

A Classifying and Ranking Selection of Healthcare Tourism Services

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ABSTRACT

The study is conducted to classify and ranking selection of healthcare tourism services using the integration of the Kano model and the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP). The selection of healthcare tourism services is the determinant factor towards patients' satisfaction. FAHP is one of the quality improvement methods to improve health tourism. However, FAHP cannot identify the patients' satisfaction. The Kano Model provides a way to better understanding of patients' satisfaction through the Kano Quality Attribute categories. Thus, the integration between the Kano Model and FAHP is proposed in this study. The study first identifies the determinant factors towards patients' satisfaction using Kano and classified them into five groups: must-be, attractive, one-Dimensional, indifferent, and reverse. Finally, the study ranked the determinant factors towards patients' satisfaction requirements by using FAHP to prioritize the most important patients' satisfaction requirements. The findings will help the healthcare decision-maker to design and improve health tourism to enhance patients' satisfaction in healthcare tourism services based on the most important patients' satisfaction requirement.

Keywords: Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process, Healthcare Tourism Service, Kano Model, Patient's Satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Many countries have doubled their efforts to enhance health tourism products in the eyes of the world. Investments are made for technologies and medicines, accreditations are given out to qualified hospitals, health experts, and infrastructure is being improvised to fit for health tourism. Based on [1], the countries in Asia such as India, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and South Korea have several hospitals in the world as well as up to date technologies and medical experts to offer excellent medical services.

Even though today Asians nations are leading the pack, [2] stated that a few Latin countries such as Romania, Costa Rica, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Guatemala, Ecuador, Cuba, Bolivia, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, Saint Martin, and Saint Barthelemy have also taken a toll to be on top of the leading board in the industry. This industry has both supply and demands factor that stimulates its growth.

1.1 Health Tourism in Malaysia

For over a decade, Malaysia is a leading nation in the world for health tourism and has been making a huge stride in the industry [3]. Moreover, Malaysia besides Singapore and Thailand has the best records in Asia from the 60 years of efforts in health tourism [4]. After the debt crisis that hit South East Asia countries in 1997 and caused the performance of health tourism to plummet, Malaysia begins to promote health tourism heavily [5]. Since then, the Malaysian government

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started to introduce health tourism in 1998 in order to branch out both of its healthcare and tourism sectors. From the promotion of health tourism, one of the mechanisms that both the Malaysian government and the private sector took was to attract neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and Brunei. Besides that, countries from other parts of the world such as the Middle-Eastern countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates were also included as the target audiences in the health tourism promotion [6].

Health tourism in Malaysia has been promoted heavily through the campaigns up to 80% compared to the developed nations such as Singapore and Thailand [7]. Thus, the initiative above may have become the goal for Malaysia as the number one choice in health tourism destinations [8]. According to [9], Malaysia becomes the number one choice in health tourism destination because most studies stated that Malaysia has a low medical cost and modern infrastructure facilities compare to other countries. Besides that, health tourism in Malaysia is facilitated and monitored by the Ministry of Health and hence Malaysia stands out as a health tourist destination compared to other countries [10].

1.2 The Determinants Factors in Healthcare Tourism Services

The research objective is to determine the impact of the determinants factor on patients' satisfaction in healthcare tourism services. This study performs classification and ranking selection of healthcare tourism services by integrating the Kano Model and Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP). The factors that apply in this research are cost, perceived value, and service quality that impacts patients' satisfaction in healthcare tourism services. A range of research methodology was applied to attain the research objective of the study. The concept of the Kano Model is integrated with the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP) to provide a systematic approach to classify and rank patients' satisfaction for better improvement strategies selection to enhance healthcare tourism services.

There are several factors that affect patients' satisfaction and satisfaction with healthcare tourism services. Three factors of patients' satisfaction were selected in this study in order to classify and rank the relationship between three factors of patients' satisfaction with healthcare tourism services. The three factors of patients' satisfaction in healthcare tourism services are cost, perceived value, and service quality. Cost is considered as the most essential aspects of health tourism [11]. It has been further suggested by [12] and [13] when planning for health-related tourism, the cost is an important consideration. In an agreement with this notion, [14] insisted that cost is one of the primary factors that drive satisfaction toward healthcare tourism services.

On the other hand, it becomes difficult for healthcare organizations to satisfy tourists without providing high-quality service [15,16] and value [17,18]. Thus, service quality offered to patients and their perception regarding perceived value is also very important concerns for patients' satisfaction. When it comes to healthcare tourism service, cost, perceived value, and service quality are of utmost importance. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of patients' satisfaction with healthcare tourism services, it is important to consider these respective aspects.

1.3 Integration of Kano Model and Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP)

Professor Noriaki Kano is the person who developed the Kano model. It is based on Herzberg's Two Factor Theory which is well known for categorizing and prioritizing patient requirements for a product and how they affect patient satisfaction [19]. The Kano model categorizes the quality attributes into five categories which include attractive (A), one-dimensional (O), must-be (M), indifferent (I), and reverse (R).

Meanwhile, FAHP uses the concepts of fuzzy set theory and hierarchical structure analysis for the selection of the most appropriate alternative among a set of useful alternatives. The earliest FAHP

method was proposed by [20] in which the fuzzy numbers with triangular membership functions express the fuzzy comparing judgment. Besides that, [21] proposed a new method utilizing triangular fuzzy numbers and extend the analysis method for the pairwise comparison scale of FAHP. This method also applies to the triangular fuzzy numbers and extends the analysis method for the synthetic extent values of the pairwise comparisons.

Healthcare services are needed to systematically analyze elements of service for effective strategy formulation as they become increasingly critical. In the healthcare sector, [22] suggested the integrated model with Kano and fuzzy AHP to obtain strategies for the healthcare industry. From the previous studies, no research has been found that integrates Kano model and FAHP to classify and ranking quality attributes in the healthcare industry such that patients' voice is represented. Thus, this study is a combination of two methods which are the Kano Model and FAHP in order to improve the study of determinants factors of patients' satisfaction in healthcare tourism services.

2. METHODS

2.1 Kano Model

Kano model guides healthcare service providers to focus on two dimensions to gain the best satisfaction and predict future trends of patient needs regarding the assumption of inequality of attributes effects on patient satisfaction [23]. There are two dimensions which are needs fulfilment and patient satisfaction. Needs fulfilment evaluates the degree of patient requirement fulfilment while patient satisfaction is a subjective response to the fulfilment of the quality attributes.

These dimensions can be drawn on a graph with two axes, as x-axis and y-axis. The x-axis represents fulfilment, while the y-axis represents patient satisfaction. It can describe requirement fulfilment and patient satisfaction relationship based on the attributes category. That is, the attractive attribute makes patients more satisfied and never make them unsatisfied. The one-dimensional attribute makes patients satisfied or unsatisfied depending on how they are fulfilled. Must-be attribute fulfilment prevents patients from being unsatisfied. Indifferent attribute is when the patients are not interested in whether the presence or absence of the features has no effect on patient satisfaction. Meanwhile, the reverse attribute is when the patient does not want in but may prefer the same. These dimensions are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Kano model of patient satisfaction.

Nur Syahirah Mohd Asri and Norshahrizan Nordin / A Classifying and Ranking Selection...

2.1.1 Kano Model Category

Kano model was used to assess the impact of quality attributes and their degree of sufficiency towards the consumer expectation [24]. There are five qualities in the Kano model which represent the relationship between the patient satisfaction and value of the attribute. The five qualities include attractive attribute, one-dimensional attribute, must-be attribute, indifferent attribute, and reverse attribute, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Dimensions of Kano model

Must-be Attribute (M)	The absent or unmet product or service features would result in high patient dissatisfaction and a patient would lack interest in obtaining the product. However, there is no improvement in patient satisfaction if the features are presences or fulfiled since they are taken for granted.
One-Dimensional Attribute (O)	The presence of the attributes would lead to an improvement in patient satisfaction while result in dissatisfaction if the feature is absent. There is a direct relationship between the level of fulfilment and patient satisfaction. This kind of requirement would contribute to patient loyalty improvement.
Attractive Attribute (A)	Attributes that would result in a high impact on patient satisfaction and the fulfilment of the feature would result in high patient satisfaction. The attributes are unexpected by the patients, the not fulfilment of the attributes would not result in dissatisfaction.
Indifferent Attribute (I)	Attributes where the patients are not interested. The presence or absence of the features has no effect on patient satisfaction.
Reserve Attribute (R)	Attributes where the patient does not want in but may prefer the same.

2.1.2 Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Coefficients Formula

After identifying the patient value through the Kano evaluation table, the quantitative value of patient satisfaction and dissatisfaction is studied using the patient satisfaction coefficient as proposed by [25].

The Satisfaction Index (SS) stated the degree of satisfaction of patient towards a product or service if the product or service meet the requirement while the Dissatisfaction Index (SD) stated that the degree of dissatisfaction of the patient towards the product and services if the product or services does not meet the requirement [26]. The patient satisfaction coefficient is determined by Satisfaction Index (SS) as the positive CS-coefficient (CS+) while Dissatisfaction Index (SD) as the negative CS-coefficient (CS-). The equations for positive CS-coefficient (CS+) and negative CS-coefficient (CS-) are as shown in Equation (1) and (2):

$$CS(+) = \frac{A+O}{A+O+M+I} \tag{1}$$

$$CS(-) = \frac{M+O}{A+M+O+I}$$
(2)

Where, *M*, *O*, *A* and *I* are the number of times an attribute is considered in a must-be, onedimensional, attractive and indifferent attributes, respectively.

2.1.3 The Absolute Largest Weights Formula

The absolute largest the positive CS-coefficient (CS+) and negative CS-coefficient (CS-) weights to rank Kano attribute assuming that achieving patient's satisfaction and preventing patient's dissatisfaction are equally important [27]. That is the largest importance weights of CS+ and CS-are considered as the attribute's weights according to the following equation below. This method considers only one side of satisfaction or dissatisfaction which the one with the largest weights.

$$w_i = \max\left(S_i, D_i\right) \tag{3}$$

Where, w_i is attribute's weight, and

$$S_i = \frac{CS(+)_i}{\sum^m CS(+)} \tag{4}$$

$$D_{i} = \frac{CS(-)_{i}}{\sum_{i=1}^{m} CS(-)_{i}}$$
(5)

 S_i is satisfaction attributes' weights while D_i is dissatisfaction attributes' weights.

2.2 Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP)

Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP) uses linguistic variable values to allow healthcare decision-makers to express their uncertain judgments and preferences rather than crisp values that are used in the conventional Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). These linguistic variable values are converted into fuzzy membership functions which appear for fuzziness and uncertainty. The steps of formulating FAHP models are the same as in conventional AHP with the only difference being in using fuzzy membership values rather than crisp values for comparative purposes. Table 2 represents the linguistic values and their triangular fuzzy numbers (TFNs) [28]. It used in FAHP these numbers can be changed and evaluated to fit with the healthcare decision maker's fuzziness. Triangular fuzzy numbers corresponding to linguistic variables are represented in Figure 2.

Linguistic values	TFNs	Reciprocal TFNs
Equally important	(1,1,2)	(0.5,1,1)
Moderately important	(2,3,4)	(0.250,0.333,0.500)
Important	(4,5,6)	(0.167,0.200,0.250)
Very important	(6,7,8)	(0.125,0.143,0.167)
Absolutely important	(8,9,9)	(0.111,0.111,0.125)

Table 2 Triangular fuzzy number of linguistic variables

Nur Syahirah Mohd Asri and Norshahrizan Nordin / A Classifying and Ranking Selection...



Figure 2. Triangular fuzzy numbers corresponding to linguistic variables.

2.2.1 Fuzzy Set Theory

According to [29], triangular fuzzy membership functions are usually used to represent fuzzy numbers and are very famous in fuzzy applications. They are also easy to use and calculate to show that it can be an effective way of constructing decision problems where the information available is subjective and uncertain. Triangular fuzzy numbers (TFNs) normally run over the range of real values in scale between [0,1]. However, any scale also can be used depending on the researchers' fuzziness and vagueness, and usually range between [1,9] in FAHP applications [30] [31].

To convert a fuzzy triangle number which in the lower, middle and upper (l,m,u) to a crisp value, many methods can be used such as fuzzy extend analysis, centre-of-area defuzzification and α cut methods. Fuzzy extend analysis is the easy way to compute and correctly determine priorities. The α -cut method is less controversial and takes into account decision-makers' attitudes to risk [32]. In this study, the α -cut method is used for converting healthcare tourism services of patients' satisfaction attributes TFN weights gained by FAHP to crisp values based on the following equation:

$$C_{\lambda} = \lambda \times aRight + (1 - \lambda) \times aLeft$$
(6)

Where, C_{λ} represents the average crisp value, λ represents the degree of optimism which ranges between [0, 1], and α represents the α -cut method.

$$aLeft = a \times (m-l) + l \tag{7}$$

 $aRight = u - a \times (u - m) \tag{8}$

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Methodology

A simple random sampling was conducted to discover which healthcare tourism services that are normally preferred by those patients who have experience in healthcare tourism services. Due to that, simple random sampling was used as a method of selecting the units from the population where all possible samples are equally likely to get selected [33]. This indicates that everyone in the target population has an equal chance of being selected. The target population is the total group of individuals from which the sample size might be drawn. The simple random sampling was used to collect the respondents for the medical tourism services from Pulau Pinang, Kuala Lumpur, and Selangor state. All the population in Pulau Pinang, Kuala Lumpur, and Selangor state

has equal chance to be selected in the study for data collection. Overall, 103 respondents were used for descriptive analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This study uses the questionnaire which was distributed through the printed paper to the respondent in order to collect the respondents' response towards the study.

3.2 Attributes Ranking Using Absolute Largest Weights by Kano Model

In order to rank attributes classified by the Kano model using the absolute largest weights, patients' satisfaction and dissatisfaction coefficients weight are calculated using equations (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). Table 3 shows Satisfaction Index (SS), Dissatisfaction Index (SD), satisfaction coefficients weight (S_i), dissatisfaction coefficients weight (D_i), absolute largest weight, and attributes rank.

Table 3 Healthcare tourism services attribute patients' satisfaction and dissatisfaction coefficients
weights and ranks

	Attributes	Satisfaction Index (SS)	Dissatisfaction Index (SD)	Si	Di	Absolute largest weight	Rank	
	Attributes related to cost							
		Mus	t be					
A2	Healthcare facility cost	0.500	0.850	0.0259	0.0361	0.0361	15	
A3	Healthcare medical operations cost	0.450	0.900	0.0233	0.0382	0.0382	7	
		One dim	ensional					
A1	Healthcare service cost	0.600	0.900	0.0311	0.0382	0.0382	8	
A4	Cost of hired physician	0.650	0.951	0.0337	0.0403	0.0404	2	
A5	Cost of efficient state of the art medical equipment	0.650	0.900	0.0337	0.0382	0.0382	9	
	Attribi	ites related to	the perceived v	value	I			
		Mus	t be	uiue				
A6	Perceived medical quality	0.450	0.900	0.0233	0.0382	0.0382	10	
A10	Perceived sacrifice of risk	0.200	0.600	0.0104	0.0255	0.0255	20	
		One dim	ensional				-	
A7	Perceived service quality	0.600	0.900	0.0311	0.0382	0.0382	11	
A8	Perceived enjoyment	0.750	0.850	0.0389	0.0361	0.0389	6	
A9	Perceived sacrifice of fee	0.650	0.650	0.0337	0.0276	0.0337	19	
	Attr	ibutes related	to service quali	ty				
		One dim	ensional	-				
A12	High communication skills of staff	0.752	0.900	0.0390	0.0382	0.0390	5	
A14	Effective medication	0.950	0.650	0.0492	0.0276	0.0492	1	
		Attra	ctive					
A11	The variety of medical services	0.700	0.400	0.0363	0.0170	0.0363	14	
A13	Fast service delivery	0.702	0.500	0.0364	0.0212	0.0364	13	
A15	Transparency of cost	0.754	0.600	0.0391	0.0255	0.0391	4	
	Attrib	utes related to	patient satisfac	ction				
Must be								
A16	Hospital stay	0.350	0.950	0.0181	0.0403	0.0403	3	
A20	Scheduled of test and procedure	0.450	0.800	0.0233	0.0340	0.0340	18	
One dimensional								
A17	Waiting time	0.650	0.850	0.0337	0.0361	0.0361	16	
A18	Scheduled of medical check-up appointment	0.650	0.900	0.0337	0.0382	0.0382	12	
A19	Responses of medical treatment	0.650	0.850	0.0337	0.0361	0.0361	17	

Table 3 shows the results of the absolute largest weight ranking method for each of the attributes, including the Satisfaction Index (SS) and Dissatisfaction Index (SD) based on the Kano model analysis. The highest absolute largest weight was A14 (0.0492) contributed by effective medication, followed by A4 (0.0404) contributed by the cost of hired physician, and A16 (0.0535) contributed by hospital stay. This method only considers one side of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the largest weights, assuming that achieving customer satisfaction and preventing customer dissatisfaction are equally important. In order to improve customer expectation, the medical tourism service focuses on the elements with the high absolute largest weight to bring a high impact towards customer expectation which will contribute to the patients' satisfaction in the medical tourism services.

3.3 Healthcare Quality Attributes' Weights and Rank Using Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP)

Based on the FAHP weights of attributes in Table 4, it is concluded that one-dimensional attribute has the largest weight and is first in the ranking, which indicates that healthcare providers should give more attention to this attribute to eliminate patients' dissatisfaction, and maintain their competitiveness in the healthcare tourism industry. The second rank is for attractive healthcare tourism services attribute and the third rank is the must-be attribute with the least weight.

According to Table 4, one-dimensional healthcare tourism services attribute has the highest weight where "A1: Healthcare service cost" is the first attribute with 0.159. Attractive healthcare tourism services attribute has intermediate weight where "A25: Transparency of cost" and "A23: Fast service quality" are second and third attribute, with 0.134 and 0.124, respectively. Must-be healthcare tourism services attribute has the least weight where "A30: Scheduled of test and procedure" is the fourth attribute with 0.068.

As a consequence, healthcare providers should fulfil the one-dimensional attribute first with a conservative improvement strategy to be fulfiled for better patients' satisfaction. After that, attractive attributes should delight and surprise the patients. The third priority should go to must-be attributes to achieve the minimum requirements, and to prevent patients from switching to another competitor.

Healthcare Dimension	Kano classes	Quality attributes	Total Weights (TFNs)	Crisp value	Normalized crisp value	Rank
	Must-be	A2	(0.004,0.009,0.019)	0.011	0.007	16
		A3	(0.022,0.044,0.092)	0.053	0.036	9
Cost	One-dimensional	A1	(0.091,0.195,0.418)	0.235	0.159	1
		A4	(0.011,0.024,0.058)	0.031	0.020	12
		A5	(0.020,0.045,0.100)	0.055	0.037	8
	Must-be	A16	(0.006,0.011,0.0217)	0.039	0.026	11
Perceived Value		A20	(0.001,0.002,0.003)	0.002	0.001	20
	One-dimensional	A17	(0.032,0.065,0.138)	0.078	0.053	6
		A18	(0.008,0.017,0.038)	0.021	0.014	14
		A19	(0.003,0.007,0.017)	0.027	0.016	13
Service Quality	One-dimensional	A22	(0.003,0.006,0.012)	0.007	0.005	17
		A24	(0.020,0.041,0.082)	0.048	0.032	10
	Attractive	A21	(0.007,0.016,0.034)	0.019	0.013	15
		A23	(0.021,0.051,0.112)	0.184	0.124	3

Table 4 Healthcare tourism services attributes' weights and rank using FAHP

		A25	(0.070,0.167,0.356)	0.198	0.134	2
Patient Satisfaction	Must-be	A26	(0.001,0.003,0.007)	0.004	0.003	19
		A30	(0.003,0.008,0.019)	0.010	0.068	4
	One-dimensional	A27	(0.023,0.049,0.105)	0.059	0.040	7
		A28	(0.003,0.005,0.001)	0.003	0.004	18
		A29	(0.010,0.019,0.040)	0.080	0.054	5

3.4 Comparing Integrated Kano-FAHP with Absolute Largest Weights

The ranking of healthcare tourism services attributes calculated by the integrated Kano-FAHP method is compared with the absolute largest weight method suggested by [34]. This comparison is to investigate the difference between them and the effect of uncertainty in the preference of patients in decision problems.

The ranking of healthcare tourism services attributes by using integrated Kano-FAHP is more accurate than the absolute largest weights method due to the overall satisfaction level. The overall satisfaction level includes both satisfaction and dissatisfaction of patients which is considered as rank attributes rather than ranking them based on satisfaction or dissatisfaction alone, as shown in Table 5.

Healthcare tourism services		R				
		Absolute largest	Integrated Kano-	Remark		
	attributes	weight	FAHP			
		Attributes related to	o cost			
		Must be				
A2	Healthcare facility cost	15	16	\downarrow		
A3	Healthcare medical operations cost	7	9	\downarrow		
		One dimensiona	al			
A1	Healthcare service cost	8	1	\uparrow		
A4	Cost of hired physician	2	12	\downarrow		
A5	Cost of efficient state of the art medical equipment	9	8	\uparrow		
		Attributes related to the pe	rceived value			
		Must be				
A16	Perceived medical quality	10	11	\downarrow		
A20	Perceived sacrifice of risk	20	20	•		
One dimensional						
A17	Perceived service quality	11	6	\uparrow		
A18	Perceived enjoyment	6	14	\downarrow		
A19	Perceived sacrifice of fee	19	13	\uparrow		
Attributes related to service quality						
One dimensional						

Table 5 Rank of healthcare attributes using absolute largest weights and FAHP

A22	High communication skills of staff	5	17	\checkmark			
A24	Effective medication	1	10	\downarrow			
		Attractive					
A21	The variety of medical services	14	15	\checkmark			
A23	Fast service delivery	13	3	\uparrow			
A25	Transparency of cost	4	2	\uparrow			
		Attributes related to patie	nt satisfaction				
		Must be					
A26	Hospital stay	3	19	\downarrow			
A30	Scheduled of test and procedure	18	4	\uparrow			
	One dimensional						
A27	Waiting time	16	7	\uparrow			
A28	Scheduled of medical check-up appointment	12	18	\downarrow			
A29	Responses of medical treatment	17	5	\uparrow			
↑ Ascended, ↓ descended, □ unchanged							

4. CONCLUSION

In this research, the Kano model was applied to classify healthcare tourism services attributes into five main categories based on their effects on patients' satisfaction. They are then ranked using FAHP. The results show that one-dimensional attribute (A1: healthcare service cost) gain the largest weight followed by attractive attributes which are (A25: transparency cost) and (A23: fast service delivery). The contribution of this research to the literature includes several points. First, the survey results identify and classify specific attributes that affect patient satisfaction in dimensions that are not thoroughly covered in the literature such as cost, perceived value, service quality, and patient satisfaction. Second, the proposed integrated Kano-FAHP model ranked the healthcare tourism services attributes within each Kano class. This investigation gives insights to providers to select the most appropriate improvement strategies. Third, the proposed model enables healthcare providers to capture the uncertainty and ambiguity in representing patients' preferences and importance. Moreover, the Kano-FAHP model enables decision-makers to classify and rank attributes considering the overall patients' satisfaction rather than ranking them based on satisfaction or dissatisfaction alone. For future research, the target sample size was also needed to expand more respondents to improve the quality of the data collection. This is because the population of medical tourism services is large. Hence, a small sample size might not balance to represent the opinion for the whole population. Thus, a larger number of sample sizes are suggested for future study in order to improve the data accuracy which benefits the research findings.

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