

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN TVET FOR SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE IN KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

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Abstract

This study examined "corporate social responsibility (CSR) and entrepreneurship development in Technical Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) for sustainable workforce in knowledge-based economy". Two specific purposes and two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted in two public tertiary institutions in Enugu state 'UNN and ESUT'. The population of the study comprises of 246 lecturers and students in the faculty of vocational technical education. No sample was taken since the population was of a manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire was face-validated by three experts in VTE. The reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which yielded grand mean of .85%. Data collection was carried out by the researcher and three research assistants. Mean and standard were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that (1) CSR has significant positive effect on employment generation, and (2) there is a significant positive relationship between CSR and capacity development. The study concluded that CSR is a veritable tool for achieving entrepreneurship development which is profitable for a country's growth and development. The study recommended that (1) government should encourage entrepreneurship by creating a business-friendly environment, and promoting ease of doing business, and (2) management of organizations should constantly comply with their CSR obligations to ensure vocational institutions are strongly supported to further equip more people with knowledge and skills that will impact positively on the economy of the country.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship Development, TVET, Sustainable Workforce, Knowledge-based Economy

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is about business organizations going beyond legal obligations and their own interests to address and manage the impact their activities have on society and environment. It is the social performance of business organizations towards their business environment. In other words, it means giving back to the society. Globally, business organizations have contributed significantly in solving existing social problems in different areas including education through corporate social responsibility. Historically, CSR is known to have originated from the United States of America (USA) and is now adopted and practiced all over the world (Matten & Moon, 2018). As a result of the widespread

and different meanings attributed to CSR by managements of organizations, the subject of CSR has become a topical issue; the discussion on the concept of CSR is bordered majorly on its impact on organizational stakeholders. According to Seto-Pamies and Papaoikonomou (2020), the management and political view of the concept of CSR is significant in solving sustainability issues. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2016) defined Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as the steady organizational commitment to act morally and contribute to the development of the economy, while equally developing, building, and improving the quality of life of employees, host community, and the entire

society. CSR is also viewed as an organization's (profit and non-profit) impact on the society, stakeholders, and natural environment (Riano & Yakovleva, 2019).

Generally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an open practice in business which depends on legal compliance, ethical values, and co-existence with the environment, people and the host community. Geoffrey (2011) averred that apart from gaining profits, organizations should bear the responsibility of their actions on the environment and the people. According to Riano and Yakovleva (2019), in an organization, CSR is comprised of four types of social responsibilities such as legal, ethical, economic, and philanthropic. CSR entails that organizations are tasked with the onus of carrying out economic activities which include the production of goods and services required to meet the needs of consumers/customers while also striving to make profit (Riano & Yakovleva, 2019). In addition, CSR ensures the organization is legally bound to follow government rules and regulations, while acting in accordance with societal norms, and seeking avenues to better the organization's stakeholders (Riano & Yakovleva, 2019).

The importance of CSR cannot be overemphasized. CSR activities help organizations adapt to volatile business environments; enhance corporate governance, build concrete networks for businesses, encourage coalitions and partnerships, and builds mutual relationship between the organizations and their stakeholders (Hansen, Dunford, Boss, Boss & Angermeier, 2011). According to Sharma, Sharma and Devi (2019), there is a significant positive correlation between CSR and a firm's management and financial performance; this is because CSR encourages employee retention, improves firm's reputation, increases consumer value, increases brand loyalty, builds managerial knowledge and experience, and reduces employee turnover. Globally, developed countries in North America, Europe and Asia have relied upon the policy reports of the World Bank and Organization for Economic Development (OECD) to master the numerous gains of CSR especially as the world transits into a knowledge-based economy. For example, in the United States,

CSR adoption and implementation by both large and small firms have helped in the entrepreneurship building and development which has resulted to the subsequent increase in the intellectual property market whose worth is valued at \$6.6 trillion, and has contributed to one third of the countries' GDPs (OECD, 2021).

Developing countries in Asia and Latin America are not left out in the pursuit of establishing a knowledge-based economy by developing entrepreneurship via CSR efforts by different organizations. Various organizations in the aforementioned regions are developing strategic and intentional moves towards attaining the full benefits of CSR geared towards entrepreneurship development so as to actualize a knowledge-based economy towards improving the viability of their region (Tchamyou 2017; Dahlman 2017). In Africa, there are pockets of CSR activities geared towards entrepreneurship development howbeit in a smaller scale, hence, the decrease in the total knowledge-based economy index in Africa, particularly in Nigeria (Anyanwu 2012).

Entrepreneurship development is thus referred to as the process of improving the knowledge and skills of individuals via organized capacity building programs. One of the objectives of entrepreneurship development is to increase the number of knowledgeable and skilled individuals in entrepreneurship (Seilan, 2013). Which also hastens the creation of new enterprises which are capable of growing a sustainable workforce and promoting a rewarding knowledge-based economy (Seilan, 2013). According to Career Star Group (2023), many countries are witnessing mass exodus of experts; while about 40% of organizational workers are at the verge of discontinuing their jobs in the nearest future. Hence, it behooves on the management of organizations to ensure workforce sustainability by fully complying with CSR provisions so as to attain a workforce that is happy, effective, efficient, engaged, skillful, innovative, creative, and rewarded so as to meet the growth objectives of the country.

Generally, several researchers have shown that there are correlations between CSR

implementation and entrepreneurship development, skill acquisition, and technical training (Green Business Bureau, 2022; Oforegbunam, 2013; OECD, 2021). However, the role of TVET in entrepreneurship development with the CSR provisions for sustainable workforce in a knowledge-based economy seems under-reported. It is therefore against this backdrop that the study sought to determine the effect of corporate social responsibility on entrepreneurship development in TVET for sustainable workforce in knowledge-based economy.

Statement of the Problem

Corporate Social Responsibility of business firms is a management idea that has gained popularity throughout the global business community. A closer look at the activities of CSR in developed countries shows significant development in all sectors of their economy. In Enugu State, Nigeria, challenges facing entrepreneurship development in TVET abounds. The situation is worrisome because many vocational technical education graduates roam the streets after graduation due to lack of requisite skills to gain employment or start up a business of their own. (Ogwumike and Iheonu, 2021). As a result, many of them are now drug addicts while others are highly engaged in cultism and gangsterism (Alumona and Amusan, 2019).

These challenges unfortunately affect the quality of vocational and technical education graduates. Although there are evidences of CSR programme in many places in Enugu State Nigeria, but compared to the level of businesses these firms operate in the State, their CSR programme is expected to be above construction of toilets and provision of writing materials. Hence, there should be genuine effort to attract and motivate businesses and companies located in Enugu State and doing business (for the State government) to invest a sizeable portion of their corporate social responsibility budget in vocational and technical education sector of the State. Strategic planning and implementation of these CSR programmes should contribute to quality teaching and learning, positive attitudes of the students, impartation of skills, and overall wellbeing of both teachers and students. The resultant effect of not fully optimizing the

corporate social responsibility for vocational and technical education development could adversely affect the quality of the graduates in the State. The researchers are quite intrigued about this matter hence the need for the present study.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to ascertain how corporate social responsibility (CSR) influences entrepreneurship development in TVET for sustainable workforce in knowledge-based economy. Specifically, the study seeks to find out:

1. The extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State.
2. How corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State?
2. How can corporate social responsibility (CSR) help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis guided the study:

1. There is no significance difference between the mean responses of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on the extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State.
2. There is no significance difference between the mean responses of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

There are several definitions of CSR which have been given by different authors. However, there is no clear and generally acceptable definition of the

concept (Hopkins, 2014). According to Zu and Song (2018), defining the CSR concept has been difficult because many companies are now involved in its practice and have successfully integrated it in all of its business operations. Nonetheless, there are simplified definitions of CSR by some authors. Bowen (1953) gave the earliest definition of CSR, as “obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society”. Falkenberg and Brunsæl (2017) opines that CSR means foregoing profits in order to meet social interest.

Thus, CSR encompasses several organizational behaviors which include: ethical consideration, environmentally friendliness, respect for host community, employee relations, shareholders' relations, among others. CSR also involves sponsoring and supporting institutions and organizations in a bid to advocate for positive change in the society. In the words of Hopkins (2014), CSR entails treating organizational stakeholders reasonably and ethically. Koestoer (2017) sees CSR as ways in which organizations collectively tackle sundry social issues in their business operations. Nazlieva (2021) also views CSR as an organization's responsibility to meet societal needs by observing legal, economical, and ethical obligations at a given time. Kim, (2021) refers to CSR as the act of carrying out businesses in a manner that guarantee profitability, promoting ethical values, following laws, and supporting the environment. Mahlouji and Anaraki (2019) submit that CSR are organizational actions backed by law that are geared towards promoting societal good. Ismail (2021) avers that organization's responsibility is not to the shareholders alone but to all the organization's stakeholders.

Components of CSR:

According to Maç, and Çalış, (2021), there are two basic components of CSR, these include: the implicit CSR and explicit CSR. The implicit CSR encompasses the role of the organization within corporate and non-corporate institutions in order to meet the interest of the society. Implicit CSR is made up of norms, rules, values necessary for organizations

to relate with issues that border on stakeholders. On the other hand, explicit CSR is referred to as organizational policies that advocate and advance responsibility that meets societal interests. Generally, explicit CSR involves organizational strategies and activities that inculcates business and social values in order to tackle issues that appear to be a part of the organization's social responsibility. Example of explicit CSR include: responding to pressures from stakeholders; partnership with other organizations including government and non-governmental organizations. The activities of organizations that practice implicit CSR are mostly not described; while organizations that practice explicit CSR describe their activities and policies to their stakeholders using their custom CSR language (Maç, & Çalış, 2021).

Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Development

There are several definitions of entrepreneurship based on their features, motivations, attributes, and contributions in the society. The foremost definition of entrepreneurship is attributed to Schumpeter, who opines that there five ways of demonstrating innovation, which include: “new products, new production processes, new markets, new inputs, and re-organization of an industry” (African Development Report, 2011). In line with the above assertion, Badal (2016) avers that entrepreneurship is a concept that represents modern industrialists' innovation. According to Porter and Kramer (2016), entrepreneurship is defined as the process that creates a unique and valuable product (goods or service) by utilizing adequate resources and minimizing risk by increasing its importance. In the words of Soyibo (2016), entrepreneurship is the process of spotting opportunities geared towards satisfying stakeholders' needs, product transformation, and value creation. Similarly, Aruwa (2014) opines that entrepreneurship is the act that puts together all the production factors in order to create products (goods or services) by accepting business risks.

In addition, entrepreneurship is seen as a process of building businesses in a country by creating an enabling environment that supports entrepreneurs,

capable of meeting socio-economic goals of the country (Tijani-Alawiye, 2014). Entrepreneurship development therefore is known to be the process of improving knowledge and skills of entrepreneurship by attending training that have been consciously organized (African Development Report, 2018). The main aim of entrepreneurship development is to increase the number of business owners, creatives, and entrepreneurs in order to fast track the rate at which new ventures are established. According to Seilan (2013), entrepreneurship development is an important factor that leads to growth and economic development in capitalistic economies. In addition, entrepreneurship development is important in: capital formation by summing people's investments and savings; providing jobs thereby increasing people's purchasing power; promoting balanced development within the regions in the country; and helping to minimize economic power concentration.

The Nexus between CSR and Entrepreneurship Development

Corporate social responsibilities give organizations the legal right to act when governmental actors fail to safeguard citizens' rights. Thus, organizations are expected to take part in the protection, facilitation and enabling of citizens' rights which is mainly the responsibility of governments. Matten and Crane (2015) aver that one of an organization's social responsibility is to administer citizen's rights by providing social citizen's rights such as access to education, health care, and welfare services; enabling civil rights such as freedom from abuses and rights to own property and exercise freedom of speech and engage in free markets; and channeling political rights of participating in societal matters through rights to vote, hold office, and participate in collective and public institutions.

Research has shown that there are significant benefits of carrying out CSR activities geared towards skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. Studies carried out by Porter and Kramer (2016) show that organizations and the society can mutually benefit through a concept of shared value when organizations generate competitive advantage such as enhanced

reputation with communities, suppliers, and interest groups and creation of business opportunities through CSR activities and tackling social problems. Laszlo and Zhexembayeva (2016) opine that organization that produce stakeholder value by investing in institutes who train people to acquire various skills can generate competitive advantage through the process of "embedded sustainability". According to Falkenberg and Brunsæl (2017), when organizations engage in CSR activities and produce economic advantage, this could prompt competitors to engage in similar CSR activities, thus, making CSR activities no longer a competitive advantage but rather a strategic necessity.

Investing in capacity development programmes via CSR activities is important in creating a sustainable workforce when people have been equipped with various vocational skills and training. Entrepreneurship development is significant as it helps people to be more effective and efficient in setting up business entities that would improve the economy of the country. One of the significances of investing in capacity development programmes as part of an organization's CSR activities is that it helps develop entrepreneurial skill of the people by training them on various skills and competences, thereby closing up the skill gap, and ensuring a sustainable workforce (CareerStarGroup, 2023).

Theoretical Framework Social Practice Theory

The Social Practice Theory (SPT) focuses on social and collective organizational practices which give room for more detailed perspective on behavior change processes and the factors driving it. According to social practice theorists, the major focus of analysis should be the organization and not individuals (Giddens, 1984). In addition, SPT avers that individuals are capable of understanding their immediate environment and capable of developing self-consciousness by relating with others and carrying out social activities (Warde, 2005).

However, it implies that individuals are involved with other activities at one point in time rather than being passive carriers of practice. One of the significances of the SPT is that it has overtime exposed

key components that undermine social development efforts. Jüttner (2017) carried out a study to exemplify the impact of SPT application to issues relating to traffic pollution in urban area of Netherland. Findings revealed that by applying SPT, factors that lead to harmful behaviours that persist overtime can be brought to light. Additionally, altering the socio-cultural practice of carrying out interventions that are practice-based is able to achieve both environmental and structural social change. This implies that, in order to attain a more sustainable practice, it is important to eradicate completely unwholesome practices linked to the sustainable practice.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in two public tertiary institutions in Enugu state namely; University of

Nigeria Nsukka and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The population of the study is 246 respondents which comprises of 42 lecturers and 204 students from the faculty of vocational technical education in the two tertiary institutions. The entire population was taken as the sample size since the population was of a manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a 17-item structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire was face-validated by three experts in the faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Cronbach alpha method was used to test the internal consistency of the items given a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Data collection was carried out by the researchers with the help of three research assistants. Mean and standard were used to analyze the data. Items with mean value of 3.5 and above were regarded as agreed while items with mean items below 3.5 were regarded as rejected.

Results

Data for answering research questions 1 to 2 were presented in table 1 to 2

Table 1: To what extent do business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State?

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Companies in my area often donate charities to the poor and less privileged	3.63	1.16	Agreed
2	Companies in my area often organize sanitation exercise to clean up the community	4.67	0.47	Agreed
3	Companies in my area often organize and award scholarships for indigent students to study in secondary schools and universities.	3.82	0.99	Agreed
4	Companies in my area often organize medical outreach for the aged, the sick, pregnant women and other members of my community	4.03	1.13	Agreed
5	Companies in my area often create a quota system where a percentage number of indigent community members are employed as staff of the company.	3.97	1.06	Agreed
6	Companies in my area often organize, support or sponsor cultural festivals, sports events and other recreational activities in my community.	4.17	1.08	Agreed
7	Companies in my area often grant soft loans to indigent members of my community for business start-ups or to support businesses.	3.90	0.86	Agreed
8	Companies in my area often engage in offsetting negative environmental impact by planting trees, funding research or donating to related causes.	4.04	1.09	Agreed
9	Companies in my area often engage in reducing harmful practices such as decreasing pollution, greenhouse gas emission and general waste.	4.52	0.54	Agreed
10	Companies in my area often engage in the construction roads, provision of pipe borne water, community health center and other basic amenities to my community.	4.46	0.50	Agreed

\bar{X} = Mean SD =Standard Deviation

Data in Table 1 reveal that all the 10 items have their mean values ranging from 3.90 to 4.67. This shows that the mean value of each item was above the cut-off point of 3.50, indicating that the items were agreed by the respondents as what extent business enterprises

engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State. The SD ranged from 0.47 - 1.16 which showed that the respondents are not too far from each other in their responses.

Table 2: How can corporate social responsibility (CSR) help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce?

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
11	Companies through CRS can grant soft loans to graduates who are willing to startup businesses within the community	3.55	1.19	Agreed
12	Companies through CRS can train and retrain youths and graduates in vocational skills within the community	4.68	0.47	Agreed
13	Companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education with funds or materials resources.	3.82	0.99	Agreed
14	Companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education with provision of machines, tools and equipment.	4.03	1.13	Agreed
15	Companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education by allowing students to engage in SIWES programme within their factories.	3.97	1.06	Agreed
16	Companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education by providing classrooms, workshops, laboratories, laptops and other learning materials.	4.17	1.08	Agreed
17	Companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education by engaging or organizing the training and retraining of teachers.	3.95	0.86	Agreed

 \bar{X} = Mean SD =Standard Deviation

Data in Table 2 reveal that all the 7 items have their mean values ranging from 3.55 to 4.68. This showed that the mean values of each item was above the cut-off point of 3.50, indicating that all the items were agreed upon as how corporate social

responsibility (CSR) helps to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce. The SD ranged from 0.47 - 1.19 which showed that the respondents are not too far from each other in their responses.

Hypothesis

Table 3: T-test analysis of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on the extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State.

S/N	Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
1.	Lecturers	46	3.81	0.49	50	0.43	1.12	Not Significant
2.	Students	6	3.41	0.80				

Key: N= No of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, SD= standard, Df = degree of freedom, t-cal = calculated value, t-tab = tabulated value, ns = not significant.

Table 3, shows that the t-calculated value is 0.43 which is lower than the tabulated value, therefore, there was no significant difference between the mean responses of the two categories of respondents on the extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State. So the null hypothesis in the

mean scores of the two groups was not rejected. Thus the hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean responses of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on the extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State was accepted.

Table 4: t-test analysis of building construction personnel and lecturers of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce.

S/N	Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
1.	Lecturers	46	3.71	0.3	50	0.62	2.01	Not Significant
2.	Students	6	3.42	0.86				

Key: N= No of respondents, \bar{X} = mean, SD= standard deviation, df = degree of freedom, t-cal = calculated value, t-tab = tabulated value, ns = not significant.

Table 4 revealed that the t-calculated value is 0.62 which is lower than the table value 2.01. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of the groups of respondents on how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean scores of the groups of respondents was not rejected. Thus the hypothesis that there is no significance difference between the mean responses of students and lecturers of vocational and technical education on how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce was not rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of this study revealed the extent to which business enterprises engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Enugu State. Some of them include: that companies in Enugu State often donate charities to the poor and less privileged; companies in Enugu State often organize sanitation exercise to clean up the community and that companies in Enugu State often organize and award scholarships for indigent students to study in secondary schools and universities. This is in line with the findings of Aruwa (2014) who stated that companies who engage in CRS helps to increase employability, helps build life skills and most importantly improves youth development in the community. Youth development is what basically pulls a country out of unemployment and poverty. In a broader sense, quality education is not cheap, therefore, it is vital to explore the involvement of many or multiple stakeholders to undertake, sponsor or assist in some of the huge expense involved especially education technology projects. Dahlman, (2017) also

supports the findings by stating that corporate social responsibility creates an operational mechanism whereby organizational activities are carried out by responding positively to societal priorities and expectations with the commitment to meet the ethical standard of the society.

The finding also disclosed how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can help to promote entrepreneurship development of TVET for sustainable workforce. Some of them include; that companies through CRS can grant soft loans to graduates who are willing to startup businesses within the community, companies through CRS can train and retrain youths and graduates in vocational skills within the community and that companies through CRS can support vocational and technical education with funds or materials resources. Warde, (2015) supported this by stating that social responsibilities of a company are the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations formed by society. Companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives, while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. Tchamyu, (2017) also supports this study by stating that entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility exists to analyze the common needs, economic and social issues to create the solution for the society needs and also to improving the quality of society. The CRS should help entrepreneurs with both economic and social issues, but primarily to acquire financial independence by investing and creating values for stakeholders.

Conclusion

The study was to ascertain how corporate social responsibility (CSR) influences entrepreneurship development in TVET for sustainable

workforce in knowledge-based economy. Corporate social responsibility policies are a tool for competitive advantage rather than to acquire one public good. Often companies adopt various methods according to their concern for the environment and society. CSR activities are important in enhancing skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. CSR provides capacity development programmes for organizational stakeholders particularly vocational and technical education graduates. CSR activities also increases their creativity and innovative capacity, thereby making them effective and efficient in setting up their own businesses. Consequently, this leads to the increase in the number of businesses in Enugu State and by extension increases the economic growth of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Government at all levels should indulge in activities that ensure sustainable development by providing business-friendly environment to promote entrepreneurship, which hopefully will impact positively on the country's economy. Equally, management of organizations as part of their CSR activities must provide supports to technical vocational education and training institutes so as to develop the spirit of entrepreneurship. Enterprises should provide the necessary funding to launch the social organization and at the same time the necessary tool for solving social problems. This will help to ensure a sustainable workforce, since the world now tilts towards a knowledge-based economy.

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