



ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution in Anambra state. The study adopted a survey research design. Three research questions guided the study. A total of 160 guidance counsellors were used for the study. The whole population served as sample. Questionnaire titled “ Causes, Consequences and Counselling Strategies in Reducing Teenage Prostitution Questionnaire” was used in collecting the data. The questionnaire is made up of 34 items with reliability

COUNSELLORS PERCEIVED CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND COUNSELLING STRATEGIES IN REDUCING TEENAGE PROSTITUTION IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Introduction

Man by nature is gregarious though this is accompanied with checks and balances to maintain healthy living. Sexual intimacy outside marriage is prohibited across many cultures and this is regarded as prostitution. According to Aloba and Ndifon (2014) prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual activity, usually with individuals other than a spouse or friend in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables. Julius Jasen(2015) sees a prostitute as one who exchanges sex or sexual favours for money, drugs and other desirables commodities. Therefore prostitution is the act of engaging in sexual intimacy in order to be rewarded either in kind or cash. Female partners are called ‘Hookers’, ‘Call girl’, ‘Harlots’ ‘Sluts’ and ‘Courtesans’ (Aminu Hussain,2017).Prostitution is typified and called names according to their different indices. For instance Blood tonic or “Sharpilee” (13-23) years. These are sharp and smart classes of prostitutes. They are called Senior babes, Call girls, Hustlers and Club babes. The Senior babes are the well educated university degree graduates. They have boutiques and engage in serious business while trade themselves along with their body. The Senior babes dress gorgeously in latest and crazy fashion which has been suggested to push them into acquisition of these materials by all means including prostitution, robbery, and cyber crime that easily provides these materials. ‘Ashewo’ or ‘Opio’ are found along the streets or roads. Some of them live in hotels



estimate of 0.88 while administration of the instrument was done on face to face. Data collected was analyzed using arithmetic mean. The findings indicated that maltreatment, vulnerability among others cause teenage prostitution while the consequences include poly-victimization and cumulative trauma, poor school performance, health problems among others. Effective counselling strategies include cognitive restructuring, implementation of sex education, abstinence among others. Based on the findings it was recommended that counselling, encouragement of abstinence, introduction of sex education in the school curriculum among others should be emphasized.

Keywords; Teenage, Prostitution, Maltreatment, Runaway, Sexuality education, Counselling.

and brothels were they operate. These names associated with prostitution are derogatory. Hence the name commercial sex worker substituted the name prostitution.

Research evidence has indicated the involvement of adolescents or teens in different locations for prostitution. Adolescent girls and boys between 12 and 19 years of age are regarded as teenagers. When individuals within these age brackets engage in prostitution. It is regarded as teenage prostitution (Anderson, England Davidson 2017). Hence researchers Babatunde A. Sogo A, John,L, Omotayo, Olsola, Olofinbiyi and Olusola defined teenage prostitution as the sexual exploitation of girls within the age bracket of 10 and 19 for remuneration in kind or cash usually arranged by the third party. Therefore teenage prostitution is referred as prostitution engaged by teenagers who trade their body for sexual intercourse in request or exchange for cash or kind by the individual or arranged by the third party (Pimp).

Teenage prostitution is regarded as the prostitution of minor. A minor is anyone under the age of 18years in most countries (Collins, 2016). The term juvenile period coincide with teen period. According to Department of Justice (2016), Juvenile prostitution is considered to be a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children as they have not reached the age of consent as recognized by federal law of United States Federal Child Exploitation. Both juvenile and teens are prostitutions of minor as they have not reached the age of 19 years to be responsible for their acts. Teenagers who entered into prostitution may act alone or be prostituted by others. It is not a new phenomenon, it has been an age long profession (Wikipaedia,2010).

The causes of teenage prostitution have been suggested by researchers across the globe. Juvenile or teenagers involve in prostitution did not decide to choose prostitution as career path they want to take, but several factors have been suggested to pull these teenagers into prostitution. These includes mal treatment, vulnerability, previous sexual abuse, sense of being loved by their pimp who may be their relatives, provision of protection and survival sex.(Buttler,(2015) Reid J.A H,& Haskell,R.A(2015).Teenagers who were exposed to childhood sexual victimization, abuse, neglect



and maltreatment may likely run away from home and may subsequently engage in prostitution and drug abuse as coping strategies (Dehart and Moran,2015, Reynolds,2016). These teenagers who have passed through multiple forms of victimization and trauma may decide to run away from home to escape maltreatment of abuse. As these teenagers ran away from home, they lack resources which they need to depend on. For them to survive they will be forced to go into prostitution which is the only means of survival they have (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012) (Bounds, Julion and Delanley ,2015).

While these teens are being maltreated at home they become vulnerable and may likely going to fall into hands of pimps who may pretend to help them out of their predicament, and subtly recruit them into commercial sex exploitation. Some of these pimps may be their relatives whom they cannot disagree with and finally they introduce them into prostitution and drug use. Most of these runaway teens lack what it takes to survive on their own and therefore are left with no other option than prostitution.

Vulnerability resulting from childhood abuse may cause the teenagers to lose self worth and confidence which may subject them to live a life of hopelessness. These vulnerable teens are easily identified and targeted by the coercers (pimps) who take advantage of these teenagers and exploit them. Barnardo's (1988) described how young girls may be abused through prostitution. The pattern is as follows

" A girl is identified by an older man who becomes a 'boy friend'.

Gradually, the boyfriend ensures the girl becomes emotionally dependent on him, initiates her into sex and detaches her from other influences in her life friends and family, using emotional and physical violence. This abuse later will progress into selling the teens for sex, usually from rooms and later hotel."

Prostitution is not only associated with girls. Boys also are involved in this evil and illegal practice. Many boys and young men who engaged in this practice are gay and have homophobic reactions to their sexuality (Department of Health,2000).

In addition to the above, adolescence or teen period is a natural time for conflict between parents and children. At times teens may try to maintain a sense of autonomy to move away from dependency that they felt towards their families and move towards the independence and self reliance that is hallmark of adulthood. This social transition coincides with beginning of sexual arousal and romantic relationship that these teens want to experiment. This indicates why some teens are likely to engage in prostitution as a result of autonomy, social transition and excitement to experiment sex. In addition to this some of these teenagers have peers who are already prostitutes that are willing to offer support to them for to experiment their sexual arousal and finally push themselves into prostitution.

The economic hardship and pressure have subjected teenagers to help their parents. A good case in point is Nigerian situation. Some of these teenagers have resorted to hawking, child labour



among others. Hawking and child labour has exposed these teenagers to rape, molestation and enticement into sex through touching and verbal maneuvering by unscrupulous and deviant characters in the society who finally turn these teens into semi prostitutes.(Kangiwa 2015,Okoronkwo and Okoronkwo,2022).Most girls who are negatively exposed to these practices may find it difficult to discontinue especially when they assess what they have gained in this act. They may find it difficult to discontinue hence they decide to carry on with this evil illegal activities.(Dysart ,2014).

Most research has indicated that these young girls lack knowledge of negative consequences of prostitution as some of them are not exposed. They lack knowledge of sexuality education. Sexuality education is a process of gaining knowledge and skills as well as forming attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding human sexuality. Majority of these girls are not aware of this abusive intimacy, its physiological and psychological negative effect hence they continue to indulge in this illicit act and enjoy the proceeds.

Other researchers suggested factors such as dysfunctional family or broken family, parent's abuse of drugs and child marriages as likely factors to predispose children under the age of 18 years to engage in this evil act.(Dyeoku and Azikiwe(2013). Although Alobo and Ndifon (2014) are of opinion that some teenagers make pragmatic decision to go into prostitution as they see it as an easy way to get what they need. This explains why teenagers who are involved in prostitution are proud of it despite what people say about it.

Researchers have suggested different consequences of teenage prostitution on the individuals, family and society. These include indelible mark on the fundamental right of the child, mental and psychological and health negative effect of the young persons. The teenagers who engaged in prostitution early in life are likely to have experienced abuse of different sorts right from home that made them to escape from home. On getting to the outside the abuse also increases as the pimps have absolute control of runaway girl child depriving her of independence and subject her to more abuses like emotional and physical abuses. All these abuses put together is known as poly victimization and cumulative trauma (Dehart and Moran,2015).

The girl child in other to overcome poly victimization and cumulative trauma may resort to substance abuse that cause mental and health issues. The emotional abuse during the early stage of life may likely transit to or lead to a negative belief by the individual to see him/her as worthless individual and as well develop low self concept of herself(Roe Sepowitz,2012). This low self concept may degenerate to a level that individual may not cope with any hard situation in life and becomes misery in life.

As a result of teenage vulnerability, they may resort to substance abuse to escape from the condition they found themselves by smoking weed, taking alcohol and illicit drugs. World Health Organization (W.H.O.,2016) indicated that use of psychoactive substance may lead to dependency syndrome that is associated with a cluster of behavioural cognitive and psychological phenomenon



which may develop after repeated substance use that typically goes with a strong desire to take drugs, difficulties in controlling its use, persistence in use despite the harmful consequences, increased tolerance and sometimes a physical withdrawal state accompanied with numerous health hazards.

Most teenagers in prostitution are run away from homes. They are always absent from school as they have varying issues such as relationship issues, family issues and drug issues. Their behaviours include binge drinking or being high in class, physically assault of teachers and students or skipping classes or coming to school with weapons (Reynold, 2016). Their acts of truancy or abscentism may lead to poor school performance by these teen prostitutes. The teen prostitute could be aggressive and engage in willful destruction of school properties that may attract punishment to them. Therefore the traumatic experiences faced at home in their relationship and use of illicit drugs could lead to truancy and poor school performance. The punishment may finally culminate into suspension (Tynande T.G and Samson J.A 2021).

Prostitution has been associated with health problems as indicated by (Williams, 2015). Teen prostitutes are lured to commit sexual acts that may negatively affect their mental and physical health. Some of these teenagers are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases such as human immune deficiency virus (HIV/AIDS), gonorrhoea, syphilis among others as their customers may refuse to use condoms while those who use it may not use it properly or even pierce it before using it. Where it is not used judiciously it can cause pregnancy that may lead to premature labour. Most of these girls their internal organs have not properly matured to sustain pregnancy and may likely be at risk of developing Vesico- Vaginal Fistula (V.V.F) or Recto-Vaginal Fistula (R.V.F). These are caused by weakening of wall between the bladder/ rectum and the vagina leading to the uncontrolled leakage of urine and feces. Such women may be stigmatized and rejected by their customers. At times their vagina may tier and cause serious health hazard in future.

Guidance and counselling is a helping profession that enhances all round human development through its three main pillars such as educational, vocational and persona-social areas. Children's upbringing is the responsibility of collective effort of parent, school and society. The counsellors through parent-teacher association collaborate with parent and society on their responsibilities towards their children to harness the skills and potentials of these teens for the good of the individuals and the society. The guidance counsellors through their professional help offer educational guidance to these teens, identify their potentials and provide enabling conditions to develop these potentials. The counsellor can also identify these teens at risks and provide appropriate counselling services to help these students achieve adjustment and produce individuals who could be great asset to themselves and the nations. There are strategies Counsellors can use in counselling against teenage prostitution. These include cognitive restructuring, sexuality education, abstinence, laying out the consequences, use of life models, self control management among others. Unfortunately there is still dearth of guidance counsellors



in our schools who could have use their professional help to harness the potentials of these teens for the good of the teens and the society. Most researches done on prostitution available have concentrated on women and girls above 20 years. Therefore there is need to carry out research on teens who are the future generation upon which sustainable development rests upon and to find out the causes, consequences and counselling strategies to reduce teenage prostitution. Hence the researchers embark on this study to fill this gap.

Statement of problem

Children are born with different potentials that could be harnessed for the good of the individuals and the society. Unfortunately these potentials are not identified, explored and harnessed for the good of the individual and the society thus causing social evils such as prostitution, robbery, unemployment amongst others. The non identification, exploration and harnessing of these children's potentials could be associated with dearth of guidance counsellors in the schools who could have used their professional strategies to help these children to be well adjusted individuals in the society and contribute to the national development of the nation.

However available literature to the knowledge of the researchers has been on women and girls above 20 years rather than teens who are future generation upon which sustainable development rests upon. Therefore there is need to explore the likely factors that could lead to causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution in Anambra state.

Purpose of the study.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution. Specifically the study seeks to

1. determine the causes of teenage prostitution.
2. determine the consequences of teenage prostitution.
3. determine the counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution.

Research questions.

1. What are the causes of teenage prostitution?
2. What are the consequences of teenage prostitution?
3. What are the counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution?

Methodology.

The design for the study is a descriptive survey type in which a group of people/items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from items considered to be representative of the entire group. The population of the study is one hundred and sixty (160) counsellors from public schools in Anambra state (P.P.S.S.C, 2022). Since the population is few there is no need for sampling. All the counsellors



in the state public schools were used in carrying out the research. The instrument used for data collection is a structured question on the " Causes, Consequences and Counselling Strategies in Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Questionnaire" in Anambra state. The questionnaire is designed to elicit and extract vital information from the respondents. A four point scale format was used namely : Strongly agreed(SA),Agreed (A),Disagreed(D),and Strongly disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was validated by two experts from Guidance and Counselling; And an expert from Measurement and Evaluation also validated the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha which yielded estimate 0.88 reliability. The questionnaire has three sections with 34 items. Section A contains items on causes of teenage prostitution. Section B contains items on consequences of prostitution while Section C contains counselling strategies on teenage prostitution. It is used to extract and elicit information from the respondents (Cousellors).

On the spot administration was embarked upon where by the researchers visited the counsellors during their monthly meeting and administered the questionnaires which were collected for data analysis. The data collected in this study were analyzed using mean. The critical point was calculated as follows. The mid mean value is 2.50, The decision rule therefore is that any of the response item for which the mean score is 2.50 and above was taken to mean that the respondents agree while any response item for which the mean is below 2.50 was taken as disagreed.

Results.

SECTION A

Research question One; What are the causes of teenage prostitution?

Table 1 Counsellor's Responses on Causes of Teenage Prostitution

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Survival needs	4.00	Agree
2.	Peer influences	3.33	Agree
3.	Sense of being loved by pimp	3.66	Agree
4.	Mal treatment	4.08	Agree
5.	Vulnerability	4.08	Agree
6.	Family dysfunctional	3.83	Agree
7.	Sense of autonomy and independence	3.87	Agree
8.	Substance abuse	3.83	Agree
9.	Lack of sexuality education	4.00	Agree
10.	Urge to go into prostitution	2.66	Agree
11.	To get a husband	1.65	Disagree

A look at the above table shows that the counsellors on the average respond affirmatively to all the items except items 11 regarding the causes of teenage prostitution. This was deduced from the fact that the means scores of all the items on the table were higher than the decision mean except item 11.



SECTION B

Research question Two ; What are the consequences of teenage prostitution?

Table 2; Counsellors' responses on consequences of teenage prostitution.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Poly-victimization and cumulative trauma	3.00	Agree
2.	Low-self concept (Depression)	2.68	Agree
3.	Poor school performance	3.06	Agree
4.	Substance abuse disorder	2.75	Agree
5.	Truancy	2.70	Agree
6.	Suspension	2.81	Agree
7.	Aggression	2.81	Agree
8.	Health problems (Physical and Mental)	3.00	Agree
9.	Abortion	2.50	Agree
10.	Unwanted pregnancy	2.50	Agree
11.	Kidnapped	2.50	Agree
12.	Enjoyment	1.65	Disagree
13.	Fame	1.65	Disagree

From the above table apart from items 12 and 13 which have means scores of 1.65 respectively, all the other items have their means scores higher than the decision mean of 2.50. This implies that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 were accepted as consequences of teenage prostitution among counsellors in Anambra state. On the other hand, items 12 and 13 have mean scores of 1.65 respectively which is lower than the decision mean (2.50). It therefore means that items 12 and 13 were rejected as consequences of teenage prostitution.

SECTION C

Research question Three; What are the consequences of counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution.

Table; Counsellors responses on counselling strategies to reduce teenage prostitution.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Cognitive restructuring	3.37	Agree
2.	Encourage abstinence	3.15	Agree
3.	Organize seminar on teenage pregnancy	2.93	Agree
4.	Use of punishment/flogging	2.00	Disagreed
5.	Implementation of sex education in school curriculum	3.34	Agree
6.	Use of self control strategies	3.00	Agree
7.	Role playing	3.00	Agree
8.	Expulsion from school	1.65	Disagreed
9.	Sublimation	3.00	Agree
10.	Encouraging the use of contraceptive	1.65	Disagreed



The above table 3 reveals that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,and9 had a higher mean than decision mean of 2.50 and therefore were seen as ways and strategies counsellors use to reduce teenage prostitution. However items 4,8 and 10 have a mean scores 2.00, 1.65 and 1.65 respectively which is lower than the decision mean. Hence they are rejected as strategies in reducing teenage pregnancy.

Discussion of the findings

The major findings of the study are briefly discussed as follows. The findings revealed that teenage prostitution in the study area is caused by the following factors maltreatment (4.08), vulnerability (4.08), survival needs(4.00), lack of sexuality education (4.00), sense of autonomy (3.87),substance abuse (3.83), dysfunctional family(3.83), peer influence(3.3), sense of being loved by the pimp(3.66), and urge to go into prostitution(2.66).These causes of teenage prostitution agree with the findings of other researchers Butler(2015),Reynold (2016),Kangiwa (2015),Bounds, Julian and Denlaney (2015) Okoronkwo N.E and Okoronkwo S.C (2017) who maintained that teenagers engage or indulge in prostitution as a result of mal treatment and deprivation of basic needs rooted in dysfunctional family characteristics that facilitates prostitution and substance abuse utilization. It also agreed with the findings of Bintu, Galadima and Ahmed Garbar(2021) who maintained that culture of child marriages could subject teens to teenage prostitution as they tend to experiment with sex earlier than necessary and form a habit of indulging in sex experimentation that may lead to prostitution. Other researchers Reid and Hekel (2015) support the findings of this work that teens with substance abuse parents are likely to be pushed into prostitution. Others argued that prostitution becomes survival means for runaway children or teens who lack requirement for any given job for survival (Lee and Sprang,2014). This is why Roe- Sepowitz (2012) maintained that some teens are turning into commercial sex work as a last resort, after leaving emotionally and physically abusive homes.

The findings in research question two revealed the consequences of teenage prostitution in the study area. It ranges from poly-victimization and cumulative trauma(3.00),poor school performance(3.06),health problems(3.00),truancy (2.70),aggression(2.81), suspension (2.81), substance use disorder (2.75), low self concept (2.68),abortion (2.50), unwanted pregnancy (2.50), and kidnapped (2.50) while enjoyment (1.65) and fame (1.65) are unlikely consequences of prostitution . These concur with the findings of other researchers Dehart and Moran (2015) Comfort Onyinye and Adedeji Adewusi(2022). These researchers posited that there is a strong relationship between prostitution and the victimization that teens experienced early in life (child abuse), ensuing substance abuse, mental health and social issues hence they run away and probably end up with prostitution. The trauma they experience as a result of various abuses may subject teens to delinquents and criminality. The trauma symptoms includes aggression, anger, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder.(Dehart and Moran, 2015).Teens who experiences victimization and trauma are likely to run away from home to escape from the abuse with little or no resources for survival .Hence prostitution is the only available means of survival outside home.



These abuses in turn negatively influence beliefs of these teens about themselves and their inabilities causing the teens to have negative self concept and self efficacy about themselves. These victimized and traumatized teens may indulge in or use drugs or alcohol as a coping strategy to escape from these terrible situations. Some of these teens may depend on the drugs which could finally turn them into prostitution for them to get cash and maintain their drug life (Agnew,2001). The traumatic experience these teens' undergo at the home in their relationship and dependent on substance use disorder may lead to truancy and poor school performance. In addition to truancy, running away and aggressive behaviours of these teens towards their peers and teachers such as binge drinking, threatening students and teachers with weapons are behaviours identified with adolescents who have experienced multiple traumas and victimizations (Reynolds, 2016). Teenagers in prostitution are at high risk for significant physical and mental health issues including sexually transmitted infections(S.T.I.),unwanted pregnancies, depression and post- traumatic stress disorder (Green Baum 2014, Williams, 2016). However the study is contrary to Kangiwa (2015) Kajuwa (2013) and Vella (2019) who disagree with this research work that teen's prostitution bring about enjoyment and fame to those who wants sexual variety and opportunity to experience new methods of sexual intercourse. Secondly they maintained that teenagers who enter into prostitution from low socioeconomic background enjoy an upward social mobility.

Finally the study indicated various counselling strategies , counsellors can apply in reducing teenage prostitution. They are cognitive restructuring (3.37), encouraging abstinence (3.15), organize seminar (2.93), implementation of sex education in school curriculum (3.00),use of self control strategies (3.00), role playing (2.50) and sublimation (3.00). While rarely use of punishment (2.00), expulsion from school (2.06) use of contraceptive (1.65). The findings support the Department of health (2000), Roe-Sepowit (2012) who maintained that teenagers in prostitution experienced multiple victimization and cumulative trauma that subject them to run away from home. Such victimization and cumulative trauma subject teenagers to develop perceived negative belief about themselves and their abilities thus causing pervasive lack of self worth or low self concept. This could finally lead to poor coping strategies to deal with psychological situations. This is where efficient and effective counsellors can dictate emotionally abused teenage girls out and apply counselling techniques such as cognitive restructuring to help these girls out and expose teens to sexuality education. Even teenagers who are truants should be properly guided, counselled and find out the root cause of their undesirable behaviours and give counselling services for remediation before they run into prostitution. The counsellors should also through guidance programme experience expose students to sexuality education and make emphasis on dangers of prostitution. The findings affirm with study carried out by Department of health (2000) on counselling services to be rendered such as seminars, role playing, self control among others.

Implications for the study

Teenagers face many emotional problems and issues that necessitate guidance and counselling services for proper adjustment for the good of the teenagers and the society. The counsellors



should provide guidance and counselling services to these teenagers early enough and help them make an informed decision. The counsellors should also identify students at risk such as truants, drug users, alcoholics, those who have relationship problems and apply counselling strategies to help these students at risks and shun prostitution.

Conclusion

This work explored the causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution in Anambra state. Teenage prostitution is perpetrated as a result of different risk factors that act as pull factors such as maltreatment, vulnerability, survival needs, lack of sexuality education, sense of autonomy, substance abuse, family dysfunctional, sense of being loved by pimp and urge to go into prostitution.

The teenage prostitution has its consequential effect on the teenagers ranging from poly-victimization and cumulative trauma, low self concept, truancy, suspension, aggression, substance abuse, health problem, unwanted pregnancy and being kidnapped. While counsellors may use different counselling strategies to reduce teenage prostitution ranging from cognitive restructuring, implementing sexuality education, encouraging abstinence, use of self control strategies, organize seminar, sublimation and role playing.

Recommendation

Based on the discussion on causes, consequences and counselling strategies in reducing teenage prostitution. The followings are recommended

Guidance counsellors should be adequately trained in identification of traumatized students that are easy prey in the hands of coercers or pimps who are the perpetrators of teenage prostitution.

Guidance counsellors should endeavour to find out the root cause of undesirable behaviours of teens and provide counselling services as the case may be.

The curriculum committee should introduce sex education as a compulsory subject area in secondary school curriculum.

The guidance counsellors should occasionally use different strategies to inculcate in the secondary schools students relevant knowledge about dangers of teenage prostitution and its consequences.

The school counsellors should enforce prevention strategies such as encouraging abstinence rather than intervention.

All hands should be desk to check this scourge. The government should live up to its responsibilities by ensuring better life for her citizenry through her economic policy via empowerment.

Non -governmental organizations should embark on its sensitization tours to help teens who are in prostitution industry to go into better options through skill acquisition.

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