

Factor Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of Bidding and Hosting the Great International Sport Events in Iran

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was factor analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of bidding and hosting the great international sport events in Iran. The research method is descriptive-analytic and considered as applied research according to the goal and results. The universe includes 230 sport management masters, executive managers and higher technicians of the country sport experienced and knowledgeable about hosting the events. The research is done in qualitative and quantitative forms. In quantitative part, the samples selected through purposeful sampling method, which are 25 participants in this research. In quantitative part, 141 samples selected through random-quota sampling and by means of Morgan table. Data collected through studying deeds and documents, previous studies, interview sessions and a researcher-made questionnaire; after studying the existing situation a primary list of strong points, weak points, opportunities and threats (SWOT) extracted by means of a preliminary questionnaire. Then through exploratory factor analysis method, Bartlett and KMO tests, the final SWOT list extracted in which strong points (7 items), weaknesses (16 items), opportunities (9 items), and threats (9 items) identified and categorized in terms of premiership. Validity of the above questionnaire verified by 20 masters of sport management and its reliability through Cronbach's alpha (0.78). Results of the research show that the following items of each SWOT features: "existence of tourism attractions (historical and natural) in the country", "weak sport marketing in the country", "strategic and geopolitical position of Iran in the critical region of Middle East", and "existence of powerful competitors for hosting the sport events in the region and world level" with 0.821, 0.926, 0.932 and 0.891 load factors are the most important items respectively.

Key Words: Factor Analysis, Hosting, The Great International Sport Event.

Introduction

Nowadays, we face with formation of the global village in which all people from different nations share in its formation and representation of its events. Revival of the modern Olympic Games led to establishment of different sport federations around the world and therefore people participation in sports and spectators increased. Such popularity led to creation and holding of various international sport events. Great sport events are those international sport games in which professional athletes and elites compete like Olympic Games, soccer world cup, etc. Dolles & Soderman (2008). Many sport events holding all over the world annually and attracted media, politicians, industries and other national and international beneficiary groups due to appealing nature of sport and people high interest to watch such events. These events are an appropriate tool to attract world different nations to the special geographical position of the host country Getz (1997). Large cities of the world concentrate their marketing development proceedings energetically for their different parts in the great sport events in order to maximize the interest of various parts such as tourism, sponsorship, popularity among media, sport industry development, life quality of the host society, etc. Kostas & Kaplanidou (2010). The main point about the great international sport events is that number of such great events is few, which results in intense competition among countries to win the business of hosting the events ,Chen (2008).

Researches prove that not only achieving the hosting of such events includes numerous benefits, but also requesting for hosting of such events include many advantages and benefits ,Ruta (2011). Beed & Maseson (2004) Found out that economic, selling, employment, percapita income and hotels income factors highly influenced by these events. Humphreys (1994) Said that soccer super cup (1994) in Atlanta resulted in 166 million dollars income in addition to 236 job opportunities. Hotchkiss et al reported that Olympic Games (1994) in Atlanta resulted in employment of 293000 ones. Beed & Maseson (2004) Reported that the occupation rate of this event (Atlanta Olympic) as 35000-42000. Gursoy & Kendal (2006) and Solberg & Perius (2007) reported that when the host country unable to provide sufficient finance for holding the event, the government use of construction, hospitals and education budget and increasing tax is inevitable which results in dissatisfaction of society members. Owen (2005) and Toohey (2008) believe that appropriate strategic schedule prevent such negative results. Chalip (2004) recommended that the strategies could be applied in order to improve the results of holding the event. He introduced two models for hosting sport events that concentrated on tourism and economic development.

The economic model divided into short-term and long-term strategies. The short-term strategy concentrated on income from the event and the long-term one, on using media to improve the image and appearance of the host country. Hosting great international sport events can be an effective factor to improve the country situation, tax system, infrastructures such as transportation, hotel management, stadiums, parks, media, airports and attracting tourists Hiller (2006), Jones (2001) and Solberg and Perius (2007). Increase in income resource of the citizens also lead to improvement of their working conditions and therefore results in higher life quality .

From the viewpoint of long-term strategy, hosting the great international sport events can be effective on tourism attraction due to the media attention to the host country. Other factors that effecting negatively on the image of host country are like economic crisis and terroristic attacks Perius & Solberg (2006). Bohlmann (2006) Expressed that if long-term development of the host country considered, hosting of the great international sport events can be successful. Based on this, the authorities can evaluate different aspects of hosting in short-term and long-term through SWOT analysis. (Kostas & Kaplanidou) Studying the viewpoints of Athens Olympic Games mangers in form of semi-guided interview and identified strong points, weak points, opportunities and threats resulted by holding Olympic Games in the host society. Powerful economy, security, best infrastructure and politics stability as strong points; weakness of infrastructures, lack of social support, low area of the country, instable economy and politics as weak

points; development of tourism, culture, life quality, the event infrastructure, exercising and health in society as hosting opportunities; imposed costs, environment damage, insecurity and risk of moving residents as threats. Tomlinson (2010), believed that the purpose of holding Olympic Games in China (2008) is to strengthen the China image as a modern country and fixing its culture and nationality over the world. Diaey (2011) stated that some countries candidate not necessarily to take hosting (e.g. Turkey), but their purpose is to obtain the candidacy benefits including political relations; developing relations in sport world; success in hosting competition of other events; identification of internal environment and development of inside organizations to spurt toward sport, urban and economic development and infrastructural benefits. Randeree (2011), in an exploring research in Islamic countries, named Tehran among 10 potential cities for holding Olympic Games in addition to confirm that holding such games in Islamic societies verified by International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Today, competition for hosting the great international sport events is not limited just to the developed countries but among developing countries. According to the parliament cultural commission of Iran in 2010, the great international sport events significantly effect on GDP and an appropriate basic for creating political, economic and social interactions; modification of social problems and as a strategic connection for developing sport industry, tourism industry and economy (2011). In the Iran National Vision Document, necessity of moving toward development; the specified goals in the documents such as development; security; social development and welfare; developing the country image; creating a pattern from Iranians and generative-effective interaction with world (2012).

The great international sport events provide an appropriate and successful basic for countries in order to achieve their development goals. Iran is always hosting different events internationally and regionally in addition to sport developments. In this case, the biggest international sport event held in Iran (Tehran City) was Asian competitions in 1974 for the first time. Iran faced with many problems and challenges in the way of requesting hosting and holding the great international sport events especially after the Islamic revolution and therefore could not request hosting and holding such events such as Olympic Games, soccer world cup, etc. and even faced with many challenges for requesting hosting of Asian, regional and world cup competitions. Success of any organization depends on exact identification of internal and external environment and compiling strategies corresponded to the mentioned environment. Identifying internal environment of a country for hosting including capabilities (sport infrastructures, transportation, habitation, tourism attractions, experts, etc.) weaknesses (economic, social, infrastructural, etc.) and studying the opportunities (social, communicational, sport, etc.) and threats of holding these events in country before requesting for hosting and holding such great international sport events is necessary.

Researches in Iran about management and sport have not studied this problem comprehensively and have not identified the capabilities, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of requesting hosting and holding such events in the country yet. Identification of strong/weak points, opportunities and threats related to requesting and holding such events is essential and it presents very useful information for the country and those authorities looking for achieving hosting. Considering the value of hosting and holding the great international sport events for the host country, this research tries to determine strong/weak points, opportunities and threats of the country in the way of requesting for hosting and holding such events from the viewpoint of sport management experts, managers and higher executive technicians of Iran sport in order to provide basic knowledge and information to compile strategies for hosting and holding the great international sport events in Iran.

Research Methodology

Regarding the subject and goals, this research is of strategic studies type done in form of infield and descriptive-analytic method. In other words, identification of current conditions described as SWOT and

the results analyzed. The universe of the research includes higher sport executive managers and technicians of the country like managers and technicians of championship in Sport and Youths Ministry, sport undersecretary of Education Ministry, heads of Sport Federations, managers and technicians of Olympic national committee and members of executive board, managers of head organizations of sport and youths in provinces in addition to the country sport management masters who have necessary knowledge and experience to the hosting and holding of the great sport events.

The universe includes 230 participants. The research is done in qualitative and quantitative forms. In quantitative part, the samples selected through purposeful sampling method which are 25 participants in this research. In quantitative part, 141 samples selected randomly-..... and by means of Morgan table. In order to determine the SWOT of hosting and holding the events, primary list of the (SWOT) items related to hosting and holding the great international sport events them extracted in addition to studying deeds and documents, library and internet searching, studying related scientific articles, using Delphi method and holding purposeful interview session with 25 masters of sport management and higher executive managers of the country sport who are experienced and knowledgeable about hosting and holding such events. After receiving the masters' viewpoints and in order to collect data, the research questionnaire designed and tried to consider different political dimensions and socio-cultural conditions of Iran society.

The questionnaire includes four parts; 1- strong points (18 questions), 2- weak points (21 questions), 3- opportunities (18 questions) and 4-threats (12 questions). Each question in each part includes 5 choices in which the importance increased from 1 to 5 respectively. After distribution and collection of the questionnaires filled by participants, those items with the factor load less than 0.3 or statistics less than absolute value of 2 removed through exploratory factor analysis method and Bartlett and KMO tests. In this case, Klain believes that those indices with factor load less than 0.3 or statistics less than absolute value of 2 shows the weakness of those indices and therefore removed from measuring model (Klain, 2010). At last, the final SWOT list extracted includes strong points (7 items), weaknesses (16 items), opportunities (9 items) and threats (9 items). The research questionnaires distributed among 20 masters in sport management to verify and then the validity determined. Reliability of the questionnaire also studied in addition to primary studying to identify executive limitations and removing possible ambiguities. SPSS v.16 and Cronbach's Alpha (0.78) method applied to measure reliability.

Findings

Before implementation of factor analysis, the researcher used KMO test for sampling adequacy and knowing that if numbers of questions are sufficient for predicting each feature. Moreover, the Bartlett's test used to know that if there is any significant relationship among the questions to provide a logical basic for factor analysis.

Table 1- The results of Bartlett's factor analysis test and KMO of questionnaire related to strong points

KMO index	Bartlett test		
	Chi square	Df	p
0.848	1208.132	153	0.001

As results of the above table show, since KMO coefficient is more than 0.7, samples size is appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, since Bartlett test is less than 0.05, there is a significant relationship among items to provide a logical basic for analyzing the factors related to the strong points. In other words, factor analysis is appropriate to identify factor model structure of the strong points.

Table 2- The results of exploratory factor analysis related to strong points (prioritization in terms of their factor load)

Strong points	Questions	Factor load
	Existence of tourism attractions (historical and natural) in the country	0.821
	Existence of experienced and informed individuals of holding the great international sport events in the country	0.725
	Public interest for hosting the great international sport events in the country	0.717
	Existence of experts in the country sport	0.660
	Existence of appropriate climate in the country	0.607
	Media appropriate support, interaction and cooperation for informing and live broadcasting of games in the country	0.602
	Existence of eager, enthusiastic and interested spectators in the country	0.356

Results of exploratory factor analysis in the above table show that the item "*existence of tourism attractions (historical and natural) in the country*" with 0.821 load factor is the most important item in this part.

Table 3- The results of Bartlett's factor analysis test and KMO of questionnaire related to weak points

KMO index	Bartlett test		
	Chi square	Df	p
0.813	1031.214	210	0.001

As the results of the above table show, since KMO coefficient is more than 0.7, samples size is appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, since the Bartlett test is less than 0.05, there is a significant relationship among items to provide a logical basic for analyzing the factors related to the strong points. In other words, factor analysis is appropriate to identify factor model structure of the weak points.

Table 4- The results of exploratory factor analysis related to weak points (prioritization in terms of their load factor)

Weak points	Questions	Factor load
	Weak sport marketing in the country	0.926
	Not possessing the influential positions and chairs in the international sport communities	0.805
	Impossibility of broadcasting the female competitions from the national media of the country	0.779
	Lack of required citizen infrastructures (aerial and road transportation, services and etc.) in the country	0.733
	Lack of appropriate and enough hotels in the country	0.697
	Cultural and religious limitations and problems in the country	0.641
	Existence of political problems and challenges in the international level	0.576
	Shortage of standard and enough sport places in the country	0.523
	Lack of mechanized ticket selling system in the country	0.483
	Available limitations about foreign female athletes' attendance in the international sport competitions in the country	0.433
	Governmental economy dominating the country sport	0.428
	Lack of specific books and resources for hosting and holding the great international sport events in the country	0.406
	Lack of specified rules and system of sport sponsors in the country	0.399

	Low importance and authorities' naïve about the process of hosting and holding the great international sport events in the country	0.379
	Sport authorities' unfamiliarity with the world languages	0.364
	Weakness in the new and update technologies in the country	0.321

Results of factor analysis in the above table show that the item "*weak sport marketing in the country*" with 0.926 factor load considered as the biggest weak point in this part from the spectators' viewpoint.

Table 5- The results of Bartlett's factor analysis test and KMO of questionnaire related to opportunities

KMO index	Bartlett test		
	Chi square	Df	p
0.845	1267.321	153	0.001

As the results of the above table show, since KMO coefficient is more than 0.7, samples size is appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, since the Bartlett test is less than 0.05, there is a significant relationship among items to provide a logical basic for analyzing the factors related to the strong points. In other words, factor analysis is appropriate to identify factor model structure of the opportunities.

Table 6- The results of exploratory factor analysis related to opportunities (prioritization in terms of their load factor)

Opportunities	Questions	Factor load
	Strategic and geopolitical position of Iran in the critical region of Middle East	0.932
	The appropriate political position of Iran among Islamic and developing countries	0.808
	The appropriate view point of the government about developing and equipping sport places, spaces and equipments in the country	0.489
	Existence of tourism and economic free areas in the country (such as Kish, Qeshm, Chabahar, Anzali, etc.)	0.427
	Universality of some of the country sports	0.413
	Improvement of the country economic position during the past years	0.412
	Appropriate hospitality culture of Iranians	0.399
	Improvement of information and communications technology in the country	0.343
	Public interest for some sport fields in the country (such as Wrestling, Volleyball, Soccer and Taekwondo)	0.332

Results of factor analysis in the above table show that the item "*strategic and geopolitical position of Iran in the critical region of Middle East*" with 0.932-load factor is the most important item in this part.

Table 7- The results of Bartlett's factor analysis test and KMO of questionnaire related to threats

KMO index	Bartlett test		
	Chi square	df	p
0.766	374.748	66	0.001

As the results of the above table show, since KMO coefficient is more than 0.7, samples size is appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, since the Bartlett test is less than 0.05, there is a significant relationship

among items to provide a logical basic for analyzing the factors related to the strong points. In other words, factor analysis is appropriate to identify factor model structure of the threats.

Table 8- The results of exploratory factor analysis related to treats (prioritization in terms of their load factor)

Threats	Questions	Factor load
	Existence of powerful competitors for hosting the sport events in the region and world level	0.891
	Lack of the country sport authorities' serious attention to the international sport protocols, rules and principles and existence of non-standard statutes	0.654
	Political challenge with some region countries (The Triple Islands, Islamic Awakening)	0.577
	Negative advertisements of foreign and enemies media against Islamic Republic of Iran	0.554
	Limitation of women spectators attendance especially foreign women in stadiums	0.472
	Weak interactions between the country sport managers and the international sport foundations	0.437
	War and ciao in neighbor countries	0.396
	Political and economic sanctions	0.375
	Lack of the rules of television broadcasting right	0.315

Results of factor analysis in the above table show that the item "*existence of powerful competitors for hosting the sport events in the region and world level*" with 0.891 load factor is the most important item in threatening hosting and holding the great international sport events in the country.

Discussion and Conclusion

The implemented surveys show that if a society tend to hosting and holding the great international sport events should have significant capabilities and strong points like economic stability and political support O'Brian & Chalip (2007) or enthusiastic volunteers and citizens' support Kostas & Kaplanido (2010) in order to success in competition of hosting and holding such events. On the other side, weaknesses and threats as insufficient skilled workforce (Kostas & Kaplanido) make this competition difficult or cause defeat. Therefore, considering O'Brian and Chalip's "sport event leverage model", the basic strong/weak points mentioned by the respondents of the research should be applied in order to achieve opportunities and controlling threats for hosting and holding of the great international sport events in Iran (as a country which decides to make use of the hosting benefits). Results of the present research proved that (Table 4) lack of necessary urban infrastructures like aerial and land transportation with 0.733 factor load, insufficient and inappropriate hotels with 0.697 factor load, insufficient standard sport locations in the country with 0.523 factor load are of the major weak points increasing rejection risk in hosting competition. This finding is in line with those of Koosha's (2013), Isfahani's (2009), Kostas & Kaplanido's and Shank's (2009).

One of the characteristics of the great international sport events is their advanced sport locations that considered as brand and credit in assigning the events ,Westerbeek (2002). Providing infrastructures is a support for requester team ,Westerbeek (2000). After organizing infrastructures, hosting request can be supported and convince the international boards and owners of the events to assign the hosting privilege ,Westerbeek (2002). Since the events compensate expenses and infrastructures, the events themselves remained as heritage ,Ozbey (2011). Therefore, spending in this part is a kind of beneficial investment for country. Results of this research proved that (Table 2), "tourism attractions" with 0.826 factor load and "suitable climates in the country" with 0.607 factor load considered of major strong points to request for and acquiring hosting the events. This finding is in line with those of Koosha's (2013), Kostas & Kaplanido's (2010), Horne's (2007), Chalip's (2004) and Gursoy & Kendall's (2006). In this case, Miranda

& Andueza studying sport tourism in Spain and sound out that natural attractions factor with 78.3% is the major factor of attracting sport tourists to this country. Iran is one of the first 10 countries from the viewpoint of tourism attractions and ranked fifth. However, our share from the world tourism industry is too low ,Honarvar (2010). While, sport tourism of Australia assessed about 3 billion dollars annually. Attracting a tourist considered one of the success indices of any sport event, which requires a compiled and specified schedule or plan for marketing sport tourism while this crucial point ignored in our country unfortunately. Thus, beside too much expense, holding the events has not had any economic benefit for the country.

The item "desirable sport tourism in Iran" with the least factor load (0.284) that is in line with the results obtained by Esfahani (2009) and Honarvar (2010). Results of the present study show that (Table 4), "weak sport marketing in the country" with the most factor load (0.926), considered as one of the basic challenges in hosting the events in Iran. In this case, Naseri (1997) pointed out the importance of programming, integrity in policymaking, lack of bureaucracy in marketing and also the importance of considering the tourist type in marketing. In addition, Honarvar (2010) pointed out the importance cooperation of sport institutions in tourism agencies have, marketing and appropriate services of tourism agencies, establishing a specific institution for marketing, attracting the sport tourists and identifying the directive, attractive and preventive factors. Also, Esfahani (2009) suggested marketing for notifying and attracting tourists. Chalip (2004), reported the necessity of marketing cooperation among the event and host country. In addition, he emphasized the necessity of compiling a strategy by cooperation of tourism agencies for the target spectators. Also, results of the present study show that (Table 4), "impossibility of broadcasting female competitions from national media", "cultural and religious limitations and problems in the country" and "existing limitation for foreign female athletes' attendance" with 0.779, 0.641 and 0.433 load factors respectively, are of main obstacles in the way of hosting and holding the great international sport events in Iran. This finding is in line with the results of studies implemented by Adabi Firoozjah (2007) and Fathollahi et al (2009).

In this case, Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) said that drastic attendance of media representatives and large number of spectators (men and women) from all over the world is one the most important features of the great international sport events. Rooche (2000) considers the great international sport events as cultural, sport and commercial events with dramatic features and attractions for all people of the world. Moreover, Westerbeek (2000) believes that the existence of local or international media with the right to sell broadcasting right of programs is one the most important features of the great international sport events. Totally, what understood from the great international sport events is that the range of such events determined based on the effects rate and spectators amount. Regarding what mentioned above and considering most participants, visitors and tourists of these games and competitions are women, holding such events seems impossible due to the cultural and religious limitations and problems in Iran. Results of this study show that "possessing no influential positions and chairs in international societies" with 0.805 load factor, and "low importance and authorities naïveté about the process of events hosting" with 0.379 load factor, are of important obstacles and challenges for events hosting to be rejected by boards and authorities. These findings are in line with results of Westerbeek et al (2002) and P.R.Amiri's studies (2002).

In this case, Westerbeek et al expressed that experience and knowledge of the requester team is so important, they also said that there were experienced individuals in an Australian team during the process of achieve hosting of Olympic Games. Experienced in requesting for hosting, gives the members of requester team an opportunity of communicating with the major authorities of the event, helps them to act more powerful during the process of negotiations and shows the event authorities that they are decisive for successful hosting. A powerful requester team can create more powerful and effective internal and external communication network, which considerably contributes to the integrity and increase of competence. P. R.

Amiri (2002) said that validity and capacity of holding is a basic element for successful hosting request but not the factor determining a successful or unsuccessful request. Undoubtedly, experience in various national and international events is ideal, but this factor is effective if the key appropriate individuals selected in the organizing team. As Amiri (2002) noted, importance of policies in many of unsuccessful hosting requests related to the following problems: 1- we did not have enough information about the event authorities. 2- We did not make policy. 3- We were so simple and amateur and thought this is a simple field. Iran not only is not influential in decision maker communities for requesting and acquiring the great international sport events, but also does not have a powerful and sufficient requesting team, Kousha (2013). Therefore, in order to achieve the benefits of this kind of events, compiled educational programs, reinforcing and training effective work forces and management of strategic program of event holding should be considered. The results of this study also show that "lack of sufficient volunteer and trained forces" and "lack of development and reinforcement of volunteer system in the country sport federations" considered as important and effective obstacles and challenges for hosting and holding the great international sport events in the country.

These results are in line with the results of Kousha (2013). In this case, Baum and Lookstone noted that without volunteer and local support, the feeling and mental relation with the event or the sense of "holiness of the event" does not create and the host community underprivileged of social opportunities and benefits of the event. In addition, Kostas and Kaplandino (2010), expressed that, by applying and participation of different populations of the city, the event managers can direct these populations and make social changes. For example in the programs of Vancouver Olympic Games, some programs compiled to provide the context of education, training and satisfying the needs of local people. The findings of the present study show that (table 8), "security of participated athletes and authorities in Iran" can be one of the most important and effective factors in hosting the great international sport events in the country. This finding is in line with the results of the implemented studies by Esfahani (2009), Kousha (2013) and Moutinho (1987). In the case of this factor importance, Crompton (1992) said that finance and probability of life risk are important obstacles in the context of event holding. Soulberg and Peroius (2007) said that the great sport events could encourage many tourists. There is a permanent risk in this kind of events. It is possible that the events provide a context for host promotion in the world, but it is possible that before or after the games, unpredicted events occurred which fade or neutralize the expected effect.

Whiteson and Horn (2006), expressed that another cases, which can negatively effect on the image of the host country are as follows: conditions such as economic crisis and terroristic attacks. Whenever appropriate security assessment does not implement and an accident occurs, the host country or city remains in the mind of public in the name of that accident, for example, people remember the 1996 Olympic Games of Atlanta by the accident of bomb explosion and athletes' fear. The results of this study show that, "negative advertisements of foreign and enemies media against Islamic Republic of Iran" with the load factor equals to 0.554, is one the most important treat factors in requesting and hosting the great international sport events in the country. This finding is in line with the results of the implemented studies by Naseri (1997) and Kousha (2013). However, these negative advertisements over the world by foreign media, effect negatively on tourism attraction (as the main resource of benefit acquirement), especially that the political-security conditions of the Middle East critical region and Iran neighbors is always changing and unstable because of governmental changes and Iran identified as the negative interferer in these stresses, Randree (2011). A collection of a tourism and economic attractive environment, appropriate hospitality culture among Iranians and appropriate climate in the country which emphasized by respondents of this study, are worthy capabilities that create many tangible and intangible economic opportunities for Iran. This subject is in line with appropriate economic and long term usage of the event that is the motivation for expend, longer reside in the city and the opportunity of image improvement and proving the culture and nationality of Iran, Chalip (2004). Regarding results of the present study suggested that holding the events in the country focuses on holding the regional and Asian events such as Asian Saloon Games, Single Field

World Cup, Asian Youth Games, Youth Olympic Games, West Asia Games and etc. which have world media feedback in order to making basic decisions about hosting the great international sport events. Since holding such events, provides the opportunity of supplying standard, basic and contextual infrastructures for removing cultural obstacles in hosting and holding the great international sport events in the country.

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