Case Report

Assessing the prevalence of good governance in public sectors in Gedeo Zone: Case of Yirga Cheffe town administration, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the prevalence of good governance in some selected public institutions in Yirga Cheffe town administration, Gedeo zone, Ethiopia. The study examined the following key concepts: The perception of public official, civil servants and service users to what extent good governance is prevalent in public institutions both in principle and on the ground. The researcher used multiple methods. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from these techniques are analyzed and interpreted. The researcher founded that frameworks and mechanisms for good governance implementation are available. In conclusion, major core elements of good governance namely accountability, transparency, equity and equality, effectiveness and efficiency and participation different achievements and failures were observed. To uphold the prevalence of good governance at grass root level, the researcher recommended the necessity of involving the society in different government affairs, the need for arranging trainings, workshop, and seminars on good governance, and using different mass medias.

Keywords: Good governance, Public sectors, Accountability, Transparency, Participation, Equity, Efficiency, Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

One of the areas of consensuses reached by the world leaders in September 2000 in their Millennium summit general assembly of the United Nations conference for the declaration of Millennium Development Goal was democracy and good Governance. That is why governance occupies a central stage in the development discourse and is considered as a crucial element to be incorporated in the development strategy. It is also taken as a mechanism in which the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (Abdellatif, 2003; Kaufmann and Kraay, 2003; Chowdhury and Skarstedt 2005; Amoko, 2003; Karl, 2011).

The success of development is dependent on good governance; therefore, it is an essential precondition to ensure positive changes particularly in developing nations of the world. In other words, good governance is a requisite for promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. Without good governance, it is assumed that the benefits of most reforms in developing countries, like Ethiopia, will not be reached to the poor and the funds allocated for various developmental issues will not be used effectively. In those countries where there are lacks of accountability, transparency, responsiveness, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, corruptions, poor control of public funds and abuses of human rights, development
Ethiopia as one of the African countries trying to achieve and striving to achieve it. According to African governance report (2004), Ethiopia like any other African country has faced a number of challenges in democratization and good governance building processes. In order to address the gaps identified the government developed a multi-sectoral national capacity building strategy which advocates the principles of decentralization, regional autonomy, and efficiency to enhance popular participation and to promote good governance, accountability and transparency.

According to Ministry of Work and Urban Development (2007), the main objectives of the policy of decentralization has been to create and strengthen urban local government that will ensure the traits of good governance such as public participation, democratization, and enhance decentralized service delivery through institutional reforms, capacity building, systems development and training. Formerly in its strategy, Ethiopia’s Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), the issue of good and decentralized governance was considered as one of the building block in the struggle against poverty.

As clearly stated in the Ethiopia’s guiding strategic framework for the five year period 2005/06-2009/10 commonly known as a Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), programs aimed at strengthening the democratization processes are being taken step by step in the form of Civil Service Reform, Justice system Reform, Improved Democratic Governance, and Decentralization which resulted significant achievements in the last few years (MoFED, 2009).

In general, though the government of FDRE has taken important measures to promote good governance by ratifying a number of international human right instruments, and the FDRE constitution adopted multi-party government system and accepted most of the internationally recognized human rights conventions since 1991, the process of good governance building is facing serious and complex challenges. The challenges are mainly related with that of the infancy of building good governance in the country (Kumera, 2011).

According to the African governance report (2005), the major challenges include lack of adequate awareness about human rights among the public, the limited democratic culture and experience in the country, limited participation of citizens in governance, lack of adequate and appropriate policies and laws in some areas and capacity limitations of law enforcement and governance organs of the government.

Based on the African governance survey conducted by the Economic Commission for Africa for 28 countries (2004), Ethiopia’s performance in all indices of measuring good governance has fallen below the sample average which is 53%. According to Shimelis (2005), while the sample index of Ethiopia is 36% and the same trend persists in the country governance profile by subsequent ECA’s governance survey of 2005 (ECA, 2005). This clearly shows that Ethiopia is still good governance African standards concerned. Moreover based on 2005 IFA Resource Allocation Index in the area of public sector management and institution Ethiopia scores 3.1 averages in which 6 points is the highest and 1 is the lowest point. Especially in transparency, accountability and corruption in public sector the country score below average, 2.5 points. Mind full of these facts, PASDEP recognizes the need for more efforts to make local authorities more transparent, accountable and efficient in their response to the needs of the people. Therefore, in order to know how far good governance in the country progresses and/or face obstacles, the activities of making regular assessments and measurements of governance condition of the country is necessary (MoFED, 2010).

The aim of this research is, therefore, to examine how good governance is prevalent in public institutions found in Yirga Cheffe town administration, Gedeo zone; Ethiopia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data type and sources

The research was conducted by using descriptive survey type in which all data relevant to the case was gathered and analyzed. This type of method was used because the research tried to assess the existing governance conditions of the public institutions on the basis of different good governance indicators. The researcher used both primary and secondary data as a source of information. Combinations of qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through semi structured questionnaires and interviews as a primary source of information for the study. A document analysis was also used as sources of secondary data.

Study area and target population

Study area

Yirga Cheffe town was selected because, after long year’s depression and stagnation, just since the past ten years especially of the last half a decade the town is shooting up and promisingly changing in all aspects in
relation to the development agenda of the government. It has also become one of the potential areas of investment in Gedeo zone. Thus, believing that the result of the research is important for the sustainability of its development the town is purposefully selected.

Target/study population

The study has target populations of public servants of 11 public institutions: Municipal, Service Office, Trade and Industry, SME, Justice Office, Woreda Court, the town Health Station, Office of Police, Water and Sewerage office, Office of Education, Revenues Office found in Yirga Cheffe town. And the service users of these institutions were also made to be target population. Besides, based on the reason that they have better information concerning the issue under investigation, public official from the above mentioned public sector offices was made to be the part of the target population.

Sampling size and sampling

The study was undertaken on purposively selected 11 public institutions out of 25 institutions found under the town administration. The public sector institutions were selected purposively because of the magnitude and importance of institutions in serving the society and their relation with diverse stakeholders. After the institutions were identified, the amount (number) of public servants in each selected institutions was included in the study as respondents proportionally to the number of employee found in each institution. (20% of the employee i.e. 44 sample respondents in all institution). After the amounts of number of respondents in each institution were proportionally decided, the sample respondents from each institution were selected using simple lottery method. Then respondents of service users of each institution were selected based on convenience sampling (accidental) method. This is due to the nature of the service user unavailability in fixed time and place. Thus those public users found executing their activities in each institution in different days were made to fill the questionnaires.

Method of data collection

To achieve the aims and objectives of this research, it is vital to have a comprehensive research approach. For this study, various techniques of data collection like questionnaire, interview, and document analysis were employed to gather both primary and secondary data.

Method of data analysis

The data which was collected using questionnaires, interview and document analysis were analyzed and discussed in the form of notes, tables and percentage. The completed questionnaire was given code and entered into the computer software and the results was imported and analyzed. Finally based on the available information which was obtained from the analysis part, a conclusion and recommendation was made by taking into account the most important points related with objectives and problems of the study.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section of the study focused on the major findings of the study. Specifically, it tried to examine the existence of good governance in public sectors by using major principles of good governance as major criteria for evaluation.

Participation

Good governance to be prevailed, all men and women should have a voice in decision making either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. To check the level of participation in the study area, the respondents were asked to respond the following varieties of questions.

As it is depicted in Table 1, 56.8 % (25) of respondents disagree with the existence of institutional framework which enables the public users to participate in their institution while the remaining 43.2 % (19) of the respondent agree with the statement. From the total respondents, 68.12 % (30) replied as there is an institutional frame work which enable civil society to participate in their institution while the remaining 31.82% witnessed the absence of the frameworks that encourage the CBOs and/or the CSOs. This at least clearly showed that community based organizations, civil society
Table 1. Civil servant perception on participation in the institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions of participation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is institutional framework that enables the public users to participate in their institutions</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is any institutional frame work which enable civil society to participate in their institution</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution with public forum for Women, Youth and the disadvantaged groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are mechanisms of customers’ consultation for the implementation of policies and program</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Service user respondents’ attitude on participation in the institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The institution prepare community forum in order to enable the community to discuss issues that mater them.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institutions encourage them to participate in decision making process that concerns the service user/community</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community ever consulted by the institution before a program or policy is implemented that concerns them</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>70.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service users have ever invited to evaluate the service provider institution management</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service users can easily provided to give their suggestions, questions, comments and complaints for their service provider institution</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Public users’ attitude on the questions of effectiveness and efficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions of effectiveness and Efficiency</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount the institution provides the services to the customers</td>
<td>Very low(1)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low(2)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium(3)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High(4)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high(5)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The satisfaction level of public users on the service provided by the institution</td>
<td>Very low(1)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low(2)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium(3)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High(4)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high(5)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rate of efficiency of public users service provider Institution</td>
<td>Very low(1)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low(2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium(3)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High(4)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high(5)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The degree of confidence (trust) the public users have in their service provider</td>
<td>Very low(1)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low(2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium(3)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High(4)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very high(5)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

organizations and NGOs have not favored by the institution to take part their roles in the institutions. Good governance is a mechanism by which women, youth, minorities and disadvantaged groups are treated in a special manner and given due emphasis. In the process of building good governance, giving a special attention to the already mentioned parts of a society is mandatory and it is by what institutions did to them that the prevalence of good governance is measured. But as shown in the Table 1, their responses were somewhat negative, that is to mean, only 9.1 % of them say yes but the majority 90.9 % of them answers no. The result showed that public institutions under discussion were not totally effectively discharging their responsibility regarding
Table 4. Service user's responses on questions of accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions of accountability</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The service users were asked irregular payments by personnel/officials of the service provider institution to accomplish their task in the institution</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community/service users had the chance to review the budget of their service provider institution</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is corruption in the service provider institutions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Service user's view on the prevalence of transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions of transparency</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The easiness to obtain information on laws and regulations of your service provider institution</td>
<td>Very difficult(1)</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult(2)</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat easy(3)</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy(4)</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very easy(5)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transparency of their service provider institution's performance</td>
<td>Very difficult(1)</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult(2)</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat easy(3)</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy(4)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very easy(5)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Condition of Good Governance in the Municipalities of Gedeo Zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Question Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a separate department in your municipality responsible for provision of trainings on the reform issues including good governance</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The present condition of good governance in their municipality is adequate /satisfactory?</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Customers (services users) are the main stakeholder in public institutions and is due to them that institutions are framed and existing. Therefore, as indicated in the Table 1 only 46.82% of them says yes but the rest 53.12% the respondents make their answer no. Still workers of public institutions included in the study as samples witnessed that framework consultation is not available. But it must be noted that the number of respondents who answered yes were not that much far less than in number. But the disparity of their response concerning the issue indicated the existence of predicaments in the institutions as far as consultation of customers concerned.

As clearly based on the interview conducted with key officials the main reason behind the institutions low achievement in participation was the way that institutions mostly favored participation to be conducted through suggestion boxes put in the compound of most institutions rather than face to face discussion with customers or their representatives.

As it is depicted in Table 2, the respondents were asked whether a community forum was prepared by the institutions which enabled the community to discuss issues that concerned them or not and their responses were yes 68.19% and no 31.81%. When the result triangulated with the result obtained from the response of the sample of public institution employee, the nominal part of analyses question number one 47.7% of the respondents were said yes about the institutional framework that enables the public users or the society to participate in the institution and the rest 52.3% said no. Concerning the role of institution in encouraging citizens' involvement in decision making, 47.7% of service user respondents responded that institutions encouraged them to involve in decision making process of which that concerns them while the remaining 52.3% replied no. Out of the total respondents 29.5% answered yes and the majority 70.5% of them answered no concerning consultation of service users or the society by institutions before a program or a policy is implemented. This indicates institutions were not ready for pre-policy or program implementation consultation of the society or customer. This implied institutions were simply implemented their programs and policies having not asked the society to know about their interest towards the new programs and/or policies.
The respondents clearly showed that institutions did not invite service users or customers to evaluate their 
managements by responding 45.5.5% no and 54.5% yes. 
According to the result observed, service users did not 
able to evaluate the institutions management. This is 
fi further strengthened by the results obtained from 
employee respondents who said 73.2% no and 26.8% 
regarding institutional mechanism that enables the 
society to control the administration. This is even further 
checked by the interviews conducted with key officials as 
they said the institutions were not made directly 
evaluated by their service users.

In order to know their reasons for 20.5 % of them who 
said no, we can’t easily provide our suggestions, 
questions, comments and complaints to service provider 
institution a question, which says ‘if no is your answer, 
what do you think is the reason?’ Was asked and most of 
these respondents were said because they didn’t think 
that institutions could give solution. From the rest 
respondents 4 of them said because of strong 
bureaucratic delay, 6 of them and 5 of them said because 
of absence of the mechanism and because it incurs them 
additional costs respectively. But in respect of the amount 
of respondents, institutions have shortcomings in giving 
solutions for service users’ questions, suggestions and 
complaints.

Regarding about whether training or workshop 
concerning the services they gained from different 
institution. Their answers were 29.6 % no and 70.4 yes. 
The question was intended in what ways that the society 
had got information about the regulations, rules, and 
principles and other relevant information regarding 
services. However, most of the respondents were said 
that they didn’t get any training, workshop or conference. 
For the question followed which says ‘if not, how do you 
know the rules and regulations of the institutions 
whenever you went to the institution to get services?’ most 
of them said informally from individuals, others, by 
brochures, and others still said using regional radios and 
television and the rest said it doesn’t necessary to know 
the rules and regulations of the institutions concerning 
the services, rather obey what the institutions told to do 
so.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness and efficiency are one of the core elements 
of good governance frequently used as indicators in 
governance measurement. As an indicator of good 
governance, effectiveness and efficiency has its own sub 
indices which are changed into operational questions and 
included in the questionnaires of this study. 
When service users’ sample respondents responded 
about the amount of services provided by the institutions, 
they said 11.4%, 9.1%, 31.8%, 29.5% and 18.2% are 
very low, low, medium, high and very high respectively. 
As the result clearly indicated that the service users rated 
the services provided to them medium. They also rated 
their satisfaction level by the service provided institutions 
as 11.4 % and 18.2% very dissatisfying and dissatisfying. 
Where as as it is only 25% and 22.7 % of the respondents 
who replied satisfying and very satisfying. But what was 
special in their responses was the category fairly 
satisfying which had 22.7% of the respondents. From this 
result, we can deduce that the service users are nearly to 
dissatisfying. The efficiency of public institutions rated 
very poor by 11.4% of the service user respondents, 
18.2% of the respondents said poor, 25 % and 22.7 % of 
them rated it good and very good respectively. From the 
results observed, it can be said that respondents rated 
the efficiency of institution good. Lastly, they also rated 
the trust that they have towards the service provider 
(institution) as 9.1% very low, 13.6 % low, 22.7 medium 
%, 27.3 % high and 27.3% very high. This means the 
service users have a confidence over their service 
provider.

Accountability

Institutions have also been assessed based on one of the 
core elements of good governance, accountability. And 
questions based on the sub indices of accountability were 
provided to civil servant respondents and their responses 
are provided in the following table.

As table 4 showed of all respondents the majority 
60.4% replied no and 39.6% yes about irregular 
payments for personnel/officials of the service provider 
institution to accomplish their tasks in the institution. 
Although the majority respondent said that they did not 
asked irregular payment by personnel/officials, it is 
possible to conclude that irregular payments are there 
using the result of the rest respondents (39.6%). As it is 
displayed by table 4 concerning that service users have 
ever got the chance to review the budget of the service 
provider institution the large number of the respondents, 
76.1%, said no. the rest 23.9% respondents said yes we 
had got the chance to the review the budget of the 
service provider institution.

Among respondents asked about whether he/she 
thinks that corruption in the service provider institutions 
exists, 69% of them said yes and the rest 31% said no. It 
is not that much sound to conclude that corruption in 
public institutions is prevalent, rather triangulation was 
necessary and when it triangulated with the response 
observed from employee respondents who said corruption 
in public institutions is high (30%) and very high (12%), 
the respondents of service user (71%) who said yes there 
irregular corruption can be accepted to conclude that corruption 
in public institution is common. Further to investigate why 
corruption has become one phenomenon in public
institutions another question was provided for respondents who said yes in the question above.

Transparency

As it is displayed in Table 5, the respondents were asked to rate on how much is difficult or easy to obtain information on laws and regulations of your service provider institutions. Thus, they replied that 21.1%, 14.2%, 32.7% 19.5% and 11.5% of them said, very difficult, difficult, somewhat easy, easy and very easy respectively. Thus, based on their response getting on laws and regulation from public institutions was somewhat easy. Respondents were also asked to rate how much service provider institutions performances are transparent towards the public, and their responses were: not transparent (8.8%), partially transparent (54.9%), transparent (8.8%) and totally transparent (11.5%). The result showed that institutions were partially transparent towards their customers.

Of the core elements of good governance, according to UN-HABITAT, equity and equality is the one that favors equal and equitable access of resources without discrimination, equal opportunities and treatments, etc for all sections of the society such as for women, for minorities, for disadvantaged groups etc. However, this research concerned focus has given about women especially concerning women’s position in institutions. As one of the highly emphasized issues that good governance working for achieving is the case of women promotion in position, thus a question that enable to assess how much women access key positions in institutions was delivered for respondents and as their response indicated, women in key positions are very small. 64.9% of the respondents rate the number of women in key position in percent from 1-10% and the rest respondents 9.6%, 6.4%, 9.6%, and 9.6% of them said 11-20%, 21-30%, and 31-40% and more than 40% respectively. This needs immediate attention for solutions. In addition, by the interview conducted with key informants (officials) what was proved was the institutions limited effort in bringing women in leadership position in the institutions.

**DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

This paper tried to show how good governance is prevalent in public sectors in light of the four core good governance principles; participation, effectiveness and efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Based on the result of this study, institutions assessed have not been found perfectly effective in any of the four good governance indicators used in the study. Instead were found relatively ineffective in some of the sub indices of the indicators and ineffective in some other indices of the indicators.

Availability of forum for the women, youth and specially the disadvantaged group of a society is one among the different criteria’s which enabled institutions to perform well in treating the group of the society under discussion. Ignoring them implies ignoring of more than half of the productive part of the population of the area. And it has become impossible for institutions to achieve good governance and poverty reduction without women, young and disadvantaged parts of the society. In this regard, very poor achievements were observed on the part of institutions in accommodating them. This greatly affects the overall performance of the institutions and led them to score weak institutional achievements. The rest variable in
this section was by far better. In principle, institutions management needs to be open for public review and evaluation. For service provider institution making a survey of transparency and accountability level must be the major activities, failed to do this lead the failure of the institution as an institution. In this regard a great gap was observed. All variables under transparency and accountability has evaluated at the middle level. From four variables, the study identified the effectiveness and efficiency, and participation of the public sectors is evaluated better than others.

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