

DIFFERENCES IN PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE – REJECTION AND PERSONALITY ORGANIZATION AMONG STATUS OFFENDERS AND HOME CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT:

The present study aims to analyze the Parental Acceptance – Rejection and personality Organization among Status Offenders and Home Children. This is one of the burning issues of the present time in our society. It has been found that parents, more or less, are involved in the delinquent behavior of their children because of their neglected and unskilled behavior (Bartol. C, Bartol, A.M, 1986). Such children are more vulnerable towards status offenders or runaways, who have disturbed family environment. The present study was comprised of 64 participants (N= 64), out of which status offender participants were (N= 32, males N = 30, females N = 02), and home children participants were (N= 32, males N = 30, females N = 02). The mean age of participants of both groups of children was 13 and 12.78 years respectively. Two sampling techniques were used; purposive sampling technique for status offenders and simple random technique was used to select the sample of home children participants. PAQ and PARQ (Ronald Rohner, 1975) were administered on participants. The findings of the study have been analyzed statistically, revealed that status offenders have perceived more parental neglect than home children. Analysis further revealed negative correlation among the personality organization of status offenders and home children, especially all the scales of aggression and emotional stability on these subscales offenders scored high.

INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Juvenile delinquency is an imprecise, nebulous legal and social label for a wide variety of law and norm violating behaviors. Legally, a juvenile delinquent one who commits an act defined by law as illegal and who is adjudicated “delinquent” by an appropriate courts. The legal definition is usually restricted to a person under 18, but states vary in their age distinctions. Running away from their homes is one of juvenile delinquent behavior; those individuals are called as status offender (Bartol. C, Bartol. A.M, 1986).

There are several reasons that children leave their homes but most common reason is avoidance. There are two main risk factors, which are individual risk factor and family environment. Individual psychological or behavioral risk factors that may make offending more likely include intelligence, impulsiveness or the inability to delay gratification, aggression, empathy, and restlessness (Farrington: 2002). Young males are especially likely to be impulsive which could mean they disregard the long term consequences of their actions, have a lack of self control, and are unable to postpone immediate gratification. This may explain why they disproportionately offend (Farrington: 2002), (Walklate: 2003). Impulsiveness is seen by some as the key aspect of a child’s personality that predicts offending (Farrington: 2002, p.682). However, it is not clear whether these aspects of personality are a result of “deficits in the executive functions of the brain”, (Farrington: 2002) or a result of parental influences or other social factors (Graham & Bowling: 1995) (Wikipedia 2000).

Family factors which may have an influence on offending include; the level of parental supervision, the way parents discipline a child, parental conflict or separation, criminal parents or siblings, parental abuse or neglect, and the quality of the parent – child

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relationship (Graham & Bowling: 1995). Therefore, children rebel against the rules which are set in their homes & mistakenly believe that things will be better if they leave their home (Wikipedia 2002). The best tool is the communication between child and parents through which the probability of runaways' children can be reduced. Child may not be interested to talk to parents about his/ her activities which are of only his concerns, but parents or guardians may provide a path way to open the problem through communication. Through communicating parents can gather information about child's tasks and activities. Parents should be acknowledged about their children's peer group and should establish relationship with their friend's parents (Wikipedia 2002).

Individuals everywhere experience more or less warmth and affection at the hands of people most important to them as they grow up (Rohner and Rohner, 1981). These people are called as "parents", although they are not necessarily mother and father. The warmth and affection (or its withdrawal) each of us has experienced as a child can be placed on continuum the "warmth dimension" of parenting. One end of the warmth dimension is marked by parental acceptance and the other end is marked by rejection. Parental acceptance which refers to the warmth, affection and love parents can give their children, has two expressions; physical and verbal. In contrast, parental rejection is as the absence or significant withdrawal of warmth dimension. It included three major forms (Rohner, 1975); (1) Hostility and Aggression, (2) Indifference and Neglect, and (3) Undifferentiated Rejection (Rohner. R, 1986).

It has been found that the willing presence of fathers in a household is a significant predictor of acceptance. Studies also have shown that the more important fathers are as effective caretakers, the more children are likely to be accepted. Fathers who involuntarily confined at home because of unemployment or illness may resent being there and may resent having to deal with their children (Rohner. R, 1986).

Runaway children are those who are socioeconomically deprived as compare to their affluent peer. They have poor health. They are homeless, lives on streets & nomadic like travelers. Some researchers suggested that those children should be kept under care those who are abandoned, unwanted, removed from care by their parents. They may have been abused, neglected or beyond parental control. These factors are associated with poverty. Children who have experienced disadvantages of socioeconomic deprivation, are about the half million and under aged 16 years, and mostly are from minority groups (Elspeth W. Zebb, 1998).

Research has revealed that total juvenile delinquency scores to be positively associated with the total perceived acceptance rejection scores. The mean differences indicated that the criminal adolescents perceived both their fathers and mothers to be significantly more aggressive, more neglecting, more rejecting as compared to the non criminal adolescents. The findings of this research are consistent with universalistic postulated of parental acceptance and rejection theory developed by Rohner, 1975 (Rafail, E & Haque. A, 1999).

Responsibility of services for runaways' children must be shared, running away children indeed need to be taken seriously. Responsibility must be shared by police an social services or local authority committees involving health, education, welfare youth, and voluntary child care organizations which basically planned for children in need and it should be forwarded but only in true meanings and on the cooperative basis (Lawrenson 1997).

A history of running away should be taken seriously because it may indicate abuse also. In running away or thrown out from the home, sometimes abuse factor is common (may be sexually or physically) which compel them to run from their homes (Lawrenson 1997).

It has been seen that children who are thrown out or running away children, may be sexually assaulted and sexual abuse may become the precursor to prostitution and they may also involved in criminal victimization. Results suggested that early abuse increases the probability of involvement in prostitution irrespective of any influence through factors such as running ways from home, substance abuse and other deviant activities. Findings indicated that early sexual abuse only indirectly affects the chances of victimization (Simons, R. L. 1991).

Findings of a research suggested that many homeless & runaway youth use tobacco, alcohol & other drugs at rates substantially higher than non runaway & non homeless youth, indicating a need for comprehensive & intense substance abuse prevention & treatment services for these youth (JM Greene, ST Ennett & C L Ring Walt, 1997).

Missing children are of considerable concern to parents, children, & the nation. In one study nearly 75% of parents acknowledged worrying about their children being kidnapped, & 35% said they are very much concerned. This issue of missing children is complex & needs to be dealt with in the appropriate context. Most children reported missing are runaways and children taken by non custodial parents, both of which are preventable events. According to children NISMART – 2 (Second National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, & Throwaway Children), children, who had been missing according to their families in 1999, were put into one of several categories i.e. non family abductions; runaway or throwaway; family abductions; missing children; neonatal abductions and internet issues. (1) Non family abduction occurs when a non family perpetrator takes a child by the use of physical force or threat of bodily harm or detains a child for atleast 1 hour in an isolated place without lawful authority or parental permission or when a child who is younger than 15 years or is mentally incompetent, without lawful authority or parental permission is taken or detained by or voluntarily accompanies a non family perpetrator who conceals the child's whereabouts demands ransom, or expresses the intention to keep the child permanently. National center for missing & exploited children has developed a campaign to get kids to "know the rules". Children or younger girls should avoid maintaining relationship to strangers. (2) In runaways and Throwaways, most children reported as missing left of their own accord, often from adverse family or living situations. Infect, leaving home as an impulse act of protest is very common, and occurring in an estimated 1 of 7 children younger then 16years (Howard, B.J. & Broughton, D.D. 2004). Children who run away commonly live in difficult situations such as poverty or reconstituted home runaway or throwaway children missing for prolonged time commonly were subjected to physical abuse (upto 75%) sexual abuse (upto 20%) or other harsh treatment from which they were seeking escape & felt they have no other way out. Data about runaways show that 68% of runaways were 15 to 17 years of age, 27% were 12 to 14 years of age, & 4% were 7 to 11 years of age (Howard, B.J. & Broughton, D.D. 2004). In preventing children from becoming runaways & throwaways lies in detecting family situations that include behavior problems or coercive interactions, especially when discipline is inappropriately harsh. (3) IN family abduction, one of the most prevalent categories of missing children is abduction by a noncustodial parent or unauthorized extend visit with family members. Research found that 35% of children were of 6 to 11 years of age, 23% were 3 to 5

years, & 21% were younger than 2 years, & 17% were 12 to 14 years of age. Children abducted by family members may be at increased risk of physical & sexual abuse or neglect. (4) In Missing Benign explanations, very large number of neither children who have not been abducted nor runaway end up missing with benign explanations. Infact, this is the second largest category of missing children “a missing benign explanation episode occurs when a child’s where about are unknown to the child’s caretaker and this cause the caretaker to (a) be alarmed, (b) try to locate the child, and (c) contact the police about the episodes for any reason, as long as the child was not lost, injured, abducted, victimized, or classified as runaway/throwaway”. (5) In neonatal abductions, from 1983-2001, the number of neonatal abductions per year ranged from 0 to 12, the perpetrators of this crime were typically females of child bearing age who had miscarriage or had been unable to conceive and had carefully planned an abduction to replace the lost or maintain a relationship. (6) Internet issues, although still relatively uncommon, the practice of pedophiles and child molesters approaching children on the internet is occurring more frequently (Howard, B.J. and Broughton, D.D .2004). In some cases, pedophiles and or child molesters have arranged meeting with children. Parents can censor on those devices which are harmful their children in use, or they use passwords on computers (Barbara J. Howard, MD, Daniel D-Broughton, MD and committee on psychological aspects of child and family health-pediatrics Vol.114-, 2004).

Research found that running away was from 5-30 times more frequent among referred children than among normal children. Several behavioral problems were significantly associated running away among referred children, including truancy, bad with parents, disobedience, stealing, use of alcohol and drugs, lying, suicidal threats, cruelty, and destructiveness (Edelbrock. C, 1980).

Research has found that violence and aggression in the lives of children in homeless families, focusing on possible connections among family violence and isolation, children’s aggression, and children’s problems with social isolation and rejection. Exposure to violence appears to come from violence in homeless environments and families as well as from aggression in parent – child relationships; that violence leads to further negative consequences for children through the social isolation that it produces. Diverse consequences of violation and aggression in he lives of homeless children include behavior problems, aggression in peer interactions, social isolation and rejection, and diverse other consequences arising from problematic parenting (Anooshian, L. J, 2003 – 2004).

It has been found that t – test indicated no significant mean differences among boys as well as girls of the two groups, on child PAQ scale. However, significant mean differences were found on self evaluation PAQ scale (i.e. negative self – esteem and negative self adequacy) among boys of both – parent and single – parent groups. Highly positive correlations were found between total PARQ scales (both father and mother) and total PAQ score of both – parent and single – parent (father absent) groups (Sheikh, S. I, 2002).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to analyze differences in parental acceptance – rejection and personality organization among runaways and home children. Further aim of the study was to measure the personality dispositions of the children of both groups i.e. status offender and home children (such as self – esteem, aggression/ hostility, self adequacy, dependency, emotional instability and unresponsiveness and world view).

1.3 Hypotheses

1. The status offender would score high on negative self – esteem subscale of Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) than non delinquent children.
2. The status offender would score high on aggression subscale of PAQ than non delinquent children.
3. The delinquent children would score high on negative self adequacy subscale of PAQ than non delinquent children.
4. The non delinquent children would score high on dependency subscale of PAQ than non delinquent children.
5. The non delinquent children would score high on emotional instability subscale of PAQ than non delinquent children.
6. The delinquent children would score high on emotional unresponsiveness subscale of PAQ than non delinquent children.
7. The delinquent children would score high on negative world view subscale than non delinquent children.
8. The non delinquent children would score high on warmth & affection subscale of Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) than delinquent children.
9. The delinquent children would score high on aggression/ hostility subscale of PARQ than non delinquent children.
10. The delinquent children would score high on neglect subscale of PARQ than non delinquent children.
11. The delinquent children would score high on rejection subscale of PARQ than non delinquent children.
12. The non delinquent children would score high on control subscale of PARQ than delinquent children.

METHOD:

2.1 Sample

The sample of the study comprised of total 64 participants, out of which status offender respondents were (N = 32), Males (N = 30) & Females (N = 02) and home children respondents were (N = 32), Males (N = 30), females (N = 02). The mean age of respondents of both groups was 13 and 12.78 years respectively. The sample was drawn by two different techniques, purposive sampling technique (non probability) was used for runaways and simple random technique was used to select home children respondents. Most of the participants were belonged to lower middle class socioeconomic status.

2.2 Research Design

Research design of the study is co – relational – comparative empirical survey research. In our co – relational – comparative empirical study, the independent variable is parental warmth – rejection while personality organization is dependent variable.

2.3 Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study, these are mentioned below;

- Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ)
- Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ)
- Personal Information Questionnaire (PIQ)

(a) Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ)

Parental acceptance – rejection questionnaire (PARQ) was developed by Rohner, R. (1975), and it was adapted in Urdu by Professor Abdul Haq (1983). It consists of five subscales i.e. warmth & affection, neglect, aggression/ hostility, rejection and control. It

is a valid and reliable scale for Pakistan. It has been used in various researches conducted in Pakistan on different samples.

(b) Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ)

Personality assessment questionnaire (PAQ) was developed by Rohner, R. (1978) and it was adapted in Urdu by Professor Abdul Haq (1983). It consists of seven subscales, which are namely, hostility/ aggression, negative self – esteem, negative self – adequacy, dependency, emotional instability, emotional unresponsiveness and negative world view. It is also a valid and reliable scale.

(c) Personality Information Questionnaire (PIQ)

In personal information questionnaire (PIQ), the information was collected about the individual such as about his age, gender, parent's education, education of participants etc.

2.4 Operational Definitions

Different terminologies were used in this study, defined as follows;

A. Status Offender:

Status offences are acts which only juvenile can commit and which can be adjudicated only a juvenile court and status offender are those who runaway from their homes (Bartol. C, Bartol. A.M, 1986).

B. Warmth / Affection

The warmth dimension of parenting is defined as the “parental acceptance”, i.e. the love and affection of parents toward their children (Rohner. R, 1975).

C. Neglect / Indifference

The neglect / indifference are the physical and psychological unavailability of parents, i.e. parents doesn't pay any attention toward needs of the child (Rohner. R, 1975).

D. Rejection

The rejection is defined as the absence or significant withdrawal of love and affection in which feels unloved, unappreciated and uncared etc (Rohner. R, 1975).

E. Hostility / Aggression

Hostility is an internal emotional reaction of anger, enmity, or resentment directed toward another person or situation or toward oneself; aggression, on the other hand, is any act that intends to hurt physically or psychologically someone (including oneself) or something (Rohner. R, 1975).

F. Dependency

Dependency is the emotional reliance or one person on another for comfort, approval, guidance, support, reassurance, and the like (Rohner. R, 1975).

G. Negative Self – Esteem

Self – esteem is a global, emotional evaluation of oneself in terms of worth. Negative self – esteem or negative feelings of self esteem imply that individuals dislike or disapprove of themselves, refuse themselves, are disappointed with themselves, and perceive themselves as persons of unworthy or disrespect.

H. Negative Self – Adequacy

Negative Self – Adequacy or negative feelings imply that individuals view themselves as incompetent, unable to deal satisfactorily with daily problems and failure or become incapable of success in the things they set out to do.

I. Emotional Unresponsiveness

Emotional Unresponsiveness refers to an individual's disability to express emotions freely and openly. Emotional unresponsiveness is revealed by the non – spontaneity and unease with which individuals are disabling to respond emotionally to other persons.

J. Emotional Instability

Emotional instability refers to an individual's inconstancy or unsteadiness of mood and the disability to withstand minor setbacks, failures, difficulties, or other stresses.

K. Negative World View

World view is a person's often non – verbalized global or overall evaluation of life and a person with a negative view about the universe as being basically a bad, insecure, threatening, unpleasant, hostile, or uncertain place.

2.5 Procedure

Data of status offenders was collected from Edhi Village and Suhrab Goath Karachi. Data was collected from 32 participants in which males were (N= 30), females were (N= 02). The sample of home children was a matched group on the basis of three variables i.e. age, gender and socioeconomic status and the sample was collected randomly from Islamia School and Noor Mohammad School of Hyderabad. Total 32 participants out of which males were (N= 30) and females were (N= 02) participated. These questionnaires were administered to collect the data from each participant. Before administering the questionnaires, first rapport was developed with the participants by the researcher and misunderstanding, if any, about the administration of questionnaires was removed, after that instructions were given to each participant. They have been told that there is no time limit for filling the questionnaires. Those participants who could understand the Urdu language, they filled the questionnaire by themselves, while those who had problem in reading, they responded verbally to each item and it was only marked by the researcher. Most of the delinquents / status offenders had only primary education.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Data was analyzed by using mean, standard deviation and t – test.

3.1 Table # 01

Mean, SD and t – value of status offender (N= 32) and Home Children (N= 32) respondents on subscales of PARQ (Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire)

SS (N= 64) Subscales Of PARQ	Status offender (N= 32)		Home Children (N= 32)		t- Value SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Warm	51.81	1.24	53.16	0.83	0.04
Agg	39.12	3.99	38.25	4.54	0.1
Ind/Neg	37.37	6.45	32.78	10.16	0.1
Rej	25.12	0.78	27.34	2.24	0.03
Con	35.90	1.82	41.81	2.94	0.3
Total	188.22	5.65	192.1	6.46	0.11

**** Warm = Warmth, Agg = Aggression, Ind/ Neg = Indifference / Neglect, Rej = Rejection, Con = Control**

Therefore, according to Mean, the difference in mean value is showing some differences in the perception of status offenders and home children.

3.2 Table # 02

Mean, SD and t – value of status offender (N= 32) and Home Children (N= 32) respondents on subscales of PAQ (Personality Assessment Questionnaire)

SS (N= 64) Subscales Of PAQ	Status offender (N= 32) Mean	Home Children (N= 32) SD	Mean	t- Value SD
Agg/Hos	14.40	1.90	10.06	1.74
Dep	18.03	1.17	15.78	1.45
-ve SE	15.87	0.84	16.84	0.89
-ve SA	15.96	0.90	17.03	1.07
Emo. U	16.03	1.18	18.72	1.02
Emo. I	14.06	1.61	13.46	1.62
-ve WV	13.65	1.27	13.56	0.84
Total	106.31	6.76	105.56	5.16

**Agg/Hos = Aggression / Hostility, Dep = Dependency, -ve SE = Negative Self – Esteem, -ve SA = Negative Self – Adequacy, Emo. U = Emotional Unresponsiveness, Emo. I = Emotional Instability, -ve WV = Negative World View.

The difference in mean value is showing non significant difference.

3.3 Table # 03

Mean, SD and Co - relation of status offender (N= 32) and Home Children (N= 32) respondents on subscales of PARQ (Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire)

SS (N= 64) Subscales Of PARQ	Status offender (N= 32) Mean	Home Children (N= 32) SD	Mean	r- Value SD
Warm	51.81	1.24	53.16	0.83
Agg	39.12	3.99	38.25	4.54
Ind/Neg	37.37	6.45	32.78	10.16
Rej	25.12	0.78	27.34	2.24
Con	35.90	1.82	41.81	2.94
Total	188.22	5.65	192.1	6.46

** Warm = Warmth, Agg = Aggression, Ind/ Neg = Indifference / Neglect, Rej = Rejection, Con = Control

3.4 Table # 04

Mean, SD and Co- relation of status offender (N= 32) and Home Children (N= 32) respondents on subscales of PAQ (Personality Assessment Questionnaire)

SS (N= 64) Subscales Of PAQ	Status offender (N= 32) Mean	Home Children (N= 32) SD	Mean	r- Value SD
Agg/Hos	14.40	1.90	10.06	1.74
Dep	18.03	1.17	15.78	1.45
-ve SE	15.87	0.84	16.84	0.89
-ve SA	15.96	0.90	17.03	1.07
Emo. U	16.03	1.18	18.72	1.02
Emo. I	14.06	1.61	13.46	1.62
-ve WV	13.65	1.27	13.56	0.84
Total	106.31	6.76	105.56	5.16

**Agg/Hos = Aggression / Hostility, Dep = Dependency, -ve SE = Negative Self – Esteem, -ve SA = Negative Self – Adequacy, Emo. U = Emotional Unresponsiveness, Emo. I = Emotional Instability, -ve WV = Negative World View.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

4.1 Discussion

Findings of the present research suggested that delinquent children perceive less father's warmth and acceptance as compare to other children. Most of the respondents (status offender) reported during data collection that "they have step mothers at home who behave aggressively and fathers pay no attention towards any of their problems. Thus they left their homes". Results are consistent with other research findings suggested that delinquent children perceive less father's warmth and affection and react aggressively by involving in antisocial acts as compare to other children (Rafail, E & Haque, A. 1999; Rohner, R, 1986).

Therefore, less parental attention and warmth appeared as one of the main causes of delinquency. Parental conflicts, avoidance & negligence disturb children profoundly thus they decide to leave their homes. Different researchers have confirmed the same fact as well (Graham, Bowling, 1995).

Findings have also revealed that children with disturbed family environment become more impulsive, aggressive and lacking in self control also. Similar findings were reported in some researches (Farrington, 2002, Walkate, 2003, Anooshian, L. J, 2003 – 2004).

In delinquent children emotional instability has also been found due to the disturbed family environment. Basically, aggression, impulsiveness, emotional unresponsiveness, negative self evaluation and negative world view are the outcomes of the parental warmth and rejection and disturbed home atmosphere where they lived and reared up. Impulsiveness and aggression are reported as the key factors of a child's personality that predicts future criminal behavior or delinquency (Farrington, 2002).

It has been observed that children who lived and reared up in parental conflicted environment and received parental rejection and negligence, their personality remained unhealthy and scattered in different parts or disorganized (Rohner, R. 1986). So it is paramount that parents should build up their home environment peaceful, disciplined and warm as much as they can. Fathers must pay attention toward their children, because children who lack in receiving the father's attention and warmth, they indulge in different jeopardized activities by which they can catch the enough attention of their parents. Parents must have some enough adequate abilities and skills to handle their children's problems and it is their first most responsibility to keep them safe or prevent from involving in delinquency and rear up them as healthy, normal and organized individuals.

4.2 Conclusion

It is concluded from the findings that father's attention and warmth/ acceptance plays significant role in child rearing. If child perceives less parental attention as well as warmth/ acceptance, it can lead him towards delinquency/ status offender. Children reared up in conflicted family environment or with harsh step mothers or with negligence of fathers they become more aggressive, impulsive and lacking in self control. Another important factor in involving of children in delinquency is peer group as well. It is seen in most of the respondents while data collection.

4.3 Recommendations

Among the several others, there are two main causes of children's leaving home, one is less parental warmth/ acceptance, attention, parental conflicts, and another one is peer influence. Psychologists must provide awareness to parents that they should keep their

home atmosphere peaceful and which is most important factor in enhancing personality characteristics rather than destroying it. Parents also must have the check on the activities of children and their peer group as well, by meeting them and their parents. They should not set strict rules in their homes because young children don't want to be confiding at homes, they need freedom. Therefore, parents should give the freedom but limited and having regular check on their daily routine activities. Some of the main strategies are discussed as below;

- First of all, it is a responsibility of Psychologist to provide full awareness about child's mind and inform the parents about their positive and vital role in building up the personality of child, that how they can maintain the home atmosphere peaceful and friendly and how they can have the regular check on the activities in which their child is indulged.
- Secondly, in case children leave their homes due to any problem, and they get back their child, they must consult to Psychologist for further enhancement of the personality dispositions of their child and reduce the risk of running away again.
- A counseling plan should also be made for the status offenders to provide them emotional and cognitive help, and then they can be convinced and motivated for going back to their homes and live a normal healthy life like other children instead of being street children.
- They must be taught different skills for coping with their disturbed family environment and their emotional problems by encountering, rather than escaping. And also informing them the disadvantaged of being involved in any antisocial activities, so that they can prevent themselves from these types of antisocial activities.

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