

## **Caracterización del perfil de ingreso a la universidad. Consideraciones para la toma de decisiones**

*College Admission Profile Characterization: Considerations for decision making*

*Caracterização do perfil de entrada para a universidade. Considerações para  
tomada de decisão*

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## Resumen

**Introducción:** En el diseño curricular universitario, un aspecto que se ha considerado fundamental para que el estudiante se desenvuelva exitosamente en su carrera tiene que ver con el vínculo entre esta y su perfil de ingreso. El problema, sin embargo, se halla en que la universidad rara vez se enfoca en aplicar estrategias que permitan identificar las características y habilidades de los nuevos “ingresantes”, aspecto fundamental para diseñar y desarrollar actividades que se ajusten más a las necesidades y destrezas de los alumnos. Por tal motivo, en el caso concreto de los implicados en el Programa Educativo de Licenciatura en Nutrición (PELN), adscrito a la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud (FCS) de la Universidad Autónoma del Carmen (Unacar), el interés se ha centrado en recabar información que permita reforzar o reestructurar tanto el plan de estudios como los procesos de ingreso y selección para dicho programa. **Objetivo:** Caracterizar el perfil de ingreso de los estudiantes de la generación 2018 del PELN de la Unacar. **Método:** Se desarrolló un estudio con enfoque cuantitativo, alcance exploratorio, descriptivo y diseño no experimental con delineación transversal-descriptiva. La muestra fue de tipo no probabilístico, ya que para la realización de este estudio se consideró a la población total de estudiantes de nuevo ingreso de la referida licenciatura. **Resultados:** En cuanto a los datos sociodemográficos, la cobertura fue de 85.71 % en relación al número total de aspirantes, la edad promedio de los aceptados fue de  $19 \pm 4.41$  años, y el género fue 27.8 % masculino y 72.2 % femenino. Asimismo, todos los estudiantes declararon ser solteros y solo uno (2.7 %) tenía un hijo. En cuanto al lugar de residencia en los últimos seis meses, se conoció que la mayoría (58 %) vive en Ciudad del Carmen (Campeche). Igualmente, se determinó que 42 % (15) de los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso que se hallan fuera de su ciudad de origen viven con algún familiar, amigo o solos. Con respecto a la condición laboral, 97 % (35) no trabaja y 3 % (1) se emplea en un trabajo de medio tiempo. En relación con los indicadores socioculturales y educativos del ingresante, 25 % estudiaron en escuelas preparatorias privadas y 75 % en escuelas públicas. Asimismo, el promedio general de los estudiantes presenta una media de  $78.38 \pm 8.58$ . Igualmente, 83.33 % de los estudiantes vienen de áreas terminales relacionada con la carrera y 84.25 % indicó que habían cursado dentro del último año de bachillerato los contenidos declarados en el perfil de ingreso de la licenciatura. Sobre las habilidades básicas declaradas en el perfil de ingreso, 42.36 % de la población estudiada reconoce la necesidad de reforzarlas, mientras que en cuanto al estado nutricional se encontró que 55.55 % presenta problemas de salud de ese tipo.

**Conclusiones:** Se concluye que las características del perfil de ingreso de los estudiantes de la generación 2018 plantean la necesidad de generar estrategias de intervención para disminuir la deserción que pudiera existir.

**Palabras clave:** estudiantes, licenciatura en Nutrición, perfil de ingreso, universidad.

## Abstract

In higher education curriculum design, admission profile has always been a key aspect for academic success since it is a bridge between the profession and admission profile, However, the problem lies in the fact that universities rarely focus in applying strategies that help identify new applicants' skills and individualities, a crucial aspect to design and develop activities more suited to students needs and talents. Due to this fact, speaking of the ones responsible for the Nutrition Bachelor's Degree of the Health Science School at the Universidad Autónoma del Carmen, the main concern is to gather information to help strengthen and reorganize the curricula and its admission and selection protocols. **Methods:** An exploratory, descriptive non experimental study was conducted with a quantitative approach and a transversal descriptive liner. A non-probabilistic study sample was used, since all student applications for 2018 were included. **Results:** Relative to socio-demographic data, program coverture was 85.71% of the student applications total, candidates presented an average age of  $19 \pm 4.41$  years. Gender related data showed that 27.8% were male and 72.2% female. 100% percent of the applicants declared their marital status as single and only 2.7% have children. Data related to place of origin, 58 are from Ciudad del Carmen (Campeche). Also, it was determined that 42% (15) of the foreign new students are living with relatives, with a friend or alone. In relation to work, 97% (35) don't have a job and 3% (1) have a part time job. Data related to socio – cultural and education indicators from candidates revealed that 25% of the applicants studied in private high schools while 75% attended public schools. Related to graduation date from high school 2.78% graduated in 2012, 5.5% in 2015, 2.78 in 2017 and 88.89 % in 2018. Average scores obtained by applicants during high school years presented a  $78.38 \pm 8.58$ . An 83.33% of applicants have the required high school specialization area and 84.25% of the study subjects indicated to have covered during the last year of high school the pre-requisites declared on the admission profile. 42.36% of the applicants recognize their need to

improve basic skills listed as requirement on the admission profile. Related to the nutritional status of the candidates 55.56% presented nutritional health issues. **Conclusions:** It was determined that the admission profile characteristics of the 2018 candidates to the Nutrition Bachelor's degree program, exposed the need to generate intervention strategies to decrease school dropout rates.

**Key words:** Students, Nutrition Bachelor's degree, Admission Profile, College / University.

## Resumo

**Introdução:** No desenho curricular universitário, um aspecto que foi considerado fundamental para o aluno desenvolver-se com sucesso em sua carreira tem a ver com a ligação entre este e seu perfil de renda. O problema, no entanto, é que a universidade raramente se concentra na aplicação de estratégias para identificar as características e habilidades de novos "participantes", um aspecto fundamental para projetar e desenvolver atividades que melhor atendam às necessidades e habilidades de os alunos. Por essa razão, no caso específico dos envolvidos no Programa Educacional de Bacharel em Nutrição (PELN), vinculado à Faculdade de Ciências da Saúde (FCS) da Universidade Autônoma de Carmen (Unacar), o interesse tem se concentrado na recolha de informação que permita reforçar ou reestruturar o currículo e os processos de admissão e seleção do referido programa. **Objetivo:** Caracterizar o perfil de renda dos alunos da geração 2018 da Unacar PELN. **Método:** Foi desenvolvido um estudo com abordagem quantitativa, exploratória, descritiva e não experimental, com delineamento descritivo transversal. A amostra foi do tipo não probabilística, pois para a realização deste estudo considerou-se a população total de novos alunos do referido grau. **Resultados:** Em relação aos dados sociodemográficos, a cobertura foi de 85,71% em relação ao total de aspirantes, a média de idade dos aceitos foi de  $19 \pm 4,41$  anos, e o gênero foi de 27,8% do sexo masculino e 72,2% do feminino. Além disso, todos os alunos declararam ser solteiros e apenas um (2,7%) teve um filho. Quanto ao local de residência nos últimos seis meses, sabia-se que a maioria (58%) mora em Ciudad del Carmen (Campeche). Da mesma forma, foi determinado que 42% (15) dos novos alunos que estão fora de sua cidade de origem vivem com um parente, amigo ou sozinho. Em relação à condição de trabalho, 97% (35) não funciona e 3% (1) é empregado em um trabalho de meio período. Em relação aos indicadores socioculturais e educacionais do participante, 25% estudaram em escolas preparatórias privadas e 75% em escolas

públicas. Da mesma forma, a média geral dos alunos apresenta uma média de  $78,38 \pm 8,58$ . Da mesma forma, 83,33% dos alunos são provenientes de áreas terminais relacionadas ao curso de graduação e 84,25% indicaram que completaram os conteúdos declarados no perfil de ingresso do curso no último ano do ensino médio. Sobre as habilidades básicas declaradas no perfil de renda, 42,36% da população estudada reconhece a necessidade de reforçá-las, enquanto em relação ao estado nutricional constatou-se que 55,55% apresentam problemas de saúde desse tipo.

**Conclusões:** Conclui-se que as características do perfil de renda dos estudantes da geração 2018 colocam a necessidade de gerar estratégias de intervenção para reduzir o abandono que possa existir.

**Palavras-chave:** estudantes, Bacharel em Nutrição, perfil de entrada, universidade.

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## Introduction

The incorporation of new students into the university system is a progressive process that consists of identifying, assimilating and following the behavioral guidelines of school practices in higher education (Ysunza and Mora, 2007). In this path, logically, the student goes through different phases that lead him to master a series of codes of his institution and career, which are forging their academic and professional profile (Véliz, Dörner, Gonzáles and Ripoll, 2017). The problem, however, is that the university rarely focuses on applying strategies to identify the characteristics and abilities of the new "entrants" (Del Valle, Ladrón y Verde, 2002), a fundamental aspect to design and develop activities that they adjust more to the needs and skills of the students (Alvarado, 2017, Nava, Lara and Ortega, 2006).

In effect, these characteristics, which are also known as the student's income profile, have to do with the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that must be gathered and demonstrated by the candidate who wishes to study any degree, because in that way You can guarantee your professional training.

In the specific case of the Educational Program of Bachelor of Nutrition (PELN), attached to the Faculty of Health Sciences (FCS) of the Autonomous University of Carmen (Unacar), and

as a result of the evaluation process by the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Higher Education Evaluation (CIEES), recommendations were made to the aforementioned training program, which focused on reinforcing the methodology of selection and entry into that career with the purpose of measuring the attributes of the income profile of the applicants, so that it can reinforce and even restructure both the curriculum and the program entry processes.

In this context, the PELN considers the "income profile" from the following dimensions: 1) sociodemographic dimension of the student, which covers coverage, state of birth, place of residence, age of entry, gender, marital status and position at home, 2) sociocultural and educational dimension of the entrant, which includes school history, knowledge, skills and social relationships, and 3) nutritional health dimension (Universidad Autónoma del Carmen [Unacar], 2015).

For the aforementioned, the objective of this work was to characterize the income profile of the 2018 generation students enrolled in the Unacar PELN, because this is one of the fundamental knowledge to support students in the successful study of that career.

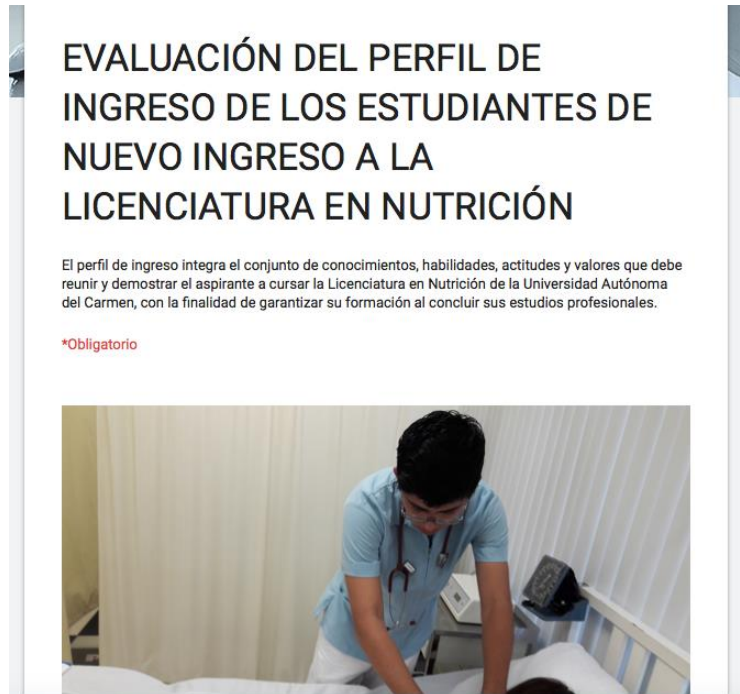
## **Materials and methods**

This was a study with a quantitative approach, exploratory-descriptive scope, non-experimental design and cross-descriptive delineation. The sample was of a non-probabilistic type, since for the execution of this study the total population of new students of the degree in Nutrition (generation 2018) of Unacar was considered. The integrated database for this work was elaborated with the following information:

1. The University System of School Control (SUCE), which provides the sociodemographic data of new students.
2. The executive portal of the licensing manager, from where the school history of origin was obtained (average grade of the baccalaureate) and the sociodemographic data were corroborated.
3. The assessment survey of the entrance profile to the Bachelor Degree in Nutrition (EVPILN), which evaluates the skills, aptitudes and social relationships indicated by the educational program. This instrument was designed by the area of clinical psychology of the FCS-Unacar and approved by the PELN academies; Subsequently, the questionnaire

was digitized and programmed using the Google Drive Form tool (figure 1) on the computers in the computer room of the FCS.

**Figura 1.** Cuestionario realizado en Google Drive para evaluar el perfil de ingreso



Fuente: Elaboración propia

4. The nutrition status evaluation card (FO-FCS-LEEN-01) of the Nutritional State Assessment Laboratory (LEEN) of the FCS-Unacar, which provided data on the nutritional status of the student.

The research was carried out based on the following methodological format:

1. Before initiating the present investigation, a written authorization was requested from the manager (coordinator) of the PELN, who was informed of the general objective and the particular purposes of the study; subsequently, it was submitted to the evaluation of the Bioethics Committee of the FCS to rule out conflicts of interest.
2. Afterwards, written access was requested to the records of the various sources of information to carry out the integration and analysis of the data collected.

- The obtained findings were tabulated in an Excel spreadsheet and then analyzed with the statistical package SPSS, version 24.0, for Windows. As this is a descriptive study (frequencies, percentages for categorical variables and measures of central tendency and dispersion for numerical variables), tables were generated based on the study variables to perform the corresponding interpretation and analysis.

The study was coordinated by the disciplinary group Education, Food, Nutrition and Health, and professors of the Educational Program of Bachelor of Clinical Psychology of the FCS-Unacar.

## Results

### *Sociodemographic dimension*

The PELN coverage during the 2018 admission process was 85.71%, in relation to the total number of applicants, according to the data obtained from the executive portal (table 1).

**Tabla 1.** Cobertura

Ítems	f	%
Aspirantes	43	100
Preinscritos	42	97.67
Inscritos	36	85.71

Fuente: Portal ejecutivo

The average age of the accepted candidates was  $19 \pm 4.41$  years, with an oscillation between 18 and 44 years. Regarding gender, 27.8% (10) belonged to the masculine and 72.2% (26) to the feminine. All students were single and only one (2.7%) mentioned that they had a child.

As for the place of residence in the last six months, it was known that 58% (21) had lived in Ciudad del Carmen (Campeche), 11% (4) in Veracruz, 8.3% (3) in Tabasco, 5.6% (2) in Chiapas, 5.6% (2) in Mexico City, 5.6% (2) in Tamaulipas, 2.8% (1) in Oaxaca, and 2.8% (1) in Quintana Roo. Likewise, it was determined that 42% (15) of the new students who were outside their city of origin lived with a family member, friend or alone. Regarding the work condition, 97% (35) did not work and 3% (1) was employed in a part-time job.



### Sociocultural and educational dimension of the entrant

The results showed that 25% (9) of the new students came from private high schools and 75% (27) studied in public schools. With respect to the year of graduation from high school, 2.78% (1) graduated in 2012, 5.56% (2) in 2015, 2.78% (1) in 2017, and 88.89% (32) in 2018.

The average of the students presented an average of  $78.38 \pm 8.58$ , with ranges from 65 to 95/100. In men, the mean was  $77.9 \pm 9.81$ , while in women it was  $78.57 \pm 9.81$ . To evaluate the knowledge, the terminal area or specialty of the high school of origin was first asked (table 2), which showed that 83.33% of the students came from terminal areas related to the career.

**Tabla 2.** Área terminal de la preparatoria de origen

Área terminal	F	%
Alimentos	12	33.33
Económico-administrativo	3	8.33
Físico-matemático	1	2.78
Químicos-biológicos	8	22.22
Salud	10	27.78
Sociales y humanidades	2	5.56
Total	36	100.00

Fuente: SUCE

On the other hand, and taking into account that coming from a related area does not mean that they had taken subjects related to the career entry profile, they were asked if they had taken the subjects described in the PELN entry profile. In this regard, the results showed that 84.25% of new students indicated that they had completed these contents within the last year of high school (table 3).

**Tabla 3.** Curso del último año de preparatoria en relación con el perfil de ingreso del PELN

Cursos	F	%
Química orgánica	31	86.11
Biología	30	83.33
Bioquímica	30	83.33

Fuente: EVPILN

Likewise, it was inquired into the needs that the students considered they should reinforce (table 4), among which 42.36% highlighted the need to "understand the socioeconomic problems that affect the country, which affect human nutrition".

**Tabla 4.** Habilidades que los estudiantes consideraron que debían reforzar

Habilidades	f	%
Comunicar, manejar información en forma organizada.	15	41.67
Análisis y juicio de las diferentes situaciones humanas presentadas.	12	33.33
Comprensión de los problemas socioeconómicos que afectan al país, los cuales repercuten en la nutrición humana.	21	58.33
Comunicar efectivamente información oral y escrita.	13	36.11

Fuente: EVPILN

Regarding the desirable attitudes in the new admission student according to the PELN, those surveyed indicated mainly (33.33%) the "service interest towards the community" (table 5).

**Tabla 5.** Actitudes que los estudiantes consideran que deben reforzar

Actitudes	f	%
Responsabilidad.	9	25
Interés de servicio hacia la comunidad.	12	33.33
Interés al conocimiento de temas relacionados con la salud.	0	0
Colaboración y participación en equipos de trabajo.	7	19

Fuente: EVPILN

### *Nutrition status*

Table 6 shows the detailed results of the evaluation of the nutritional status of the population studied. In general, it can be indicated that 44.45% of new students had "normal weight", while 55.55% had nutritional health problems according to the World Health Organization cut-off points, especially in women, which evidence the need to develop intervention strategies.

**Tabla 6.** Estado de salud nutricional

Clasificación	Población total (N = 36)				Género femenino (n = 24)				Género masculino (n = 12)			
	F	%	□	DE	F	%	□	DE	f	%	□	DE
Bajo peso	4	11.11	17.72	0.25	1	4.17	17.3	0	3	25.0	17.8	0.87
Normopeso	16	44.44	21.65	1.54	11	45.83	21.8	1.65	5	41.7	21.3	1.2
Sobrepeso	8	22.22	27.52	1.41	4	16.67	27	1.23	4	33.3	28.05	1.39
Obesidad	8	22.22	33.26	3.94	8	33.33	33.26	3.94	0	0.0	0	0
Total	36	100	25.03	1.7	24	100	24.84	1.7	12	100	22.38	0.86

Fuente: FO-FCS-LEEN-01

## Discussion

The evaluation of a degree program is a systematic process that collects information necessary for efficient and relevant decision making (Lacueva, 2015). In the case of the FCS-Unacar PELN, this was evaluated in 2016 by the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES), and was categorized as a quality educational program (level 1) for three years, although a series of recommendations was also made, among which the systematization of the assessment of the entrance profile to the degree with the aim of achieving academic success in all the students stands out.

In order for the candidates to fully comply with an ideal student profile, a process must be generated, which must begin with the definition of the type of person and professional that they intend to train, which must include not only the scientific knowledge with which they must start, but also the skills, abilities and values with which it must count, since they will be the axes to train a good citizen and a competent professional (Alvarado, 2017, González-Velázquez, Lara-Barrón, Pineda-Olvera and Crespo-Knopfler, 2014).

In accordance with these premises, it is worth noting that the FCS-Unacar PELN seeks to train students who take ownership of the main characteristics of their profession. Therefore, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and social relationships are defined, among others, that will allow the Nutrition student to achieve a competent professional (Unacar, 2015); these attributes, logically, are not present in all those who achieve the entrance to the degree, for what greater demands are required in the selection processes, since the deficiencies in the university environment are

manifested in the low academic performance and even in the abandonment of the career (Micin, Carreño and Urzúa, 2017).

The income profile, therefore, must be taken into consideration as a body of knowledge and experiences that are essential to be admitted to the program. This profile expresses the sector of potential learners or core of recognizable users for a given educational proposal (Esparza and López, 2011, García and López, 2011) with the objective that they can develop knowledge, skills and favorable attitudes to study and finish with older chances of success studies started.

On the other hand, it is important to note that there is little literature on the study and assessment of the income profile, which makes the comparison process with other findings difficult. In fact, sociodemographic characteristics are not usually indicators that are taken into account for the selection of candidates, which could be examined to determine if there are common elements in student dropouts and to generate strategies for permanent action to promote academic success.

However, the starting point within sociodemographic characteristics focuses on the coverage reached in the 2018 generation, taking into account that it is an important indicator in education due to its direct relationship with demand, an element of high impact in the selection processes. The expansion of coverage in national higher education is considered a process of social inclusion (Ocegueda, Miramontes, Moctezuma and Mungaray, 2017) that seeks to increase the number of Mexicans who access the education system to strengthen their citizenship conditions and reaffirm shared responsibility in the construction of a diverse society and without the achievements of inequality that today are an affront to all.

In practice, however, it can be indicated that the system of higher education in Mexico faces great challenges, since its coverage is still limited, since it leaves 70% of the population without access to this level, especially those who they are among the lower income social groups (Ocegueda et al., 2017).

Even so, in the specific case of the PELN coverage in 2018, it can be affirmed that this is high, since it stood at 85.71% of the total number of applicants. Likewise, and with respect to the age of admission -which in the present study was  $19 \pm 4.41$  years-, these results coincide with other investigations (De Garay, 2003, González-Velázquez et al., 2014, Irigoyen et al., 2009, Pineda-Olvera, Lara-Barrón, Rocha-Lara, Piña-Jiménez and Romero-Villalobos, 2018). This factor must

be watched carefully, since according to the results of a study on desertion in university students (Torres et al., 2017), between 18 and 21 years of age is where the prevalence of this phenomenon is most prevalent, which could happen because they do not have the ideal income profile or because they still do not have the security of what they want to study.

Likewise, and in relation to the marital status of the students when entering the PELN, the findings coincide with those found by Aiello et al. (2007) and Micin, Carreño and Urzúa (2017), since most are single, which can be considered as a positive factor to achieve a good school trajectory, since students in this condition have a greater opportunity to study without have to focus on fulfilling direct family responsibilities. In this sense, Torres et al. (2017) found that marriage and free union are indicators that increase the chances of dropping out of school.

On the other hand, on the employment situation of students entering the PELN, it was determined that the highest percentage does not work, a fact that agrees with the results of the studies prepared by Aiello et al. (2007) and Torres et al. (2017).

With respect to the sociocultural and educational findings of the entrant, highlights not only the average grade of  $78.38 \pm 8.58$ , but also that 83.33% of students come from terminal areas related to the career, and that 84.25% of new students In the last year of the baccalaureate they had completed some subject related to the knowledge described in the PELN entry profile. This indicates that most of the newly admitted students have a notion of the fundamental knowledge declared in the income profile.

It also highlights that 42.36% of respondents recognize the need to reinforce not only the "understanding of the socioeconomic problems that affect the country, which impact on human nutrition", but also the "service interest towards the community".

Finally, in relation to nutritional health, 50% of study subjects have a weight that is not consistent with the profession they chose, which does not mean that they are inadequate nutrition professionals, but that the challenge will be greater within your professional training.

## Conclusions

In principle, it should be underlined that in Mexico there is little research focused on the study of the income profile of university students, hence it can not be determined with certainty what would be the ideal, as well as the impact that this has on learning of the students. For this reason, the data collected in this study is a valid effort to have systematized information to make timely decisions and establish strategies that help improve the results of the students' school trajectory.

In this regard, the students' age of entry, marital status and economic dependence were detected as aspects with a favorable impact on the PELN, given that they are considered conditions that contribute to academic success. Equally, the knowledge according to its terminal area and the subjects studied in the last year of baccalaureate since, are data that indicate that the young people have basic knowledge about the area, which will allow greater understanding about the contents and courses of the PELN.

On the other hand, within the areas to be reinforced we can mention the high school average or the fact that around half of the students do not live in the city, which forces them to reside with a family member or friend, an aspect that could be complicate the economics of the aspirants. In addition, it must be indicated that 50% of the study subjects present a weight that is not consistent with the profession they chose.

Finally, the characteristics of the income profile of students of generation 2018 of the PELN, raise the need to implement a program of regularization and / or leveling for new students, develop a formal program of academic advising, use data from academic trajectories for curricular update processes, managing housing, transportation and maintenance grants, as well as consolidating the nutritional monitoring and monitoring program in support of students who require it.

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