

Evaluation of Service Quality in Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Hotels

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Abstract

Defining and Evaluating quality service is of importance to providers of hotel services. This study aims to diagnose the applicability of the Evaluation of service quality in Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) hotels. A structured and self-administered survey was used targeting international tourists who were visiting the Aqaba tourism destination, Jordan. The authors delivered 400 questionnaires to international tourists from which 310 were retained and valid for the analysis. A series of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to assess the research constructs dimensions, validity, and composite reliability.

Keywords: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance Empathy, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA)

1. Introduction

The quality of service is one of the most important and extensive topics covered by many studies during the past decades, which dealt with quality of service in terms of concepts, measurement, exclusion and others. Garvin (1988) was one of the scientists who cared about the quality of service. (1994). Quality of service is a comparison of a real experience of service with the expectations of guests before consumption (Al-Hussein et al, 2015; Nelson,2000).

Quality of service is a complex concept because the service itself has the characteristics of Kalamalasia, Vnalism and heterogeneity and others, and that the quality of service appear by comparing the expectations of the guests and their awareness of the service provided, so the same service can be seen as high quality by some guests, And low quality for other guests. In other words, the quality of service depends on the guests themselves.

The majority of the tourist that provides tourism service provider, hospitality and leisure, as members of the service industry a range of baseline services. However, service providers who expand their services beyond expectations have a much better chance of satisfying their customers. With creative ideas and a strong understanding of the needs and desires of their customers, the service provider develops extensive and innovative strategies (Alshawagfih et al,2015; Jawabreh et al,2015).

Quality of services plays an important role in the design and marketing of the service product, as it is important for both service providers and beneficiaries. Service organizations have become increasingly aware of the importance and role of applying TQM concept to competitive advantage (Hokey et al ,2002; Ibrahim et al,2014; Gavin, Philip,1997; Jiju et al,2004; Ching-Piao et al,2008)

Quality affects the volume of demand for tourism services and is a means of making the competitive position of the institution compared to other institutions competing in the market, and is one of the most important sources of profit for the institution is seeking to reduce the cost of service and finally quality of service is a source of conservation of current customers As well as attracting new customers (Amyan,. Jawabreh, 2011; Jawabreh et al 2018, Jawabreh et al 2017; Katerina et al, 2012)

The researcher believes that the quality of service is the degree of preference at an acceptable price, and control of variables at acceptable costs. The quality and quality of the product (service or commodity) are excellent when compared with the criteria set from the perspective of the institution or from the perspective of the beneficiary / the customer (Ksenia, Chan, 2018; Maxwell et al.2000)

Satisfaction is one of the most important factors that lead to the continued operation of tourist hotels in Aqaba Special Economic Zone. It contributes to increasing the market share of any business organization and the return on investment. Satisfaction is aimed at improving the quality of products and services while reducing costs, time and effort to improve customer service and satisfaction. The aim of this study is to identify the impact of the quality of tourist hotel services on the satisfaction of customers from the services provided in tourist restaurants in the Aqaba Economic Zone.

2. Literature Review

Jawabreh (2012) found there is the impact of implementing customer relationship management to increase the customer trust in Umaid Bahwan with a medium degree where Umaid Bhwan employees have good skills, and customers feel confident with dealing with Umaid Bhwan hotel. The information customers get from the hotel is accurate.

The hotel always exerts good efforts to fulfill its promises, so the customers could get the hotels services as promised.

(Al Rosan 2007) the study aims at identifying factors influencing the quality of hotel service: An applied study on a sample of five star hotels in Jordan. Using the correlation, regression and variance of test-t and test-f to analyze the results of the study and test the hypotheses, the researcher concluded that there is a positive impression for the quality of the total services. Reliability, and responsiveness with the overall quality of hotel services, and this relationship was not between the safety factors and full quality sympathy. The researcher benefited from this study in building the study model (independent variable) and knowledge of the dimensions of quality of services in tourist restaurants that affect the satisfaction of tourists.

Saleh et al, 2010, entitled "The quality of tourist services as recognized by tourists in Palestine" The aim of the study was to identify the quality of tourism services as perceived by tourists in Palestine. The study aimed to know the quality of tourism services from the point of view of tourists in Palestine.

The study focused on the importance of the response, the availability of information, the method of presentation, the content, safety, political stability and security, as well as the role of sex, age, type of tourism, social status and educational level on the quality of tourism services from the point of view of tourists in Palestine. The sample of the study consisted of 100 tourists, half of them foreigners and the other half of the Arabs. The researcher benefited from this study in building the model of the study (independent variable) and the security and stability factor is important for the tourist demand in the destination area in Aqaba or other tourist cities.

The study showed the importance of applying the principles of TQM, which was in the form of customer satisfaction and senior management support, to enable the employees Improve their performance (Riadh,2009)

The concept of customer satisfaction is one of the concepts that has attracted the attention of many researchers and those who are interested in management and marketing. This is because many organizations in the world recognize that the reason for their excellence is based on customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction. More than competitors to satisfy the customer by providing products and services that meet the wishes of the customer and meet the requirements and expectations from the first time as the idea of satisfying the wishes of the customer is the secret of success and excellence of most organizations, especially in light of the current challenges of War technical and spread of multinational organizations and the resulting changes in the tastes and needs of customers as the market opportunity in exchange for new technology that comes by foreign organizations competing among themselves in order to attract the most customers and retain access to their satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, any productive or service organization seeks to achieve customer satisfaction because it was originally found to meet its needs and desires by providing products or services. The essence of the organization's work is the customer, without which there will be no organization at all. And programs towards customer satisfaction

The aim of this study was to find statistical differences between the employees' service quality in Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) hotels of the importance of applying the principles and the relationship between some personal variables (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, and Assurance Empathy). To achieve the objectives of this study, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to a sample of five-star hotels consisting of 6 hotels selected according to the classification criteria.

One of the most important results of the study is that there are high levels of awareness among employees of five star hotels to the importance of applying the principles of TQM to some demographic variables such as experience and educational level(Mohammad et al,2011)

The benefited from this study in building the model of the study (the independent variable) and in the knowledge of the importance of applying the quality standards in the hospitality sector in Jordan in order to improve the tourism sector in Jordan and make it the most influential sector in the national product.

Vanniarajan, T (2009), entitled "Dineserv: A Tool for Measurement Service Quality in Restaurant", aims to identify six dimensions of the quality of services offered in Indian restaurants (relationship, empathy, communication, food quality, prices and content). The results of the analysis (239) concluded that the dimensions of quality in the restaurants were different in terms of interest and the benefits of the relationship between the restaurant and the customer ranked first, and the second was the sympathy, the communication, the quality of the food, the prices and the material (vanniarajan, 2009).

Interestingly, the number of European tourists' arrivals has dramatically increased since the referendum. Apart from assessing the reliability and validity of the perceived service quality measurement scale, the results indicate that the nature of perceived service quality measurement instrument is found to two dimension tangibles and intangibles have for North Cyprus hotel services. The results reveal that tangibles and intangibles exert a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, and European customers visiting North Cyprus are demanding improved service quality (Halil ,Kashif,2005).

Jasmina Gržini (2007), the study of the importance of hotel service quality through six axes (reliability, warranty, concrete, empathy, response). The results of this study indicate that all service quality axes have received negative differences indicating that the services were lower than the customer's expectations

The study recommended that hotel managers focus on identifying the problem between what the customer

expects and what is happening in order to make the appropriate modifications and upgrades in order to raise the level of services and thus gain customer satisfaction.

(Jenet Agbor2011) The Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality: a study of three Service sectors in Umeå. The study found that reliability, responsiveness and security are closely related to customer satisfaction and quality of tourism services. Empathy ranked last

(Raykaet al,2005) Analysis of the data revealed a number of impediments to developing and maintaining distinguishable, superior service. These impediments fell into four broad areas: Budget constraints, Staff attitude, Lack of mentoring and High customer expectations.

Mohinder chand (2010), entitled The impact of HRM practice on service quality, customer satisfaction and performance in the Indian hotel industry

This study aimed at understanding the impact of human resource management practices on the quality of services provided to tourists and their satisfaction with the hotel industry. The study showed that human resource management practices have a positive impact on improving the quality of services and customer satisfaction. And the economic return of the hotel industry.

The study showed that the third internal problem that occurs between the quality of service and its delivery plays an important role in achieving customer satisfaction, and this can be addressed by studying the quality of service and the quality of service provided by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. The problem is finding the compatibility between the worker and the job, increasing the awareness of the importance of working in a team spirit, finding the compatibility between technology and function, supervising supervision, self-control, dealing with conflicts and problems and the clarity of the role of each worker in the organization. Hence, external quality as customer satisfaction is closely related to internal customer satisfaction, and the study pointed out that all dimensions of quality are important in achieving customer satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

This section provides the methodology applied in the current study. It consists of the research model, operational definitions of the study's independent and dependent variables, research hypotheses, besides data collection tool and research population and sample.

3.1 Research Model

The elements of this research are established based on preceding literature, either theoretically or empirically. Indeed, this study used variables that are common in tourism development literature. Figure (1) represents a model for the study that shows the independent variables, the dependent variable, and the proposed relationship between them.

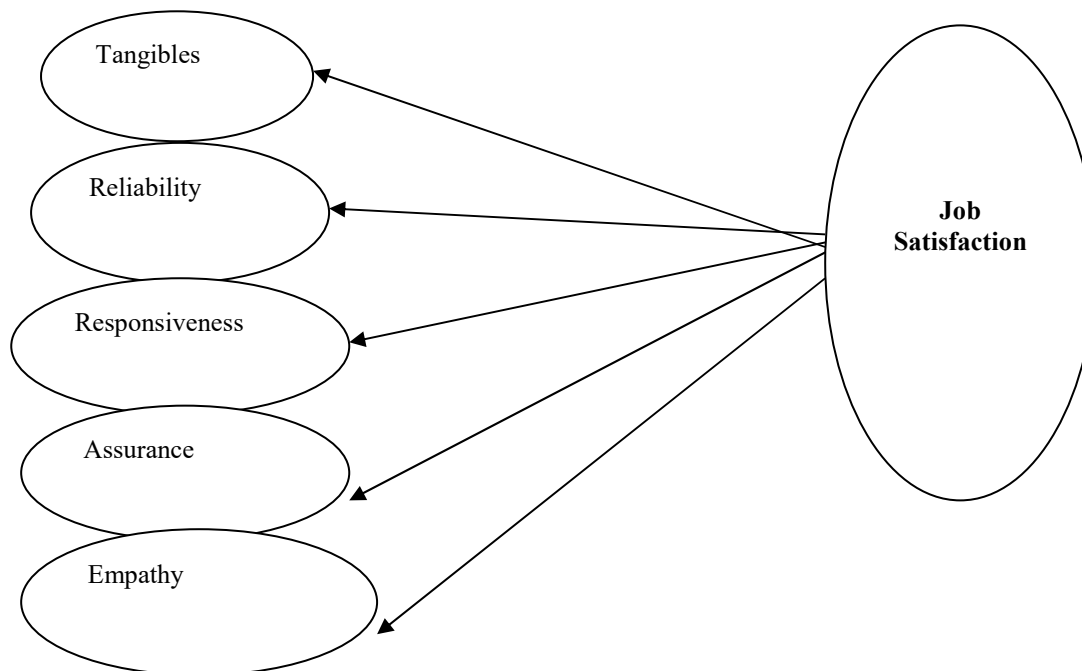


Figure 1. Research Model

3.2 Description of personal factors and functional respondents:

Table No. (1) Shows a description of personal and functional factors of the sample individuals, as follows:

Gender: it is shown that 58.0 % of the sample is male, and 42.0 %

Age range: it is shown that 36.0 % of the sample their age from 21 to 30 years and 28.0 % between 31- 40 years, 21.0 % between 41 to 50 , 9.0 % of those less than 20 years , 6.0 % between 51- 60 years .

Monthly income: the table shows that 66.0 % of the sample their income less than 1000\$, 22.0 % between 1001\$ - 2000\$, 7.33 % between 2001\$ - 3000\$, and 4.67 % their income More than 3000\$.

Occupation: 95.33 % of the sample individuals is working in Private Sector , and 4.67 % in Public Sector .

Education: 68.0 % of the sample study has Bachelors degree, and 22.70 % of the sample has Masters degree, 5.30 % of the sample has Post Graduate degree, and 4.00 % has High School.

Table 1. The frequencies and percentages of the personal levels of the respondents

Factor		Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	184	58.00
	Female	126	42.00
Age	less than 20 years	28	9.00
	21- 30 years	108	36.00
	31 – 40 years	84	28.00
	41-50 years	62	21.00
	51 -60 years	18	6.00
Income	less than 1000\$	198	66.00
	1001\$ - 2000\$	66	22.00
	2001\$ - 3000\$	22	7.33
	More than 3000\$	14	4.67
Occupation	Private Sector	286	95.33
	Public Sector	14	4.67
Education	High School	12	4.00
	Bachelors degree	204	68.00
	Masters degree	68	22.70
	Post Graduate degree	16	5.30

3.3. Stability of the Measure:

The stability of the measure was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, it is shown from Table (2) that:

Alpha value related to items of Tangibles equals to 0.95 .

Alpha value related to items of Reliability equals to 0.84.

Alpha value related to items of Responsiveness equals to 0.79.

Alpha value related to items of Assurance equals to 0.83

Alpha value related to items of Empathy equals to 0.65

Alpha value related to all items equals to 0.90 .

All these values are greater than 0.60 which means that the measure is stable.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha Test

Item/ dimension	Cronbach's alpha
Tangibles	0.95
Reliability	0.84
Responsiveness	0.79
Assurance	0.83
Empathy	0.65
total	0.90

3.4. Validity of Instrument

The validity of the instrument was verified by using the Factorial Analysis to check the connection between the sentences and the dimension its related to.

Table 1 shows the results of this analysis, where the saturation of all the items for each dimension were high, and >0.30 which is acceptable, this means that each item is related to the dimension it belongs to.

3.5. Hypotheses:

First hypothesis: there is no statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and tangibility of front office staff.

Table 3 shows that all the items have a arithmetic means greater than 3.00 and p-value less than 0.05 which

means that they are statistically significant. Item (1) which concerning the " modern looking equipment" , came in the first rank with an arithmetic average of 4.40 . Item (5) which concerning the "convenient branch location" , came in the second rank with an arithmetic average of 4.38 . Items 2 , 3 , 4 came later . Item (6) which concerning the "employees who have a neat, professional appearance” , ranked last in the items with a mean of 3.67.

3.5.1. *Test of first hypothesis:*

The table shows that all grouped items has a mean of 4.03, and 0.00 p-value , which means the rejection of a hypothesis, this suggests there is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and tangibility of front office staff .

Table 3. Arithmetic mean, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of **Tangibles**:

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
1	Modern Looking Equipment	4.40	1.12	15.20	0.00
2	visually appealing materials associated with the service	3.95	1.38	8.38	0.00
3	Convenient Business hours.	3.89	1.62	6.72	0.00
4	visually appealing facilities	3.87	1.49	7.20	0.00
5	convenient branch location	4.38	1.11	15.37	0.00
6	employees who have a neat, professional appearance	3.67	1.37	5.96	0.00
	All grouped items	4.03	0.79	16.00	0.00

3.5.2. *Second hypothesis:*

There is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and reliability of front office staff.

Table 4 shows With the exception of items 10, 11, all other items have a arithmetic means greater than 3.00 and p-value less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant. Item (7) which concerning the” maintain error free records” , came in the first rank with an arithmetic average of 4.03 . Item (9) which concerning the “provide service as promised ” , came in the second rank with an arithmetic average of 3.87 . Items 8 , came in the third rank . The Item 12 ranked last in the items statistically accepted with a mean of 3.78.

In item 10, although the mean was greater than 3.00 , the and p-value was more than 0.05 which means that" the lack of the dependability in handling customers' problems "

Item 11 has a mean greater than 3.00, but p-value was greater than 0.05, which means that it was not statistically significant, which means that" the lack of the providing services at the promised time " .

3.5.3. *Test of second hypothesis:*

The table shows that all grouped items has a mean of 3.61 , and 0.00 p-value , which means that this hypothesis is rejected , this suggests there is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and reliability of front office staff.

Table 4. Arithmetic mean, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of reliability.

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
7	Maintain Error Free records	4.03	1.00	12.54	0.00
8	performing services right the first time	3.83	0.94	10.78	0.00
9	Provide service as promised	3.87	1.10	9.68	0.00
10	dependability in handling customers' problems	3.07	0.63	1.29	0.20
11	providing services at the promised time	3.10	0.76	1.62	0.11
12	keeping customers informed about when the services will be performed	3.78	1.08	8.85	0.00
	All grouped items	3.61	0.48	15.74	0.00

3.5.4. *Third hypothesis*

There is no statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and responsiveness of front office staff.

Table 5 shows that all the items have an arithmetic means greater than 3.00 and p-value less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant. Item (14) which concerning the” willingness of Employees to help customers” , came in the first rank with an arithmetic average of 4.23 . Item (13) which concerning the “prompt Service to Customers”, came in the second rank with an arithmetic average of 3.99. Item (15) which concerning the “readiness to respond to customers' request”, ranked last in the items with a mean of 3.69.

3.5.5. *Test of third hypothesis:*

The table shows that all grouped items has a mean of 3.97 , and 0.00 p-value , which means the rejection of a hypothesis, this suggests there is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and **responsiveness** of front office staff.

Table 5. Arithmetic means, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of **Responsiveness**:

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
13	Prompt Service to Customers	3.99	1.08	11.18	0.00
14	willingness of Employees to help customers	4.23	1.04	14.49	0.00
15	Readiness to respond to customers' request	3.69	0.90	9.36	0.00
	All grouped items	3.97	0.73	16.12	0.00

3.5.6. *Fourth hypothesis:*

There is no statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and assurance of front office staff.

Table 6 shows with the exception of items 19, all other items have a arithmetic means greater than 3.00 and p-value less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant. Item (17) which concerning the” employees who instill confidence in their customers”, came in the first rank with an arithmetic average of 4.41 . Item (16) which concerning the “making customers feel safe in their transactions”, came in the second rank with an arithmetic average of 4.18. The Item (18) which concerning the” employees who are consistently courteous” ranked last in the items statistically accepted with a mean of 3.76.

In item 19, although the mean was greater than 3.00 , the p-value was more than 0.05 , which means that it was not statistically significant , which means that" the lack of the employees who have the knowledge to answer customers' questions "

3.5.7. *Test of fourth hypothesis:*

The table shows that all grouped items has a mean of 3.87 , and 0.00 p-value , which means that this hypothesis is rejected , this suggests there is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and assurance of front office staff.

Table 6. Arithmetic mean, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of assurance

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
16	making customers feel safe in their transactions	4.18	0.98	14.80	0.00
17	employees who instill confidence in their customers	4.41	0.99	17.46	0.00
18	employees who are consistently courteous	3.76	1.09	8.53	0.00
19	employees who have the knowledge to answer customers' questions	3.14	0.45	3.82	0.06
	All grouped items	3.87	0.60	17.69	0.00

3.5.8. *Fifth hypothesis:*

There is no statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and empathy of front office staff.

Table 7 shows with the exception of items 20, all other items have a arithmetic means greater than 3.00 and p-value less than 0.05 which means that they are statistically significant. Item (21) which concerning the" giving customers individual attention " , came in the first rank with an arithmetic average of 4.23 . Item (22) which concerning the " having customer's best interest at heart " , came in the second rank with an arithmetic average of 3.68 . The Item (23) which concerning the" employees who deal with customers in a caring fashion " ranked last in the items statistically accepted with a mean of 3.61.

In item 20 , although the mean was greater than 3.00 , but the p-value was more than 0.05, which means that it was not statistically significant , which means that" the lack of the employees who understand the needs of their customers "

3.5.9. *Test of fifth hypothesis:*

The table shows that all grouped items has a mean of 3.65 , and 0.00 p-value , which means that this hypothesis is rejected , this suggests there is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and empathy of front office staff.

Table 7. Arithmetic mean, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of empathy

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
20	employees who understand the needs of their customers	3.08	0.56	1.74	0.08
21	giving customers individual attention	4.23	1.06	14.28	0.00
22	having customer's best interest at heart	3.68	0.96	8.63	0.00
23	employees who deal with customers in a caring fashion	3.61	0.84	8.82	0.00
	All grouped items	3.65	0.54	14.76	0.00

Table 7: Arithmetic mean, standard deviations, t value, and P-Value of satisfaction:

Item No	Item details	mean	Std. deviation	t-value	P-Value
24	Are you satisfied with your visit to the Aqaba hotels?	4.17	0.97	14.80	0.00
25	Are you satisfied with what each hotels offers and offers?	4.43	0.98	17.46	0.00
26	Are you satisfied if hotels make improvements and changes in the quality of services provided?	3.74	1.10	8.53	0.00
27	Are the services provided well than your expectations?	3.14	0.45	3.82	0.00
28	Do hotels always meet the needs and desires of customers?	4.22	1.05	14.50	0.00
29	Are you more satisfied with the services offered by competing hotels?	3.70	0.89	9.35	0.00
	All grouped items	4.59	0.90	11.41	0.00

Result

There is a statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and tangibility of hotel staff. Where the modern Looking Equipment, visually appealing materials associated with the service, convenient business hours, visually appealing facilities, convenient branch location, employees who have a neat, and professional appearance.

Quality of service is a key element of success in today's competitive environment. The management of the service sector must focus on improving the quality of its services on a continuous basis to suit the needs and requirements of its customers and meet the wishes of its employees, which helps to increase productivity and increase profits and improve its reputation in the local and global market, increasing the chances of success in the competitive environment. And the continuation of the Organization through the demand for services or goods provided by the Organization.

There is statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and reliability of hotel staff. Where the maintain error free records , performing services right the first time , Provide service as promised , and keeping customers informed about when the services will be performed . But not dependability in handling customers' problems, and be not providing services at the promised time.

There is a statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and responsiveness of hotel staff. Where the Prompt Service to customers, the willingness of Employees to help customers, and readiness to respond to customers' request. Organizations' efforts to retain customers and increase their loyalty are due to the fact that the cost of acquiring a new customer is five times the cost of retaining the current customer (Downling, 2002).

The results of some studies that show that satisfaction is not necessarily led to increased loyalty are taken into account (Ahmed et al, 2012; Alananzeh et al,2018).

In addition, establishing, maintaining, strengthening and maintaining relationships with customers and other parties' works to achieve a certain profit so that the objectives of all stakeholders are met through mutual exchange and joint fulfillment of promises (Abu Rumman, 2013).

There is a statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and assurance of hotel staff. Where the making customers feel safe in their transactions, employees instill confidence in their customers and they are consistently courteous, but employees have not the knowledge to answer customers' questions. Which makes us emphasize the need to pay attention to this dimension by the management of classified restaurants? In view of the elements of this dimension, we find them consist of self-confidence, a sense of safety, fitness and literature in dealing, and training staff to qualify them to serve tourists.

There is a statically significant relation between customer satisfaction and empathy of hotel staff. Where the giving customer's individual attention, having customer's best interest at heart, and employees who deal with customers in a caring fashion. But employees do not understand the needs of their customers.

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