

Influence of strategic orientation on performance of selected hotels in Mombasa County.

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Abstract

The performance of hotel industry is considered to be one of the key drivers of the economy in both the developed and developing nations. The sector contributes to the economy through employment creation, wealth creation and innovation. However, a number of hotels fail to take off, and are closed within the first three years of their inception. One of the possible reasons for the failure is the nature of strategic orientation that a particular hotel adopts for its operations. This study aimed at determining the influence of strategic orientation on the performance of hotels. The study is anchored on firms' performance theory and resource based theory. The study adopted descriptive survey design that focuses on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives and cultural influences. The target populations were the eight classified beach hotels in Mombasa County and the sample size comprised of five respondents from each of the eight classified beach hotels in Mombasa County, Chief Executive Officer, an operation manager, relationship manager, information technology manager and a strategic manager. This study concluded that Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation have influence on the performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County. Entrepreneurial orientation ($r=0.874^{**}$, $P<0.05$) has the highest correlation coefficient with performance of beach hotels. Strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) have a positive and significant influence on the performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County ($r=0.948^{**}$, $p<0.05$). A linear regression model results showed that strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) explained 89.9% of the variations in performance of hotels ($R^2=0.899$). Multiple linear regressions confirmed a positive and significant association between strategic orientation and performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County. Entrepreneurial orientation has the greatest influence on the performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County while technology orientation has the least influence on the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. The study recommended that key leaders especially CEO's in beach hotels should focus more on the implementation of strategies that enhance entrepreneurial orientation. The study results indicated that the respondents agreed that the influence of entrepreneurship orientation on hotel performance was real. This study therefore recommends that the marketing officers give close attention to after-sales service as this has proved vital in enhancing the hotels' performance.

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I. Introduction.

The concept of firm's performance is core to businesses because the major objective of businesses is to make profits. Mutindi, (2018), state that one of the important questions in business has been why some firms succeed and why others fail and this has influenced a study on the drivers of firm's performance. Awino (2015) asserts that for an organization to be successful it has to record high returns and identify performance drivers from the top to the bottom of the organization. Njihia, (2013), highlight performance measurement as one of the tools which helps firms in monitoring performance, identifying the areas that need attention, enhancing motivation, improving communication and strengthening accountability. Hotel managers, like any other managers, can use the feedback on performance to make adjustments to policies and other modes of organizational operations. Fwaya (2016) views performance as a formula for the assessment of the functioning of an organization under certain parameters such as productivity, employee' morale and effectiveness. Performance management and improvement is at the heart of strategic management because a lot of strategic thinking is geared towards defining and measuring performance (Nzuve and Nyaega, 2016).

One of organization's most revered axioms is that to be successful, the organizational product must satisfy some need or desire in the marketplace. As a corollary to this axiom, organizations generally propose that

the marketing concept and customer-orientated behaviors should guide marketing mix decisions. Odhiambo (2018) identified various approaches to performance in an organization which includes strategic orientation. The word 'orientation' is defined by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as, 'the type of activity or subject that a person or organization seems most interested in and gives most attention to.' In the current marketplace, firms confront an intense operating environment where maintaining and improving sales, market share, and profitability are an ongoing challenge. In current rapidly globalizing world, companies use different techniques to achieve competitive advantage. New technologies, new products, innovation of new idea and new systems are emerging every time (Johnson & Sholes, 2002). The heart of the strategic management process is to achieve the performance outcomes that allow firms to be competitive over time (Habersham, 2003).

Lynch, Mason, Beresford and Found (2012) define firm or business orientation as the way in which an organization pursues its business. This orientation guides corporate strategy and can be described as the guiding philosophies of organizations. Business orientation, according to Zhou and Li (2009) influence the way resources are acquired, allocated and utilized to create competitive advantage. It may therefore be deduced that business orientation adopted by firms in deploying resources may be a source of competitive advantage. These resources however vary with the firm's life cycle stage. The business orientation that is dominant is often determined by the internal constraints and external environment within which a firm operates. A core part of the internal constraints is the life cycle stage of the firm, which is determined by its resources. Business orientation is said to evolve continuously as a firm faces different situations, including its life cycle. Zhou and Li (2009) noted that the effectiveness of business orientation varies with the environment of the firm. In addition Fredericks (2005) suggested that the performances of firms depend on how business orientation matches the resources of the firms. In other words, there has to be a fit of business orientation and organizational resources, which as earlier mentioned, indicate the life cycle of the firms.

Strategic orientation has not acquired a single universally accepted definition. As such, it has been defined in different ways by different entities. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009) orientation is the general or lasting direction of thought, inclination or interest. Avci, Madanoglu and Okumu's (2011) view strategic orientation as the manner in which a firm adapts to its external environment. This implies that strategic orientation refers to the order of responses an organization makes to its operational environment as it attempts to enhance its performance and gain competitive advantage. Strategic orientation can also be seen as an aspect of organizational culture and therefore has different impacts on different organizations. According to Grawe, Chen and Daugherty (2009) strategic orientation focuses resources to achieve the desired results. Balodi (2014) supports this understanding by stating that strategic orientation manifests in the firm's culture and serves as antecedents to organizational practices and decisions associated with resource allocation in pursuit of opportunities. Strategic orientation can also be viewed as principles that direct and influence the activities of an organization (Masa'deh, Gharaibeh, Tarhini&Obeidat, 2015). According to Nazdrol, Mamun and Breen (2017) strategic orientation is the tactical direction implemented by a firm to create the proper behaviours for the continuous superior performance of the business. Strategic orientation is one of the most important pillars with great implications for an organization's structure, activities, investments, relations with market and organizational performance (Valos&Bednall, 2010). Strategic orientation guides the direction that an organization takes so as to monitor its activities for better achievements (Gao, Zhou &Yim, 2007). This enables an organization to achieve its goals by taking risks, investing in innovation, becoming proactive and developing orientation for the future (Kumar, Boesso, Favotto&Menini, 2012).

Hotels around the world are classified based on different system of classifications. The star classifications system of Hotels is common in many countries. The higher the star rating of the Hotel indicates the higher luxury. Hotels in Kenya are classified in star - rating system that includes 5 - star the higher luxury, 4 -star Hotels, 3 - star Hotels, 2 -star Hotels and 1-star Hotels. The Kenya Economic Report (2013) reports that the hotel industry strives to attain and retain leadership amid the rest of industries operating in the country through continuous improvement of its internal and external processes and through alignment of its strategic decisions to those of the environment in which it operates. The National Tourism Strategy (2013) argues that the number of rooms a hotel has determined its performance. Kenya is rated as the second country with the greatest number of hotel rooms after South Africa, National Tourism Strategy (2013).

The decline in world tourism has grossly affected hotel sales and posed a threat to hotel operators because Kenyan hotels largely depend on the International Tourism Market (Oketch, 2010). Many hotels were closed and this caused staff to be laid off. There were also a low bed occupancy capacity of 10 - 20% and the situation was headed for worse if something was not done (Nzuve&Nyaega, 2011). Similarly, Kenyan hotels have become more complex to manage because of the demands of the dynamic business environment. Hotels were finding it difficult to meet the challenge of customer demands as well as complicated service technologies and production processes. Therefore the future direction of hotel industry is determined by management practices and how people working in that organization interact and collaborates with each other, with customers and other stakeholders.

Statement of the problem

Like most sectors of the Kenyan economy, the hotel industry has gone through turbulent times in the last two decades and this emanates from challenges within the tourism sector (MUTINDI, 2018). GATUKUYI, (2017) stated that the hotel industry in Kenya has been facing numerous challenges which have posed a threat to their existence. First, there was stiff competition with some tourists preferring other destinations such as South Africa, Tunisia and Morocco to Kenya.

This competition has resulted in some hotels experiencing liquidity problems resulting in some being placed under receivership. Second, the demand for hotel services is seasonal which makes facilities and staff to be underutilized during low seasons (WANJIKU&MBUGUA, 2018). For instance, a study by OKETCH (2010) showed that the decline in world tourism grossly affected hotel sales and posed a threat to hotel operators because Kenyan hotels largely depended on the International Tourism Market. NZUVE and NYAEGA (2011) asserted that many hotels were closed down which caused workers to be laid off. There was also a low bed occupancy capacity of 10 - 20% and the situation was headed for worse if something was not done.

Although hotel performance has been an area of high research (SHIKURI&CHEPKWONY, 2013; ONGORI, IRAVO& MUNENE, 2013) a number of gaps remain to be investigated. For instance MARANGA (2015) recommended a study on safety of guests in 3 - 5 star hotels.

This is an emerging area that has been neglected in research and has immense impact on operations and performance in the industry. WADONGO (2010) identified gaps in Non - financial strategic drivers and recommended studies on innovation, human resource management, and customer focus. ONGORI (2013) studied factors affecting performance of hotels and restaurants and established gaps exist in strategic plans, employee skills and knowledge and customer satisfaction. SHIKURI et al. (2013) found out shortage of competent manpower as a main challenge, a study on safety measures was done because it was a major contributor to drop in international visitor arrival, customer focus to reassure them of improved services, retrain staff to align their orientation to changes in the environment and redefine priorities through strategic planning.

A review of the existing literature showed that no much empirical work had been done to examine how strategic orientation influences performance in the case of the hotel industry in Kenya with many scholars focusing more on the financial institutions and the general SMEs, whose findings were not specific on industry. The gaps identified in previous studies are all important and that is why this study, therefore will select entrepreneurial, market, technological and innovation orientation in hotel industry because they are noted in the literature as more rigorous and comprehensive influence of hotel performance.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of strategic orientation on performance of hotel in Mombasa County.

II. Literature review

Firm Performance Theory was advanced by Lumpkin and Dess (1996) and posits that there is need for a strategic fit between a firm's strategic focus and a firm performance and which should lead to improved performance. Firm performance is an important construct in the field of strategic entrepreneurship. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argue that entrepreneurial activity or process may at times lead to favorable outcomes on one performance dimension and unfavorable outcomes on a different performance dimension. As such, in entrepreneurial orientation studies, it is important to recognize the multi-dimensional nature of the performance construct that combines financial and growth performance measures (WIKLUND,1999). Research has shown that combining financial and growth measures give a richer description of the actual performance of the firm, (FAIROZ, HIROBUMI& TANAKA, 2010; ZAINOL&AYADURAI, 2011). This theory remains internally focused and rather than being evaluated as an external strategic focus on sustainable development, it is evaluated on its financial benefit to the firm. Moreover, the theory can be applied at four different levels, these are; enterprise, corporate, business and functional strategies.

The RBV was a concept first recognized by Wernerfelt in 1984, and has even since developed into a strategic thought of growth (Cleland, 2009). Depending on this view, organizations develop their competitive advantage from their ability to gather and develop an appropriate blend of resources. Since gaining sustainable competitive benefits is attained by continuously working on exploiting or creating new resources, some management specialists advice that organizations' internal processes should work on creating resource bundles that would assist them in building a sustainable competitive advantage, whereby competitors would not be able to imitate the unique resource combination (Meding, 2009). The resource-based view of an organization gives an opportunity to diversify its income through identifying is applicable resources and with appropriate utilization of each. For many Firms, the degree of income diversification depends on the amount of resources available in the organization, how are the resources to be utilized, the percentage of, percentage of total income

being earned from self-financing and percentage of self-financing depending on the largest customer or on largest selling product or service, (Alymkulova, 2005).

Empirical review

In a study (Mwangi & Ngugi, 2014) that examined the influence of Entrepreneurial Orientation on growth of Micro and Small Enterprises in Kerugoya, Kenya. The study found that the dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation (innovativeness, risk taking, pro-activeness, and entrepreneurial managerial competence have a significant positive influence on growth of Micro and Small Enterprises. A study by Mahmood and Hanafi (2013) on “Market orientation and business performance among firms in Ghana” found out that entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on business performance of women-based firms in Malaysia. A study by Arbaugh, Cox and Camp (2009) on “Strategic Orientations and Their Effects on Firm Performance” using a sample of 1045 firms from 17 countries found out that the uni-dimensional entrepreneurial orientation significantly predicted firm profitability. Fatoki (2014) investigated the entrepreneurial orientation of micro enterprises in the retail sector in South Africa and the results revealed adeptness by micro enterprises at introducing new product lines and also at making changes to the product line, but weakness in research and development, pro-activeness and risk-taking.

III. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and the target population was eight classified beach hotels in Mombasa County whereas the sample size comprised of five respondents from each of the eight classified beach hotels in Mombasa County, Chief Executive Officer, an operation manager, relationship manager, information technology manager and a strategic manager. Data was only corrected ones and was analyzed using SPSS version 23 and presented through descriptive and inferential statistics.

Response rate

The study gathered a total of 36 responses out of a target population of 40 respondents. This represented 90% response rate which was considered excellent for analysis as stated by (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012) that response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, response rate of 60% is generally good while a response rate of above 70% is excellent.

Data Reliability Assessment

The researcher sought to assess the reliability of the data collected to measure the various variables in the study. The purpose of reliability assessment was to assess the internal consistency of the data collected by the research questionnaires. To measure this, Cronbach Alpha was computed to assess the reliability of the data collected. According to (George & Mallery, 2003), Cronbach Alpha value greater than 0.7 is regarded as satisfactory for reliability assessment.

Cronbach Alpha for Reliability Assessments

| Variables | Items | Cronbach Alpha Values |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Entrepreneurial orientation | 6 | 0.980 |
| Market orientation | 6 | 0.851 |
| Technology orientation | 6 | 0.856 |
| Customer orientation | 6 | 0.890 |
| Hotel Performance | 6 | 0.847 |

As shown in table above, Cronbach alpha values for strategic orientation were greater than 0.7. From these findings it can be concluded that the constructs measured had the adequate reliability for the subsequent stages of analysis since all the Cronbach Alpha values were greater than 0.7.

Respondents' characteristics

In the results, 16.7% of the respondents were CEO/General managers, 27.8% operation managers, 19.4% relationship managers, 22.2% IT Managers while 13.9% constituted strategic managers who responded in this study. Further it can be observed that an overwhelming majority of the managers were males (80.5%), while females only constituted (19.5%). This finding is in agreement with the finding of (Nzioka, 2013) who found that majority (92%) of managers were males while minority (8%) were females in hospitality industry. This was an indication that women are under-represented at the managerial level in the beach hotels in Mombasa County in Kenya. In addition, this study showed that the respondents (41.7%) were members of professional bodies such as institute of certified public accountant, institute of human resource management, marketing society of Kenya among others an indication that at least hotel managers are joining professional bodies. The results

further indicate that most respondents' highest Level of Education was bachelor degree accounted by 47.2%. Those with masters and Ph.D. accounted for 33.4%. The study also indicated that 19.4% of the respondents had other qualifications of diploma. This means that these beach hotel managers are highly and well educated.

Influence of Strategic Orientation on Hotel Performance

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of strategic orientation on performance of hotel in Mombasa County. Strategic orientation variables investigated in this study included entrepreneurship orientation, market orientation, technology orientation and customer orientation.

Table 2 Performance of hotels

| Performance of hotels | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| In light of the new knowledge, employees adopt themselves to change easily | 36 | 3.56 | .936 |
| In light of the new knowledge, employees do not resist to change | 36 | 3.58 | .674 |
| In light of the new knowledge, employees do not regret that we change the working approaches | 36 | 3.22 | .422 |
| In light of the new knowledge, employees have positive opinions about change | 36 | 4.06 | .232 |
| In light of the new knowledge, employees do not hesitate to implement changed ideas | 36 | 3.39 | .934 |
| In light of the new knowledge, employees accept revised routines and procedures easily concerning change | 36 | 2.67 | 1.219 |

The study results in Table 2 indicate that the respondents agreed that the influence of strategic orientation on hotels performance was as a result of various strategic orientation aspects. Aspect of the final output of improved sales in superior firm performance can be related to strategic orientation was rated by the respondents by a mean of 3.63 while aspect of being customer-oriented leads to obtaining a competitive advantage was rated by the respondents with a mean of 3.35. Further, the respondents stated that customer orientation is the degree to which the hotel obtains and uses information from customers as demonstrated by a mean of 3.79. Similarly, the respondents stated that the customer orientation is considered an important tool for achieving high performance in hotels as depicted by a mean of 3.95.

On the statement of being customer-oriented the respondents stated that being customer-oriented leads to obtaining a high performance as shown by a mean of 3.51 and finally the respondents stated that hotel management should understand that, tourists' needs, expectations and perceptions of services' benefits change over time as demonstrated with a mean of 3.59. This findings concurs with the sentiment of Maria and Martin, (2016) who stated that any strategic orientation is undertaken to bring a positive improvement or change in current practices, this study suggests that the success of any such effort is an important criterion for firm performance. This study proposes innovation success as a mediating variable between strategic orientation and firm performance. Using innovation success as a mediator can provide a clearer picture of this relationship.

Bivariate Correlation analysis

The study sought to establish the underlying relationships and the extent to which the independent variables influenced the dependent variables. Correlation analysis was used to accomplish this purpose. Correlation analysis is used to find the relationship between two or more sets of variables. It also tells the direction as well as how much relationship exist between these variables. In this study the Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation, which is also known as the product moment correlation coefficient, is one of the most popular methods used to measure the relationship between two variables. Table 3 is a correlation matrix that gives the correlation.

Influence of strategic orientation on performance of selected hotels in Mombasa County.

| | | Hotel Performance |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Hotel Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | |
| | N | 36 |
| Entrepreneurial Orientation | Pearson Correlation | .874** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 36 |
| Marketing Orientation | Pearson Correlation | .670** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 36 |
| Technology Orientation | Pearson Correlation | .416* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 |
| | N | 36 |
| Customer Orientation | Pearson Correlation | .714** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 36 |

The correlation matrix Table 4.8 indicates that hotel’s performance has a positive and significant relationship each of the four elements of strategic orientation. Specifically, Entrepreneurial orientation ($r=.874^{**}$, $P<.05$), Marketing orientation ($r= .670^{**}$, $p<.05$), Technology orientation ($r=.416^{**}$, $P<.05$) and Customer orientation ($r= .714^{**}$, $P<.05$).

Regression Analysis

The purpose of this study will be to determine the influence of strategic orientation on performance of hotel in Mombasa County. Strategic orientation comprised of Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation.

Table 4 Model Summary

| Model | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .948 ^a | .899 | .886 | .17420 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), CO, TO, EO, MO

As shown in Table 4, strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) has a positive and significant influence on the performance of hotel in Mombasa County ($r=0.948^{**}$, $p<.05$). Hence undertaking the operations when orientation is strategically managed has positive effects on the performance of the organizations (hotel). These findings were subjected to further analysis where a linear regression model was used to determine the influence of strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) and results showed that strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) explains 89.9% of the variations in performance of hotels ($R^2=0.899$). Thus the unexplained variation (coefficient of non-determination; $1-R^2$) is 10.1%.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA^a)

Using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) as shown in table 5, the F- test indicated that the explanatory variable (X_1-X_4) representing the strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) was valid ($F_{(4, 31)}=68.713$, $p < .05$) meaning that the explanatory variables strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) is a good predictor of variations in performance in the performance of hotels in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Table 5 Analysis of variance (ANOVA^a)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Regression | 8.341 | 4 | 2.085 | 68.713 | .000 ^b |
| Residual | .941 | 31 | .030 | | |
| Total | 9.282 | 35 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), CO, TO, EO, MO

Coefficient of determination

The value of the constant shows that the hotel performance will always exist at a certain minimum ($\beta_0 = 0.099, p = .602$). The entrepreneurial orientation was found to influence the performance of the hotels positively and significantly ($\beta_1 = 0.381, p < .05$) meaning that as the hotels improves their entrepreneurial orientation their performance will improve as well by 38.1%. This means that entrepreneurial orientation positively and significantly influences the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. The marketing orientation was also found to influence the performance of the hotels positively and significantly ($\beta_1 = 0.229, p < .05$) meaning that as the hotels improves their marketing orientation their performance will improve as well 22.9%. This means that marketing orientation positively and significantly influences the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. The technology orientation was found to influence the performance of the hotels positively and significantly ($\beta_1 = 0.128, p < .05$) meaning that as the hotels improves their technology orientation their performance will improve as well by 12.8%. This means that technology orientation positively and significantly influences the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. The customer orientation was found to influence the performance of the hotels positively and significantly ($\beta_1 = 0.294, p < .05$) meaning that as the hotels improves their customer orientation their performance will improve as well by 29.4%. This means that entrepreneurial orientation positively and significantly influences the performance of hotels in Mombasa County.

Table 6 Multiple Regression Analysis Coefficient

| Model | Unstandardized | | Standardized | | t | Sig. |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std Error | Beta | Coefficient | | |
| 1 (Constant) | .099 | .187 | | | .528 | .602 |
| Entrepreneurial | .381 | .067 | .456 | | 5.650 | .000 |
| Marketing | .229 | .052 | .426 | | 4.407 | .000 |
| Technology | .128 | .059 | .142 | | 2.165 | .038 |
| Customer | .294 | .133 | .262 | | 2.206 | .035 |

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

IV. Conclusion

Strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) have a positive and significant influence on the performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County ($r=0.948^{**}, p<.05$). A linear regression model results showed that strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) explained 89.9% of the variations in performance of hotels ($R^2=0.899$). Multiple linear regression confirmed a positive and significant association between strategic orientation (Entrepreneurial orientation, Marketing orientation, Technology orientation and Customer orientation) and performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County. Entrepreneurial orientation has the greatest influence on the performance of beach hotels in Mombasa County while technology orientation has the least influence on the performance of hotels in Mombasa County.

V. Recommendations

The study recommends that key leaders especially CEO’s in beach hotels should focus more on the implementation of strategies that enhance entrepreneurial orientation as well as managers of information technology effectively put in place a good network to ensure stable and reliable technology standards. Moreover, the hotel management in particular marketing manager to ensure that the hotel as a whole understand that, tourists’ needs, expectations and perceptions of services’ benefits change over time and therefore should appreciate the theory.

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