting impaired due to increased screen time as witnessed by 35.8% of the students. Lastly, there has been addressing of problem faced due to long hours of insertion of headphones or earphones into the ears which leads to hearing impairments as reported by 11.1% of the students.

Do you think unfair means was involved during online assessments

81 responses



Unfortunately, with the closure of schools and colleges, the various examinations conducted during several time periods all, round the year has been majorly disrupted. Many examinations had to be postponed or cancelled multiple times or else, students were promoted to the next session without conducting of any examination. Moreover, students appeared for many examinations via sitting at their respective domestic surroundings which led to mass cheating taking place affecting the vitality and originality of education. As such, examinations have lost its authenticity, quality and transparency. A proper scrutiny for the fair conducting of exams could not be undertaken in the current scenario. This resulted in everybody almost landing up with the same scores by virtue of similar answers copied from various sources. It led to loss of advanced and technical

thinking skills amongst students leading to reduction in creativity and varied perspective and opinions.

A major section of 48.1% of the students have agreed to the involvement of unfair means during online assessments. 27.2% students are either very honest and appeared fairly for the assessments or are denying to accept the truth. 24.7% students have denied the situation paving way for conducting of online examinations in the approaching future as well. We just need to ensure that in whichever way examinations are being conducted, it should be conducted under proper vigilance and scrutiny in order to maintain its originality and vitality. If not, the approaching future will be more challenging where getting proper placements would not be easy as the recruitment and selection process of different organizations would become even more stiff and complicated and would result in a cut throat competition amongst all.

In a nutshell, there were some institutions who tried to resolve the Covid-19 outbreak in a much more effective and efficient manner as compared to some other institutions though, it was difficult and challenging for them as well. But still, classroom learning is still encouraged by 80.2% of the students as it helps us to develop our inter-personal skills. It makes concepts clearer and helps overcome boredom of our lives. It brings in necessary changes required for our ultimate welfare though, the same was discouraged by 19.8% of the students.

This pandemic encouraged us to administer changes and formulate in necessary policies in our education system in order to start working in a new and advanced way as required in the ongoing scenario. It helped us to learn and gather new things and ultimately resulted in growth and development of the entire nation by becoming more technology driven and hence, global.

ANALYSIS 2: An analysis on impact of Covid-19 outbreak in the lives of working people

The Covid – 19 pandemic ruined many lives and families, many people got unemployed leading to a huge surge in the unemployment and poverty rates all over the world. There were situations where people were forced to work with reduced payments which was much lower than what they actually deserve. The people got stuck into their homes and had not much work for many months which led to increased cases of hypertension, diabetes, depression and even suicides!!! People felt the need of financial assistance but couldn't avail the same due to several problems and constraints faced by the country at large.

There was a huge percentage of people which was about 85.2% amongst the entire group who were willing to work in the physical setting. As against small segment of just 14.8% people who were interested to work in their domestic surroundings.

When the people were surveyed for the purpose of this project, it was found that almost 63% of the people found it challenging and accepted that their burden increased when shifted to work from home from physical setting. However, 3.7% were neutral about the same and 33.3% people disagreed to the question indicating that they were really happy and comfortable with the new normal situation and have accustomed themselves and their lifestyles accordingly.

Application of practical knowledge is urgently required in our new working pattern as the environment has become technology-friendly. The same has been agreed by 81.5% of the people while 7.4% people neither accepted nor denied the question. However, 11.1% were still of the opinion that this is not required and they can still continue with the same old practice of working in the physical mode only.

Another issue to be brought into light was the consideration received for the work done post arrival of the novel pandemic. Since, every institution faced economic hardships in some way or the other, it resulted into varied payments or even expulsion of people from their workplace!!! Depending upon the economic feasibility and other constraints, the organizations continued with their work to meet its various expenditures. 18.5% people agreed that their economic ability got reduced while 11.1% describing their worsened economic condition posing serious challenges in meeting their various expenses. However, a major population of 63% received the same stipends providing a sigh of relief amongst such group. A very admiring and applaudable sign was emphasized upon by just 7.4% people whose payments were increased in the wake of this era by understanding and respecting their situation.

There are many organizations who believe that for involving active participation and the best contribution from the employees, it is very important to satisfy them and their needs. Understanding and helping out people during their economic crisis gives a very good impression and makes people willing to work diligently and honestly. Almost 48.1% people were provided with monthly allowances owing to their contribution for the healthy growth and development of all. However, 14.8% people disagreed to any such payment followed by 11.1%

people oblivious of such allowance. Lastly, there were employees who were not provided with any such allowance amidst the present scenario.

After the complete survey was conducted, there was a sense of positivity and calmness as 92.6% were found to be non-affected from this life-risking deadly virus. It really gives a soothing relief that many people followed the necessary protocols and guidelines and managed to keep themselves protected. However, the ones who got affected were provided with some additional consideration depending upon the economic feasibility and various other constraints of their respective organizations.

The pandemic administered and fostered innumerable changes and difficulties in the lives of working people. Women are the worst sufferers as India is a country which demands and expects a lot from this gender. They are expected to cater to the needs of everybody be it her parents, in-laws, spouse or the children. Managing household chores along with the professional commitments was very difficult during this timeframe as reported by 37% of the population. Since, there was a paucity of resources in various organizations, there was a resultant reduced payment for the employees as emphasized by 33.3% of the employees. There were many people who had a habit of working in the pen and paper mode only which posed serious threat to their employment and they really could not coordinate with the situation as elucidated by 25.9% of the people. Losing a job is really a matter of concern which brought many challenges amongst the people disrupting their lifestyle as illustrated by 11.1% people.

There has been a strict rule of checking employee temperature before their entry on a regular basis as emphasized by 63% people in order to curb the virus from spreading. Maintaining social distancing and proper cleanliness was highlighted upon by the government and the same was followed at many places as reported by 55.6% people. Formulation of its own protocols and guidelines in addition to the specified would also help to combat the virus as suggested by 48.1% people. Acting prudently and separating people suspected to have the symptoms will prove beneficial for the entire workforce as inundated by 25.9% employees. 22.2% employees enlightened upon sign-marking mandatory distances followed by 11.1% who threw light upon adaptations of more workstations in order to save as many lives as possible.

During these unexpected and peculiar times, many people expected some sort of financial assistance from the government. But, the majority of the population (92.6%) could not avail any benefit. However, the government ensured adequate

availability of food grains and took an active participation for developing a vaccine to defeat the novel coronavirus.

The current scenario led to huge economic recession leading to lower economic growth as demonstrated by 66.7% population. This abnormal situation brought in unplanned expenditures leading to huge growth in public debt as reported by 40.7% people. Reorganization of employees and rise in inequality was brought into notice by 37% and 22.2% people, respectively. Poor children were highly victimized and this made them prone to increased child labour as suggested by 11.1% respondents. Health was deteriorated of a large section which led to increased fatalities as elucidated by 3.7% people.

Various long-term suggestions have come up and has to be mandatorily implemented in our lives for the ultimate welfare of the population. New employment policies need to be made so as to reduce the unemployment level as suggested by 81.5% people. Public health should be given due consideration for long-term growth and development as emphasized by 55.6% people. Better labour institution and social security has to be generated as considered by 33.3% and 25.9% people, respectively. Lastly, adequate policies should be made for the migrants as inundated by 18.5% people.

CONCLUSION

The loss and destruction caused by this disruptor has brought mankind to a vulnerable position. But, overcoming the situation by integrating the honest efforts of everyone would help us enormously. There is an urgent need for the formulation of various policies and administering them in the current situation catering to the needs of all the sections of the society. The various policies adopted will determine the speed and strength of recovery from this novel life-risking virus. The rapid transition to online mode assisted in keeping continuity of work. Magnanimous changes are required to be brought up in the working pattern and our lifestyles to tackle the current timeframe while maintaining utmost precautions at all times. There is a requirement of collaboration of information sharing and data exchange which would offer immense opportunities to develop interventions to help improve teamwork in virtual settings. This pandemic reinforced our conviction and integrated us to remodify and restructure existing working pattern for the growth and development of the world at large. The provision of technical development opportunities and increased scope and reach of learning and working led to development of innovative models and

prepared people for their future. The entire situation involved research so as to overcome the situation and thereby, complementing the system with a feedback mechanism involving all. Also, there was an urgent need to develop a comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluating the performance of everyone so as to ensure the sustainable growth of every section of society. Promoting various opportunities to exchange experience and expertise is the key to form human capital which in turn, would become the stepping stone of any successful plan. Valuing deep thoughts and alleviating the existing inequalities of our society would lead us to prepare ourselves for an envisioned future.

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