

Employees' Organizational Culture & Support Perceptions & Organizational Identification: A Field Investigation in India

Soumendu Biswas

This study investigates the combined influence of employees' perceptions of organizational culture and support on their organizational citizenship and counterproductive work behaviors when mediated by their levels of organizational identification. Data that were collected from 837 managerial executives working in organizations across India were subjected to various quantitative analytical techniques to test the hypotheses and the conceptual model. These analyses led to the affirmation of all the study hypotheses as well as the proposed conceptual latent variable model. The study notes the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and concludes by mentioning its limitations and future research scopes arising therefrom.

Soumendu Biswas is Assistant Professor, Management Development Institute Gurgaon, Mehrauli Road, Sukhrali, Gurugram 122007, India. E-mail id: sbiswas@mdi.ac.in

Introduction

The intricate economic environment in developing markets calls for an exploration of administration and processes that lend stability and significance to organizations and their employees. For this, organizational culture serves as a suitable construct to comprehend common attitudinal patterns that bind organizational members together because there exists an active link between the culture of an organization and employees' prosocial behavior through the latter's contextual sense- and meaning-making whose fallout is an amplification of positive and a reduction of negative employee conducts (Song et al., 2019).

However, while the literature has frequently indicated that both, employees' perceptions of organizational culture (EPOC) and their perceived organizational support (POS) may be considered antecedents of employees' favorable attitudes and behaviors (Salvador et al., 2022), it remains silent regarding the possible mechanisms of how such linkages may be

simultaneously conceptualized and/or empirically tested. This is identified as a research lacuna and has been attended to as a principal objective of this study. Furthermore, given the importance placed on both EPOC as well as POS (Pei-Li, 2017), the concerned literature is lacking in the conceptualization of EPOC and POS as interacting antecedents and this has also been considered a research gap and thus forms a primary purpose of this study.

In this connection, EPOC, promulgated historically and sustained contextually, gives the organization and by extension, its members their professional identity (Ipek & Tanyeri, 2021). Thus, EPOC is a set of core values that employees strongly adhere to and regularly manifest during mutual interactions (Chong et al., 2018). Once acquired, employees act out these organizationally preferred norms of behavior that define their perceived organizational culture and subsequently form the basis for their organizational identification (Gao et al., 2020). Ergo, the employee-organization relationship that is initiated as an economic exchange, once initiated, becomes driven by employees' motivation, satisfaction, and aspirations which are further dependent upon their favorable perceptions of their organization in terms of a conducive culture and adequacy of occupational support (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). Specifically, it strengthens their value congruence with the organization and subsequently, they feel obligated to react favorably with positive attitudes and behaviors (Dawley et al., 2008).

EPOC, POS & Organizational Identification

Employees' perceived organizational culture (EPOC) refers to their conceptions regulating their behavioral synchronicity with co-workers through shared norms, values, and beliefs (Jin & Lee, 2021). Consequently, EPOC has been found to result in employees' attitudes and behaviors that give them a sense of concordance with their organization (Baek et al., 2019). It also serves in defining the organization's boundaries thus demarcating the 'internal' and 'external' organizational environment thereby triggering employees' sense of organizational identity (Ciampa et al., 2021). As a result, the first hypothesis is postulated as follows.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Employees' perceptions of organizational culture are positively associated with their organizational identification.

As per the social identity theory (SIT), organizations that display a sense of safety, security, and care towards their employees motivate the latter towards stronger organizational identification (Zhao et al., 2018). As such, POS which is based on a social reciprocation between an organization and its employees and which depends on employees' convictions about how supportive and empathetic their organization is towards them, reinforces their levels of organizational identification (Shkoler et al., 2021).

Additionally, while the link between EPOC and organizational identification

helps describe the process of employees' personalization of organizationally shared values, beliefs, and norms, POS help them justify why they should personalize these organizational assumptions and how the overlap of the organization's characteristics with their own can be beneficial to them (Ismail & Baki, 2017). This implies that EPOC which is complementary to employees' well-being along with POS generates a greater sense of belongingness to their organization (Choi et al., 2014). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are posited.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Employees' perceived organizational support is positively related to their levels of organizational identification.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Perceived organizational support interacts with employees' perceptions of organizational culture to enhance employees' organizational identification.

Organizational Identification, OCBs & CWBs

A review of the relevant literature suggests when employees socially identify themselves with their organization, they are enthused intrinsically to act in a discretionary manner for the welfare of their employer (Erturk, 2007). Thus, employees' self-congruence with their organization as evinced by their organizational identification spurs them to undertake civic and altruistic activities as good Samaritans, in other words, display their organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Zhao et al., 2021).

Moreover, as a corollary, when employees experience organizational identification, they keep away from activities that may be disruptive to their organization's functioning (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2013). Such behaviors and activities that are labeled as counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) shall, therefore, be contrary to reciprocity norms that are expected as outcomes of EPOC and POS and employees' organizational identification (Qin et al., 2021). Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are put forward.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). Employees' organizational identification is positively linked to their organizational citizenship behaviors.

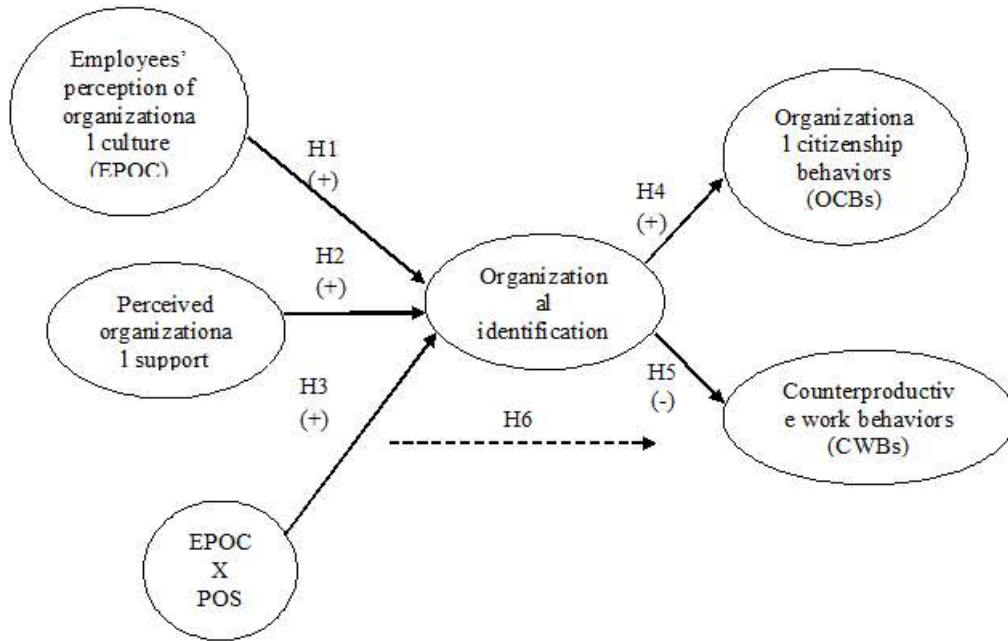
Hypothesis 5 (H5). Employees' organizational identification is negatively associated with their counterproductive work behaviors.

A review of the study hypotheses proffered so far illustrates the likelihood of organizational identification as a possible intervening variable. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented.

Hypothesis 6 (H6). Employees' organizational identification shall mediate the linkages between the primary antecedents that is, employees' perceptions of organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and their interaction, and the final consequences namely, organizational citizenship behaviors and counterproductive work behaviors.

All the study hypotheses propounded so far are assimilated and presented as a latent variable model (LVM) in Fig. 1 which is then subjected to further empirical testing.

Figure 1. The proposed conceptual latent variable model (LVM) and the hypothesized links between the study constructs



Sample & Procedures

Data for this study were collected through a random survey conducted in multiple organizations spread across India. While exact data were not available for the workforce population, the sample size was approximated using the method when the population is infinite (Liu, 2014). Initially, about 37 organizations were randomly selected from the National Business Directory of India. 11 of these 37 organizations agreed to allow their employees to participate in the survey of which seven were from the manufacturing sector and the rest belonged to the services sector. A list of

voluntary participants, all of whom were executives belonging to the managerial cadre, from each organization was drawn up. Based on this list, 1700 questionnaires were distributed. 837 filled and usable questionnaires could be finally collected which were then considered for data analysis procedures. Thus, the response rate for this study was about 49 percent.

The average age of the respondents was about 37 years and their average work experience was around 11 years. Of the 837 respondents, 516 were males and the remaining 321 were females. Further, 525 respondents belonged to organizations from the manufacturing sec-

tor and 312 were from the services sector organizations. Finally, 303 respondents were from the junior, 422 were from the middle, and 112 were from the senior levels of management.

Measures

All the five study variables were measured on a five-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

EPOC: Eight items of the Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) scale developed and reported by O'Reilly et al. (1991) were adapted to measure EPOC. An example item from the inventory used for this study was, 'This organization is achievement-oriented, has high expectations, and demands results from its employees'. The reliability of this measure as per its Cronbach's alpha value was .73.

POS: The eight-item scale reported by Rhoades et al. (2001) was used to measure POS. An example item of this scale was 'This organization strongly considers my goals and values'. One of the two items that were reverse-scored was 'This organization shows little concern for me'. The internal consistency reliability value of this scale was .81.

Organizational Identification: To measure organizational identification, six items reported by Mael and Ashforth (1992) were used. An illustrative item of this scale would be 'This organization's successes are my successes'. The Cronbach's alpha value for this measure was .72.

OCBs were measured with 20 items OCB scale reported by Moorman (1993). It comprised five factors of which three namely, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship were measured by four items, one factor that is, altruism was measured by three items, and the remaining factor viz. civic virtue was measured by five items. An example item of this measure was 'I help others who have heavy workloads'. The reliability index of this measure apropos its Cronbach's alpha value was .76.

CWBs were measured by adapting the 19-item scale developed by Bennet and Robinson (2000). Two factors of CWBs namely, interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance were measured by seven and 12 items, respectively. A sample item was 'There have been instances when employees of this organization have made fun of others at work'. The internal consistency reliability value of this measure was .86.

Control variables. For all subsequent analyses, respondents' age, work experience, sex (1 = male, 2 = female), managerial position (1 = junior, 2 = middle, and 3 = senior), and the sector to which their organization belonged (1 = manufacturing, 2 = services) were treated as control variables. The control variables were chosen as per earlier research similar to the present one (Xu et al., 2019).

Common Method Bias

For this study, a common latent variable model (CLVM) associated with the

manifest variables of the five study constructs was tested against the conceptual LVM proposed earlier (fig.I) to check for differences in model fit. The comparative-fit-index (CFI) and the incremental-fit-index (IFI) of the proposed model were .93 and .93, respectively whereas, the same indices were .61 and .61, respectively for the CLVM. As such, the CLVM was not accepted and this eliminated the risk of CMB in the proposed LVM.

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model was tested by scrutinizing its reliability and validity

as the main criteria of assessment (Ramayah et al., 2011). As per Table I, the composite reliability values ranged from .71 to .82 establishing construct reliability while the average variance extracted (AVE) values varied between .61 and .75 demonstrating convergent validity. Furthermore, the squares of the intercorrelations between the study variables were less than the AVE values which provided evidence of discriminant validity (Koufteros, 1999). Additionally, the heterotrait-monotrait method was also examined and as shown in Table I, these values spread from .54 to .76, thus providing further substantiation of discriminant validity.

Table I. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Variables	CR	1	2	3	4	5
1. EPOC	.76	.61				
2. POS	.80	.18(.54)	.72			
3. Organizational identification	.71	.29(.62)	.40(.68)	.64		
4.OCBs	.78	.05(.64)	.32(.63)	.40(.44)	.68	
5. CWBs	.82	.21(.66)	.26(.71)	.24(.76)	.14(.65)	.75

Note. n = 837; CR is ‘Composite Reliability’; The diagonal values of the matrix represent the average variance extracted while the off-diagonal values are the squares of the inter-correlations between the study variables; Off-diagonal values in parentheses are results of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) analysis; EPOC is ‘Employees’ perception of organizational culture’, ‘POS’ is ‘Perceived organizational support’; ‘OCBs’ is ‘Organizational citizenship behaviors’; ‘CWBs’ is ‘Counterproductive work behaviors’.

Table 2 Configural Invariance Tests

Grouping Variable	Unconstrained Model				Fully Constrained Model				
	χ^2	Df	χ^2	df	No. of Groups	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	p-value	Invariant
Sector	190623.5	4170	194688.1	8340	2	4064.6	4170	0.876	YES
Sex	190623.5	4170	194720.1	8413	2	4096.6	4243	0.945	YES
LoM	190623.5	4170	194801.6	8291	3	4178.1	4121	0.263	YES

Note. n = 837; LoM is ‘Level of management’.

Configural Invariance Tests

As per the results mentioned in Table 2, the measures used were found to be invariant between the various groups namely, sector, gender, and LoM and therefore, the results obtained were equally applicable to all groups considered in the present study.

Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations & Internal Reliabilities

Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviations, inter-correlations, and internal reliability indices of the key study

variables. As expected, EPOC and POS correlated positively and significantly with organizational identification ($r = .54, p \leq .01$; $r = .63, p \leq .05$, respectively). Further, organizational identification correlated significantly and positively with OCBs ($r = .63, p \leq .05$) and negatively with CWBs ($r = -.49, p \leq .01$). The diagonal values in parentheses represent the scale reliabilities as measured by Cronbach's alpha for each study variable.

EPOC and POS correlated positively and significantly with organizational identification.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics, Inter-correlations & Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Indices

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Sector	1.25	.44	1.00									
2. Sex	1.38	.49	-.21*	1.00								
3. LoM	2.38	.69	-.02	.17**	1.00							
4. Age	37.20	8.87	.04	-.15	-.07	1.00						
5. Work experience	11.07	8.30	.01	-.13	-.08*	.81	1.00					
6. EPOC	3.66	.73	-.04	-.05	-.07	.03	-.06*	(.73)				
7. POS	3.03	.58	.13*	-.08	-.14	.12*	.09*	.42**	(.81)			
8. Organizational Identification	3.84	.76	.08	-.06	.04	.05*	-.07	.54**	.63*	(.72)		
9. OCBs	3.44	.48	.04	.13**	.09	.05	-.02	.23*	.57**	.63*	(.76)	
10. CWBs	2.28	.41	-.02	.04	.12	-.06	-.07	-.46*	-.51*	-.49**	-.38**	(.86)

Note. $n = 837$; * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$; S.D. is Standard Deviation; Cronbach's Alpha reliability indices are reported in parentheses on the diagonal; Short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and text.

EPOC, POS, Organizational Identification & Interaction Analysis

In this section, the main and interaction effects of EPOC and POS on organizational identification have been tested.

For this purpose, three competing LVMs namely, LVM1, LVM2, and LVM3 designating absence of moderation, *full*-moderation, and *quasi*-moderation, respectively were cross-checked with the data being subjected to structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures with

maximum likelihood estimates. The standardized regression estimates of the accepted model that is, LVM3 establishing H1 and H2 are presented in Table 4, and the fit measures comparing the three LVMs in this section leading to the acceptance of H3 are presented in Table 5.

Table 4 Regression Analyses Results of LVM3

Values (→) Paths(↓)	Unstandardized coefficients				
	b	Standard error	Standardized estimates	C.R.†	Remarks
EPOC → Organizational Identification	.61	.07	.52	8.41	H1 accepted
POS → Organizational Identification	.65	.09	.56	6.51	H2 accepted
EPOC X POS → Organizational Identification	.27	.08	.21	11.14	H3 accepted

Note. *n* = 837; †C.R. is 'Critical Ratios', a recommended basis for testing the statistical significance of SEM components. C.R. ≤ ±1.96 indicates significance at the 95% level and C.R. ≤ ±2.58 indicates significance at the 99% level.

Table 5 Analysis of Moderator – Fit Indices

Values (→) Models (↓)	Fit Indices								
	Absolute Fit Indices				Comparative Fit Indices				
	Normed χ^2	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NFI	RFI	AIC	CAIC
LVM1 (no moderation)	4.56	.77	.11	.75	.75	.71	.68	NI ^À	NI ^À
LVM2 (full moderation)	3.16	.85	.08	.82	.82	.85	.81	956.06	1004.11
LVM3 (quasi moderation)	2.16	.97	.04	.95	.95	.97	.93	759.24	824.16

Note. *n* = 837; Abbreviations and acceptable values are as mentioned in the text; 'NI^À' is 'Not Included'.

Furthermore, to eliminate possible model misspecification, the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) (Akaike, 1974) and the Consistent Akaike Information Criteria (CAIC) (Bozdogan, 1987) were inspected for the LVMs with moderator analyses. As reported in Table 5, between LVM2 and LVM3, the latter was found to have lower AIC and CAIC val-

ues. Thus, possible errors accompanying model misspecification for LVM3 could be disregarded.

Organizational Identification, OCBs, CWBs & Mediator Analysis

To proceed, LVM3 from the previous analyses was further extended for

analyses to three new LVMs namely, LVM4, LVM5, and LVM6 which were competing LVMs and represented path models with the absence of mediation, full mediation, and *quasi*-mediation respectively by organizational identification. As per the results, the standardized regression estimates indicating the acceptance of H4 and H5 are presented in Table 5, and the fit measures comparing the three

LVMs in this section namely, LVM4, LVM5, and LVM6 are presented in Table 7. Similar to the previous analysis and as reported in Table 7, between LVM5 and LVM6, lower AIC and CAIC values were found for LVM6 and so, possible errors accompanying model misspecification for LVM6 were considered absent.

Table 6 Regression Analyses Results of LVM 6

Values (→)	Unstandardized coefficients				
Paths(↓)	b	Standard error	Standardized estimates	C.R.†	Remarks
Organizational identification → OCBs	.23	.05	.14	2.67	H5 accepted
Organizational identification → CWBs	-.38	.05	-.24	-4.17	H6 accepted

Note. $n = 837$; Abbreviations and acceptable values are as mentioned in Table IV above.

Table 7 Analysis of Mediation – Fit Indices

Values (→) Models (↓)	Fit Indices								
	Absolute Fit Indices			Comparative Fit Indices					
	Normed χ^2	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NFI	RFI	AIC	CAIC
LVM4 (no mediation)	6.68	.74	.10	.73	.73	.74	.71	NI ^Å	NI ^Å
LVM5 (full mediation)	3.55	.90	.07	.88	.88	.87	.85	1465.63	1502.14
LVM6 (quasi-mediation)	2.46	.96	.05	.95	.95	.93	.91	1047.23	1094.58

Note. $n = 837$; Abbreviations and acceptable values are as mentioned in the text; ‘NI^Å’ is ‘Not Included’.

Additional mediation analyses as per the procedures suggested by MacKinnon et al. (1995) were also conducted. Accordingly, organizational identification was considered as a *quasi*-mediator in the proposed LVM, and H6 of the present study was accepted. Finally, although the application of SEM proce-

dures established organizational identification as a *quasi*-mediator and precluded problems of correlated measurement errors, tests were conducted as per the z -prime method (MacKinnon et al., 2002) to discount the possibilities of Type-I error. Moreover, the ratios of the indirect effects on the total effects of all the

mediated paths were computed and expressed as 'percentage of mediation'. These results are presented in Table 8 below.

Theoretical Implications

The acceptance of H1 and H2 indicates a combination of the resource-based view and the social exchange theories that interact with the organizational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) in drawing employees together towards a common organizational entity. With the outcome being employees' organizational identification, the affirmation of H3 implies SIT as a theoretical outcome motivating employees to exhibit prosocial and restrict deviant behaviors as per their in-group status *vis-à-vis* their organization. Additionally, the corroboration of H4 posits that apropos the attachment theory (Lin, 2010) employees whose perceived values and beliefs match those of their organizations result in amplifying the organizations' ability to elicit favorable behaviors such as OCBs through augmented levels of positive attitudes like organizational identification. Further, the endorsement of the H5 indicates the implications of the social judgment theory (Michaelidaou & Dibb,

Table 8 Additional Analysis of Mediation

Values (→) Paths (↓)	Additional Mediation Tests	Percentage of Mediation Explained	Path Analyses	Results of the Additional Mediation Analyses		
	Sobel's Test Aorian's Test Goodman's Test		Whether regression estimate of (direct paths) (paths under mediated conditions) >(paths under mediated condition)?	Whether regression estimate of (direct paths) (paths under mediated conditions) >(paths under mediated condition)? is significant?		
EPOC→Organizational identification→OCBs	4.07**	4.05**	4.09**	20.03	Yes	Organizational identification is a <i>quasi</i> -mediator
EPOC→Organizational identification→CWBs	-5.72**	-5.70**	-5.74**	23.61	Yes	
POS→Organizational identification→OCBs	3.88**	3.85**	3.90**	22.33		
POS→Organizational identification→CWBs	-5.24**	-5.21**	-5.26**	26.08		
EPOC X POS→Organizational identification→OCBs	2.72**	2.68**	2.76**	29.28		
EPOC X POS à Organizational identification→CWBs	-3.08**	-3.06**	-3.11**	18.24		

Note. n = 837; **p ≤.01; Abbreviations are as mentioned in the text.

2008) which propounds that the more an individual identifies her/himself with an entity, the more will s/he value the object of such identification leading to ego involvement and preventing any detriment to such an entity. Finally, the corroboration of H6 along with the accepted LVM that is, exemplifies the mechanics of the expectation-confirmation theory (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009) where shared positive perceptions about an organization's intangible resources in terms of culture and support result in favorable expectations based on a merger of personal and the organizational identity which is confirmed through enhanced levels of OCBs and absence of CWBs.

Practical Implications

This study has implications for practicing managers. First, the findings indicating a significant link between EPOC and organizational identification denote that a key task of managers should be to constantly communicate the normative values of the organization to employees. Second, managers should support tasks and projects that require a collaborative approach possibly, cross-departmental ones. In doing so, they must encourage not only the sharing of information but also the diffusion of opinions, suggestions, and viewpoints from those involved in these tasks. Third, EPOC created and sustained through appropriate recruit-

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ment and socialization processes shall result in an escalation in employees' participation in management, especially about their OCBs over and above their routine tasks and responsibilities. Finally, managers may note that getting employees to identify with the organization such that the latter display prosocial behaviors and abstain from CWBs shall go a long way in establishing and maintaining discipline, curbing deviance, and reducing grievances without resorting to any punitive measures.

Limitations & Future Research

The present study should be appraised within the boundaries of certain limitations which also give rise to certain areas for future research. First, this study was carried out among Indian executives in managerial positions working in India. As such, it precludes cross-cultural and cross-national comparisons of the hypothesized links or the accepted LVM that is, LVM6. Being cross-sectional in design, the study findings may not be pertinent over time and further restricts causal claims *vis-à-vis* the hypothesized linkages among the study variables. Another constraint was the limited time available for data collection which prevented incorporating a larger number of organizations and respondents than those approached.

However, the above study limitations pave the way for possible future research. The LVM6 that has been considered here as the most suitable model insofar as addressing the present research objectives and concerns can be

extended to cross-national, cross-cultural, and/or cross-temporal examinations. It would also be interesting to note the observations of future researchers if this study is placed in the context of specific socio-economic employee cohorts such as telecommuters, contract workers, and/or those who work from home.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study probed into the shared influence of EPOC and POS on their OCBs and CWBs when mediated by their identification with their employing organization. Based on the outcomes, LVM6 was considered the most empirically valid model which fulfilled the study hypotheses and objective. Consequently, the theoretical and practical implications of the study results and findings were specified. Despite its limitations, the study concludes by suggesting certain areas for future research.

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