

Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy among Selected Teenagers in Loboc, Bohol

LOUISSÉ ANGELI ABUCEJO

angeliabucejo18@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5235-9252>

SERCHELLE ANN BERNALDEZ

serchelleannbernaldez@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0487-3011>

VIC JOSEF VIRGIL COSTES

vicjosefvirgilcostes@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9715-298X>

ROIMEE DANILA

rbdanila@universityofbohol.edu.ph

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5406-222X>

MARICHU GABINES

margabz219@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6749-1876>

HELEN KATE SALES

s.helenkate12@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1239-2155>

CHRISTINE RIZZA MAE TAN

Christinetan249@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5554-9339>



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MELINDA C. PAUSANOS

mcpausanos@universityofbohol.edu.ph
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7035-0757>

EVELYN R. NAPITAN

napitanevelyn32@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9543-9554>

RACHELL ROMANOS

rromanos@universityofbohol.edu.ph
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3673-6939>

ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy has been a never-ending problem worldwide, and it is one of the most significant social problems that most countries in the world face presently. It affects young women bearing the child at such a young age and young girl's development holistically. The researchers aim to determine the factors that influence teenagers to get involved in early sexual activity that can lead to early pregnancy. The researchers utilized the descriptive quantitative study design using a self-made questionnaire to determine factors affecting teenage pregnancy among selected teenagers in Loboc, Bohol. The respondents in this study were between 15-19 years old and whose pregnancy occurred within 2015-2021. The respondents were selected from the database at the health center. A self-made survey questionnaire was sent through Facebook and Messenger. The findings indicated that most respondents were 17-18 years old, high school graduates, and single. It was also discovered that respondents were moderately aware of the influence of psycho-emotional and spiritual factors on teenage pregnancy but were only slightly aware of the impact of socioeconomic factors. Therefore, recommendations were focused on providing health teaching about the influence of socioeconomic factors on teenage pregnancy using online platforms.

Keywords: Teenage Pregnancy, Psycho-emotional Factors, Socioeconomic Factors, Spiritual Factors, 15-19 years old, Referral System, Cronbach's Alpha Analysis, Loboc, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy has been a never-ending problem worldwide. One in ten young Filipino women aged 15-19 has begun childbearing (PSA, 2018). An article from the Manila Bulletin, Rica Arevalo (2019), determined that the Philippines has become the country with the highest adolescent pregnancies among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations. Globally, there are about twelve million girls from ages 15 to 19 years old, and there are at least 777 000 girls, under 15 who give birth each year in developing countries (WHO, 2020). Southeast Asia has an average birth rate of 47 births per 1000 females aged 15-19, wherein Laos has the highest rate of 94, Cambodia 57, Thailand 50, Indonesia 48, and the Philippines 47 (UNICEF, 2019). Live births in the Philippines in 2016 totaled 203, 085 which slightly decreased to 196 478 in 2017 and 183 000 in 2018. Despite this significant decrease, the Philippines remains one of the highest adolescent birth rates among the ASEAN member states (UNFPA, 2020). These numbers reflect the prevalence of teenage pregnancy worldwide.

Teenage pregnancy is one of the significant social problems that most countries in the world face presently. It affects society, especially the young women bearing their children at such a young age. It dramatically affects the young girl's development holistically. Furthermore, teenage mothers do not have a consistent means of support for their children and themselves. In most cases, adolescent childbearing and child-rearing negatively connotate shame, disgrace, and failure to achieve a young girl's dreams of attaining higher pursuits. According to Yampolskaya, Svetlana & Brown, Eric & Greenbaum, Paul (2002), 60% of teenage mothers live in poverty at the time of birth, and about 73% go on welfare within five years of giving birth.

In a 2014 survey of young Adult Fertility and Sexuality, 14% of teenage girls between the ages of 15-19 years old were reported to be first-time mothers or have had several children already (Au-Yeung, 2014). Among the reasons identified in the survey, the primary cause of teenage pregnancy was the lack of sexual education, sexual health services, and increased technology use. Teenagers have limited access to sex education and sexual health services. Due to easy access to technology combined with teenage girl's curiosity, they engage in sexual activities without appropriate knowledge about family planning, resulting in an unplanned

pregnancy (Salvador, Sauce, Alvarez, & Rosario, 2016).

This study is anchored on Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, Theory of Reasoned Action by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, and Maternal Role Attainment Theory by Ramona Mercer. Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory states that at the adolescent age of about 12-18 years. The child learns the roles he will occupy as an adult and the time where they re-examine their identity and find out exactly who they are. Adolescents at this stage search for their identity by intensely exploring personal values, goals, and beliefs. They want to belong to a society and fit in. In this stage, they become more independent on others; they start to think of their future relationships, families, and careers. They try to explore possibilities. They become less loyal to themselves and more open to the opposite sex, even with ideological differences. These behaviors may then ultimately lead to sex and adolescent pregnancy (Erikson, 1963).

A theory developed by Fishbein and Ajzen, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), proposes that an individual's intention to perform a behavior predicts willful behavior. Two forces: 1) attitude toward performance of the behavior (e.g., whether engaging in the behavior whether good or bad) and 2) the individual's belief in the subjective norms that dictate societal expectations regarding that behavior (e.g., what the individual believes Family and friends think they should do influences the intention to act. Therefore, the behavior is the product of an intended action, and the individual's attitudes toward the behavior guide the intended action (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). The Theory of Reasoned Action scrutinizes an individual's demeanor toward that conduct and the individual customs of significant individuals and assemblies that could impact those demeanors (Lawson, 2007). For example, *a teenage girl intends to attend a pregnancy prevention program to know more about safe sex and contraceptive use*. Predicting whether the teenage girl would attend the program would depend on her decision, whether positive or negative and the models that she sees from individuals around her, such as her peers, whether the program would be beneficial. The Theory of Reasoned Action stated that outlooks and the models are the primary manipulators on purpose, called the fundamental support of behavior. Utilizing this theory in the study implies that teenagers weigh the severity of pregnancy when they choose to engage in sexual relations. Therefore, teenagers would perceive the seriousness of teenage pregnancy for their future life outcomes. This

perception would help guide a teenager's decision-making process about engaging in sexual relations.

Another is the theory of Ramona Mercer on Maternal Role Attainment Theory. This theory aims to fill in a structure for nurses to effectively provide healthcare interventions to nontraditional mothers to receive a solid maternal identity. This theory can be utilized throughout pregnancy and after labor to help mothers bond and connect with their children. This theory helps in the structure of the mother-child relationship as the infant develops. The mother bonds with the infant to gain caretaking capability and experience and verbalize pleasure in the maternal role. The nursing process follows four phases of acquisition in the Maternal Role Attainment Theory. First is the anticipatory stage, which tends to the social and mental adjustment to the maternal role and learning desires. Second is the formal stage, which assumes the role during childbirth, and addresses practices guided by others in the mother's social framework and system. The third is the informal stage, where the mother builds up her manners and ways of mothering not based on her social framework. The fourth stage is the personal stage, where the mother obtains confidence in her maternal role (Petiprin, 2016).

Teenage pregnancy refers to a pregnant woman aged 19 years and below (Mothiba & Maputle, 2012). A young girl who has had her menarche can become pregnant when sexual intercourse happens. On average, girls will usually get their first period at age 12; however, it can vary from person to person (NHS-UK, 2019). Several girls may experience their first period earlier or later than 12 years old. Thus, when girls as young as 12 years old engage in sexual activities, getting pregnant is a high possibility as long as they already had their first period. A normal pregnancy can have complications and risks that may endanger not only the mother but the baby as well.

With teenage pregnancy, these risks are amplified. Adolescent pregnancy's most common medical consequences are anemia, pregnancy-induced hypertension, low birth weight, premature births, intrauterine growth retardation, and neonatal mortality. These risks were predominantly caused by social, economic, and behavioral factors predisposing young women to pregnancy. Pregnancies under the age of 16 are at an increased risk of premature births, low birth weight, and neonatal death. (Cunnington, 2001). A substantially higher risk of pregnancy-induced hypertension, pre-eclampsia Toxemia, Eclampsia, Premature Onset of Labor, fetal mortality,

and premature delivery were associated with teenage pregnancy. Increased neonatal morbidity and mortality in babies born to adolescent mothers were also seen. The group of younger adolescents (17 years of age) was most prone to adverse obstetric and neonatal results (Kumar, Singh, Basu, Pandey, & Bhargava, 2007).

Despite these known dangers and risks, cases of teenage pregnancy remain high globally. Several studies identified different factors which predispose adolescent pregnancy. The most common elements were lack of knowledge, peer pressure, parental guidance, poverty, and early marriage. However, other factors were identified by several researchers from different regions in the world.

These factors can be categorized into three parts; Psycho-emotional, socioeconomic, and Spiritual Factors. Psycho-emotional factors refer to elements that involve one's mind and emotions. These factors are level of awareness, knowledge, desires or wants, and urges. At the same time, socioeconomic factors affect one's social involvement and economic status. This category encompasses the environment, peers, family, cultural practices, and financial situation. Spiritual elements refer to factors that involve one's beliefs, includes religion, values, and principles.

A study conducted by South Sudan Medical Journal (2016) entitled "Factors Contributing to, and Effects of Teenage Pregnancy in Juba" revealed a few factors that resulted in teenage pregnancy, namely; lack of parental care, communication, and supervision, poverty, peer-pressure, and non-use of contraceptives. Salvador J. et al. (2016) also discovered in their study entitled "The Phenomenon of Teenage Pregnancy in the Philippines" that sex education is essential to prevent teenage pregnancy's detrimental effects.

Other risk factors associated with teenage pregnancy were identified by Kaphagawani & Kalipeni (2017) in their study titled "Sociocultural Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancy in Zomba District, Malawi." Factors identified were early sex and marriage, low contraceptive use, low education levels, low socioeconomic status, inadequate knowledge about reproductive and sexual health, gender inequity, and physical/sexual violence.

Due to this apparent problem, the researchers have decided to conduct a study in Loboc to determine the different factors contributing to the increasing teenage pregnancy rate in the said town. For us to determine the said factors, we sought to answer the following questions;

1) What is the profile of the respondents with regards to age, civil status, highest educational attainment, and several pregnancies; 2) What is the respondents' level of awareness on the factors affecting teenage pregnancy in terms of psycho-emotional factors, socioeconomic factors, and spiritual factors; 3) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their level of awareness on the factors affecting teenage pregnancy; and lastly, 4) What recommendations can be made based on the findings of the study?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized the descriptive quantitative study design using a self-made questionnaire to determine factors affecting teenage pregnancy among selected teenagers in Loboc, Bohol. The respondents were teenage pregnant mothers between fifteen (15) and nineteen (19) who got pregnant between 2015 and 2021. A sample size of 72 respondents were chosen from the database at the health center in Loboc, Bohol. The study were done in eighteen (18) barangays out of twenty-eight (28).

A self-made questionnaire was utilized that focused on the different factors contributing to teenage pregnancy occurrence in Loboc, Bohol. The questionnaire contained two parts: Part I is composed of the demographic profile of the respondents, such as the following: Age, Highest Educational Attainment, Civil Status, and Number of Pregnancies. Part II of the questionnaire included the factors affecting adolescent pregnancy, such as Psycho-emotional, Socioeconomic, and Spiritual aspects. The researchers used the Likert Scale to measure the respondents' agreement or disagreement on how the different factors affect teenage pregnancy. A pilot test was conducted with ten (10) respondents who met the respondents' inclusion. They were not included during the actual data gathering. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was used to verify and measure the tool's reliability by statisticians. The result showed that the tool was reliable, as are the findings.

Before data collection, a permission letter was sent to the Vice President for Academics and the College of Nursing Dean of the University of Bohol. Upon its approval, the conduct of the study commenced. A permit from the Local Government Unit (LGU) was secured, and a letter of permission to access the list of pregnant women from 2015-2021 was given to the Municipal Health Center (MHC). The researchers chose the

respondents from the list provided by the MHC. After obtaining the permits, assent forms were obtained from respondents aged below 18 years old, and consent forms from those aged 18 years old and above. Then, the researchers sent a link via Facebook messenger for the survey.

Throughout the conduct of the study, primary ethical considerations were observed. The study underwent an ethics review by the University of Bohol Ethics Review Committee. The tool was translated into the local language for the respondents to understand the questions thoroughly. The study encouraged respondents' voluntary participation wherein their right to withdraw from the study at any stage was emphasized if they wished to do so. Their privacy and anonymity were maintained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents. The study's findings revealed that most of the respondents were aged between seventeen (17) and eighteen (18), comprising 50% of the population and 40.3% were High School graduates. Most respondents were single, with 90.3%, and 96.6 % had 1-2 pregnancies.

Regarding the age of the respondents, it revealed that out of 72 respondents, thirty-six or (50.0%) were 17-18 years old, twenty-eight or (38.9%) of them were 19-20 years old, and eight or (11.1%) are 15-16 years old. One in ten young Filipino women aged 15-19 began childbearing: An 8 percent are already mothers, 2 percent are pregnant with their first child, according to the 2013 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). For the number of pregnancies, the data showed that seventy-one of the respondents, or 98.6%, were one to two pregnancies, and only one (1.4%) out of seventy-two had three to four pregnancies. A study in the U.S. discovered that repeated teenage pregnancies are typically caused by depression, a history of abortion, and relationship factors (Maravilla, Betts, Cruz, & Alati, 2017).

For the civil status, sixty-five or (90.3%) of the respondents were single, and seven or (9.7%) were married. In connection to the data presented, surveys from UNFPA discovered that over 30% of teenage girls in developing countries are already married before the age of 18 (Okonofua, 2013). For their Educational Attainment, the highest rank was High School Graduates, which had twenty-nine or (40.4%), twenty-five or (34.7%) are College Level. Seventeen or (23.6%) are High School Level,

and one or (1.4%) is College Graduate which got the lowest rank. A study showed that teenagers in developing countries with higher educational attainment are less likely to become pregnant (Mohr, Carbajal, & Sharma, 2013).

Level of Awareness on the Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy.

The respondents' level of awareness on psycho-emotional factors affecting teenage pregnancy has a weighted mean of 2.69, which is interpreted as moderately aware that it influences adolescent pregnancy and is ranked first. A study revealed that not attending school and inadequate education by parents to their children about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues have all been linked to teenage pregnancy (Mezmur, Assefa, Alemayehu, 2021). Spiritual factors affecting adolescent pregnancy ranked second. It has a weighted mean of 2.56 which means that the respondents are moderately aware that it affects teenage pregnancy. According to one study, religiously affiliated teenagers are less likely to become pregnant (Ogland, Sunil, T.S., Bartkowski, 2010).

Socioeconomic factors ranked third and had a weighted mean of 2.40, which is interpreted as slightly aware that it influences teenage pregnancy. A study revealed that having several sexual partners, frequent sex, and irregular contraception usage increased the chance of teenage pregnancy among the behavioral factors studied. Peer pressure, sexual abuse, and a lack of sexual control have all been linked to an increased risk of adolescent pregnancy (Ochen, Chi, & Lawoko, 2019). Overall, the three categories had a composite mean of 2.51 that describes the overall descriptor as "Agree" and is interpreted as moderately aware that it influences pregnancy.

Level of Awareness in terms of Psycho-emotional Factors. It revealed that the "curiosity about sex" ranked at the top with a weighted mean of 2.85. It is described as "Agree" and is interpreted as moderately aware that it influences pregnancy. According to a study, one of the causes of teenage pregnancy was curiosity. Adolescents were curious about sexuality, wherein they lacked sexual knowledge (Pogoy, 2014). Meanwhile, "Lack of sex education" ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.71. Early pregnancy is almost often the result of a lack of sex education; hence, parents' obligation is to provide adequate sex education to their teenage daughters. It is believed that a lack of proper understanding about sex education causes teenage girls to become sexually active, which leads to eventual sexual activity (Ogori, Shitu, Yunusa, 2013).

The statement with the lowest rank, “Lack of parental guidance,” had a weighted mean of 2.51 and was described as “Agree” Respondents were moderately aware that it influences teenage pregnancy. The common cause of adolescent pregnancy is a lack of supervision from guardians/parents; they are hesitant or do not appreciate the importance of educating teenagers, especially to vice and sexual reproductive behavior leaving them unguided during their adolescent stage of development, which is when their cognitive, emotional, psychological, and social skills are most developed (Manzi, Ogwang, Akankwatsa, Wokali, Obba, Bumba, Nekaka, & Gavamukulya, 2018).

Level of Awareness in terms of Spiritual Factors. The findings showed that “lack of involvement in spiritual activities” and “poor spiritual foundation” are interpreted as moderately aware that they influence pregnancy. A weighted mean of 2.58 and 2.53, respectively, are described as Agree. A study showed that religiosity decreased the probability of sexual activity (Rostosky, Wilcox, Wright, & Randall, 2004). Teens with a more significant level of religiosity are more likely to put away sexual activity than those with a lower level of religiosity (Hardy, & Raffaelli, 2003).

Level of Awareness in terms of Socioeconomic Factors. “Drinking alcoholic beverages with friends lead to a lack of self-control” ranked first with a weighted mean of 2.58. Respondents Agreed and were moderately aware of its influences on teenage pregnancy. According to a study, alcohol use led to impaired decision-making and contribute to high-risk sexual activity. The use of alcohol and risky sexual behavior may reflect risk-taking, sociability, and self-control (Griffin, Scheier, Acevedo, Grenard, Botvin, 2011).

Meanwhile, “Seeing friends and relatives who are pregnant at a young age” ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.51. Respondents agreed and were moderately aware that it influences teenage pregnancy. A study in South Africa found that lack of parental guidance and good role models, and the influence of their peers were the cause of adolescent pregnancy (Thobejane, 2017). The statements “Having friends who engage in premarital sex” ranked 3rd and “Viewing pornographic video influences one to engage in sexual activities.” ranked 4th with a weighted mean of 2.40 and 2.39, respectively. Respondents disagreed and were slightly aware that it influences teenage pregnancy. “Poverty,” ranked fifth, had a weighted mean of 2.13. Respondents disagreed and were somewhat familiar that it affects adolescent pregnancy. A study revealed that the

primary reason for teenage pregnancy in Nigeria and South Africa is poverty (Lambani, 2017).

Correlation between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and Their Level of Awareness. Data revealed no significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their level of awareness on the factor affecting teenage pregnancy. In other words, the respondents' demographic profile does not affect their understanding of the factors influencing adolescent pregnancy.

Correlation between the Respondents' Age and Their Level of Awareness on the Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy. It shows that the P-value of this variable is 0.318. A P-value that is more significant than 0.05 means failure to reject the null hypothesis. That indicates no meaningful relationship between the respondents' age and their level of awareness on the factor influencing teenage pregnancy. A study from Ethiopia discovered that increased age is significantly associated with adolescent pregnancy (Habitu, Yalew, Bisetegn, 2017). A study in the Philippines also revealed an increased report of early sexual initiation among teenagers between ages fifteen (15) and nineteen (19) between the years of 2008-2013 (Habitu, Vaughan, & Morgan, 2019). However, the respondents' age does not affect their awareness of teenage pregnancy factors in this study.

Correlation between the Respondents' Highest Educational Attainment and Their Level of Awareness on the Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy. The result shows that the P-value of this variable is 0.620, which is greater than 0.05. That indicates no significant relationship between the respondents' highest educational attainment and their level of awareness on the factor influencing teenage pregnancy. Education plays an essential role in the incidence of adolescent pregnancy in many regions. A study revealed that the absence of formal education is associated with teenage pregnancies in Ethiopia (Mezmur et al., 2021). Education is essential for teenagers to know many subjects, especially about education. A study in Indonesia discovered that awareness of teenage pregnancy is related to the incidence of adolescent pregnancy in that area (Budiharjo, Theresia, Widyasih, 2018). Thus, data about educational attainment is relevant to this study. However, in this study, the respondents' highest educational attainment does not affect their level of awareness on the influence of such factors on teenage pregnancy.

Correlation between the Respondents' Civil Status and Their

Level of Awareness on the Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy.

The result indicates no significant relationship between the respondents' civil status and their level of awareness on the factor influencing teenage pregnancy. In some countries, early marriage is commonly practiced in the community. This cultural practice may be associated with incidences of adolescent pregnancies in the area. A study in Juba discovered that forced marriage was a factor associated with teenage pregnancy (Gwido & Fekadu, 2016). On the contrary, a study in the Philippines reported increased sexual experiences on single respondents (Habito et al., 2019). In this study, the respondents' civil status does not affect their awareness of teenage pregnancy factors.

Correlation between the Respondents' No. of Pregnancy and Their Level of Awareness on the Factors Affecting Teenage Pregnancy.

The result showed that the P-value is 0.812, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates no significant relationship between the respondents' number of pregnancies and their level of awareness on the factor influencing teenage pregnancy. A study in the Philippines revealed that one in every five teenage mothers experienced repeated pregnancies from 1993-2013, regardless of the type of residence and economic status. Furthermore, this data showed no decrease in 20 years (Maravilla et al., 2018). However, in this study, the respondents' number of pregnancies does not affect their awareness of teenage pregnancy factors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teenagers in Loboc, Bohol have an increased risk of teenage pregnancy due to socioeconomic factors since they are only slightly aware of its influence on adolescent pregnancy. Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory discussed how teenagers start to interest the opposite sex and become impulsive with their actions. They explore and engage in different things at this stage to find their own identity. However, many factors can interfere with the process, resulting in negative behaviors such as impulsiveness, risk-taking behaviors, early sexual engagement, etc., leading to teenage pregnancy.

Another conclusion drawn from the study's findings is that teenagers in Loboc are at low risk of teenage pregnancy associated with psycho-emotional and spiritual factors. The respondents have moderate knowledge about how these factors influence adolescent pregnancy. This

awareness may help in the prevention of teenage pregnancy. Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action explains every action is controlled by an individual's attitude and social belief on that particular action, whether it is acceptable or not. An early sexual engagement that ultimately results in teenage pregnancy may be influenced by an individual's attitude towards it and how she views the action. An individual who knows that consequences, such as early pregnancy, may be experienced due to early sexual engagement will most likely avoid such behavior. Moreover, beliefs anchored on spiritual factors will prevent a teenager from engaging in such behavior. Thus, with this knowledge, teenagers are less likely to experience teenage pregnancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sex education is essential to prevent teenage pregnancy. Thus, health education is our primary recommendation. The following actions are recommended:

1. Promote adolescent pregnancy information through social media, webinars, workshops, and presentations at conferences/professional meetings;
2. Provide positive youth development strategies that will provide young people with skills, that can help them succeed as an adult that will increase protective factors such as knowledge, personal values, intention to use birth control and limit sexual activity, communication with parents/adults about sex, condoms, contraception, ability to avoid situations that lead to sex, refusal skills, life planning, vision for future;
3. The researchers will provide health teaching to the community to increase their awareness about the influence of socioeconomic factors on teenage pregnancy utilizing the online platform through infomercials, pamphlets, etc.;
4. The researchers will coordinate with the municipal health center in Loboc, Bohol, and suggest conducting programs/seminars using online platforms to emphasize the importance of parental guidance for their children's social media supervision and be good role models; and lastly,
5. The researchers will coordinate with the LGU to conduct programs/seminars using online platforms to educate teenagers about the

importance of education to avoid poverty, which influences teenage pregnancy.

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