

Employees Voice and Silence on Leadership and Organizational Culture as Mediation Variables

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ABSTRACT

This research study delves into the dynamics of employee behavior in relation to leadership and organizational culture, focusing on the roles of voice and silence as mediating variables. The study aims to understand how employees' perceptions of leadership and the prevailing organizational culture influence their decisions to speak up (voice) or withhold their opinions (silence). By investigating the mediating effects of voice and silence, the study seeks to provide insights into the intricate interplay between leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and employee communication behavior. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to capture a comprehensive view of the subject matter. Through a survey administered to a diverse sample of employees across various industries, data will be collected regarding their perceptions of leadership styles, organizational culture dimensions, and their tendencies to engage in vocal behaviors or remain silent. Concurrently, qualitative interviews with selected participants will delve deeper into the underlying motivations, barriers, and contextual nuances shaping employees' decisions to voice their opinions or remain silent. The study hypothesizes that both leadership styles and organizational culture significantly impact employees' likelihood to engage in voice or silence behaviors. Furthermore, it posits that employees' perceptions of leadership and organizational culture act as mediating factors in this relationship. By employing advanced statistical analyses and thematic coding techniques, the study aims to validate these hypotheses and uncover potential mechanisms through which leadership and culture jointly influence employee communication behavior. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the complex relationship between leadership, organizational culture, and employee communication behaviors. The study's outcomes could offer practical implications for organizational leaders and managers, helping them comprehend the importance of fostering an inclusive culture that encourages employee voice and reduces the prevalence of silence. Ultimately, the research strives to enrich the understanding of the dynamics that shape employee engagement, communication, and participation within their respective organizations.

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Introduction

The work or organizational environment that has an increasing level of complexity and uncertainty can make employees' desire to convey the voice they have stifled or inhibited. The voice that employees have can take the form of conveying ideas or suggestions for the organization. Organizations encourage employees to be able to speak up and convey the information they have so that it will help the organization get

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information that may not have been known so far, where this information can help the organization increase their effectiveness and can promote remedial changes (Chang and Choi, 2014).

Sounds issued by humans are one of the main medias for communicating with fellow humans in addition to other communication media such as signs and writing. The sound produced by everyone is basically unique, that is, typical for each individual, although sometimes a person can imitate the voices of other people, relatively close to the same, although not identical. The distinctiveness of people's voices lies in the loudness or weakness of the voice when people speak in normal circumstances, the way of pronouncing words, intonation, rhythm of speech, accent, etc. With this situation, voice can be used as a differentiator, namely if people have known someone for a long time and know their voice by heart, even if their eyes are closed or communicating from a distance, that person will be able to know who they are talking to.

Expressing opinions or speaking up is something that is difficult to do and many individuals still choose not to do it. If an employee knows about a piece of information or sees something important, then tries to convey it, but the employee chooses to refrain from thinking about a bad situation that might occur in the future when he chooses to share the information he has. The employee does not want bad things to happen to him when he conveys the information he has so he chooses to anticipate the bad things by choosing to be silent. Such a situation is experienced by employees and is one of the reasons why it is difficult for employees to express their voice or opinion. When an employee knows important information or issues for the organization, he will choose to first observe the existing situation and try to remember what role he has in the organization to be able to determine the possibilities that occur when he discloses the important information or issues he has.

No individual, group or organization can survive without sharing information between its members, because only in this way can organizational members convey information and ideas (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Barriers to communication often cause employees' performance to decline (Gani, 2014), are counterproductive, and make employees feel like they are not members of the organization (Sirota & Klein, 2014).

Conveying ideas through employee voices is a form of upward communication, because the targets of the voice are people who can make decisions in the organization (Morrison, 2011). Employee voice is an important part of internal communication in organizations and is a topic of concern for more in-depth study (Constantin & Baias, 2015). According to Burke (2013), employee voice is relevant at all levels in the organization, from the highest hierarchical level to employees at the lowest level.

The positive impact of employee voice contributes to the effectiveness and survival of the business (Detert & Burris, 2007) as well as to the employees themselves. This shows that the performance of organizations and employees actually depends on employees' willingness to speak, share ideas, suggestions and concerns when functions in the organization are not running as they should.

When the employee tries to withhold the information, he has or chooses not to convey the information, he can withhold information that may be considered valuable and should be known by his manager or superior, which can also be detrimental to the organization. One impact that can also occur if employees choose not to speak up is that employees choose not to share the knowledge they have about certain methods or ways that can help improve organizational performance. In an organizational situation like this, employee voice is used to describe the implementation of employees in work or organization to speak out or express their voice about the organizational situation in which they are located (Marchington, 2009).

Research conducted by Kish-Gephart et al., (2009) quoted Dutton's (2001) statement which stated that when an issue is raised, it requires openness from the leadership and a willingness from the leadership to listen. Research has shown that no matter how open a leader is, many employees are still more likely to remain silent than to share initiatives or suggest new ideas at work. Leaders try to get input from employees by improving the quality of communication relationships up and down according to the existing hierarchy. The majority of leaders fail to encourage employees to speak up because employees have two reasons, namely fear of the consequences that will be faced after expressing their opinions (Lebel, 2016) and fear when expressing their opinions ends in vain without any changes occurring (Burris, 2012). This is in line with the research of Milliken et al., (2003) and Wolfe et al., (2012) which states that employees will choose not to speak up even if the issues they have are important because employees feel insecure about themselves in the future when they choose to speak out and have feelings if the issues conveyed will be in vain. Fear of consequences can take the form of embarrassment, isolation from the environment, giving low work ratings, losing promotions, being fired, and so on (Lebel, 2016). When employees choose to remain silent, this actually has the effect of damaging organizational culture. This is stated in the research of Wolfe et al., (2012) that employees who choose to be silent will have an impact on the organization, namely the lack of diversity of information obtained by the organization, the lack of providing critical analysis of available ideas and alternatives, the lack of criticism from employees, employees feeling worthless, employees are considered to have less control and lack of sharing of knowledge that employees have.

Although employee voices are important, not all employees participate by voting. Locke and Anderson found (in Burke, 2013) that in various industries 30% to 40% of employees still choose to remain silent rather than provide information to the company. Research by Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin (2003) found that 85% of professional employees and managers knowingly know that they have failed to disclose important and crucial matters that should be of concern to the company. Detert, Burris, & Harisson (2010) found that 42% of employees in various organizations retain information when they feel they did not get something or lost something when they conveyed it.

Organizational work culture is also influenced by the leadership. Leadership is a crucial and much needed component in an organization. In practice, leaders take an important role as decision makers. This is certainly not easy. Some leaders lead well and in a friendly manner, but others can sometimes be harsh and authoritarian. Sinek Simon

in his book *Leaders Eat Last* states that leaders are the first to face danger, take risks and set themselves aside for others (Simon 2014). Based on the findings from these various studies, this has aroused the curiosity of researchers to conduct studies related to voiced and silent employees at BKPSDMD Kab. Siak against organizations that destroy culture.

Theoretical support

Employee voice theory and Employee silence

Employees often have ideas, information and opinions aimed at improving and optimizing their own work and that of the organization (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) say that when an employee expresses an opinion regarding problems that occur in the work environment, such as suggestions to other people (co-workers) and the organization, takes a communicative approach in looking at the problems that occur and voices information related to work, then the employee can be said to have done voice behavior (Nikolau, Maria & Demitris, 2008).

Voice behavior is conceptualized as a part of extra-role behavior (Van Dyne et al., 1995). At the end of the 1990s, research conducted no longer saw voice behavior only as an expression of dissatisfaction, but also as an important part of extra-role behavior (Morisson, 2014). Extra-role behavior is behavior that, with freedom of choice, has the potential to benefit other people or the organization, and exceeds one role beyond expectations (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). This means that this behavior is not contained in the job description in a company and is a personal initiative of the individual. The research also states that voice behavior has a contribution that can make the company's performance more effective. Apart from that, voice behavior is the willingness of employees to provide their ideas and thoughts related to work processes and is something that needs to be learned by work teams in the organization. Voice is also informal communication or in other words, employees are free to communicate ideas, suggestions, concerns, information regarding problems within the company or in relationships with co-workers to people who have the authority to make decisions with the aim of bringing about better change. (Morisson, 2014; Detert & Burris, 2007).

In this study, researchers did not use a definition that links voice behavior to obstructive behavior such as whistle blowing or disclosure of company scandals (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), the act of differentiating principles from the organization (Graham in Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), and complaining behavior, where it reflects an expression of dissatisfaction and does not always include suggestions for change (Kowalski, 1996). In addition, it also does not use similar terms that help explain voice behavior, such as issue selling. Issue selling is an effort made by an employee to get superiors to pay attention to a particular problem or issue that is currently occurring. Issue selling can also be said to be "seditious" behavior by employees. This behavior not only requires voice behavior but also the employee building a coalition, looking for allies and preparing an official presentation regarding the problem. This helps explain an employee's motivation in carrying out voice behavior (Miceli & Near in Morisson, 2014; Dutton et al., 2002).

When discussing voice, it will always be related to silent. As a form of behavior, voice and silent appear as two opposite poles. When compared briefly, silence is behavior that "deliberately" withholds information, while voice is behavior that says and reveals information. But employees who don't do voice behavior are not necessarily silent. This is because someone who doesn't voice it could be because they don't have ideas, concepts

or other things that can be voiced. Silent also does not mean that an employee experiences a "lack of speech". However, silence is employee behavior that does not express the actual situation or information they have about the state of their organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

The definition that will be used in this research is voice behavior as part of extra role behavior that voices ideas, thoughts, information or suggestions regarding problems in the work environment which are expressed to other people who have the authority to make decisions with the aim of improving the individual or company rather than just criticizing.

Leadership

Leadership literally comes from the word lead. The word lead implies directing, fostering or managing, guiding and also showing or influencing. Leaders have a responsibility both physically and spiritually for the success of the work activities of those they lead, so becoming a leader is not easy and not everyone will have the same ability in carrying out their leadership.

According to Wahjosumidjo (2005: 17) leadership is translated into terms of traits, personal behavior, influence on other people, patterns, interactions, cooperative relationships between roles, position of one administrative position, and persuasiveness, and perceptions of others. about the legitimacy of influence. Miftah Thoha (2010: 9) leadership is an activity to influence the behavior of other people, or the art of influencing human behavior, both individuals and groups.

Leadership is a very important factor in an organization because most of the success and failure of an organization is determined by the leadership in the organization. According to C. Turney (1992) in Martinis Yamin and Maisah (2010: 74) defines leadership as a group of processes carried out by someone in managing and inspiring a number of jobs to achieve organizational goals through the application of management techniques. George R. Terry (Miftah Thoha, 2010: 5) means that leadership is an activity to influence people so that they are directed towards achieving organizational goals. Leadership includes the process of influencing in determining organizational goals, motivating the behavior of followers to achieve goals, influencing to improve the group and its culture.

A. Dale Timple (2000: 58) defines leadership as a process of social influence in which managers seek voluntary participation from subordinates in an effort to achieve organizational goals. With leadership carried out by a leader also describes the direction and goals to be achieved from an organization. So that it can be said that leadership is very influential for the big name of the organization. According to Sudarwan Danim (2004: 56) leadership is every act carried out by individuals or groups to coordinate and give direction to individuals or groups who are members of a certain organization to achieve predetermined goals.

Martinis Yamin and Maisah (2010: 74) leadership is a process of influence carried out by someone in managing group members to achieve organizational goals. Leadership is a form of strategy or theory of leadership which is of course carried out by the people we usually refer to as leaders. A leader is someone with leadership authority directing his subordinates to do part of his work in achieving goals.

Organizational culture

Schein (2010) defines organizational power as a set of norms, values, basic assumptions and beliefs built by group members to overcome adaptation and integration problems that influence employee behavior in organizations with more profound cultural values.

Supporting Schein's definition, Denison et al. (2012) define organizational culture as the underlying values, protocols, beliefs, and assumptions that are deeply rooted in the organizational structure. organizations organized by organizational members who demonstrate and strengthen these basic principles (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Denison and Mishra (1995) categorized Organizational Culture into four characteristics: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. In addition, the Characteristics of Organizational Culture according to Denison have been further classified into smaller indices to make the results appropriate to reflect the organization's need for strength and flexibility (Denison et al., 2014).

Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki (2014) define organizational culture as a form of assumption that is held, accepted implicitly by a group and determines how the group feels, thinks and reacts to its diverse environment. This definition highlights three important characteristics of organizational culture. First, organizational culture is given to new employees through a socialization process. Both organizational cultures influence our behavior at work and organizational culture applies at two different levels. Each level varies in terms of its outward outlook and ability to withstand change.

Research Framework

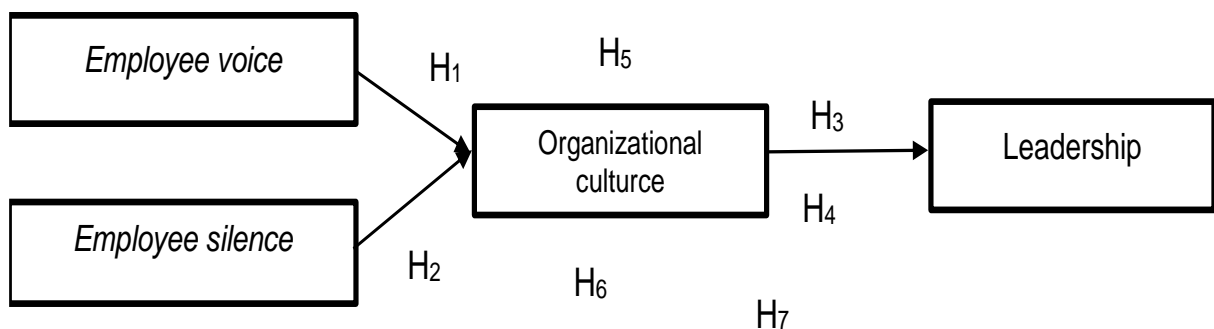


Figure 1. Research Framework.

Research method

Quantitative Method

The research carried out is a type of quantitative research with a causality research design. According to Anwar Sanusi (2016), causality research design is a research design designed to examine the possibility of cause and effect between variables. The causality research design is considered appropriate for this research because causality research is used to understand which variables influence (independent variables) and which variables are the result (dependent variables), as well as to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables in this research.

Results

Analisis SEM-PLS

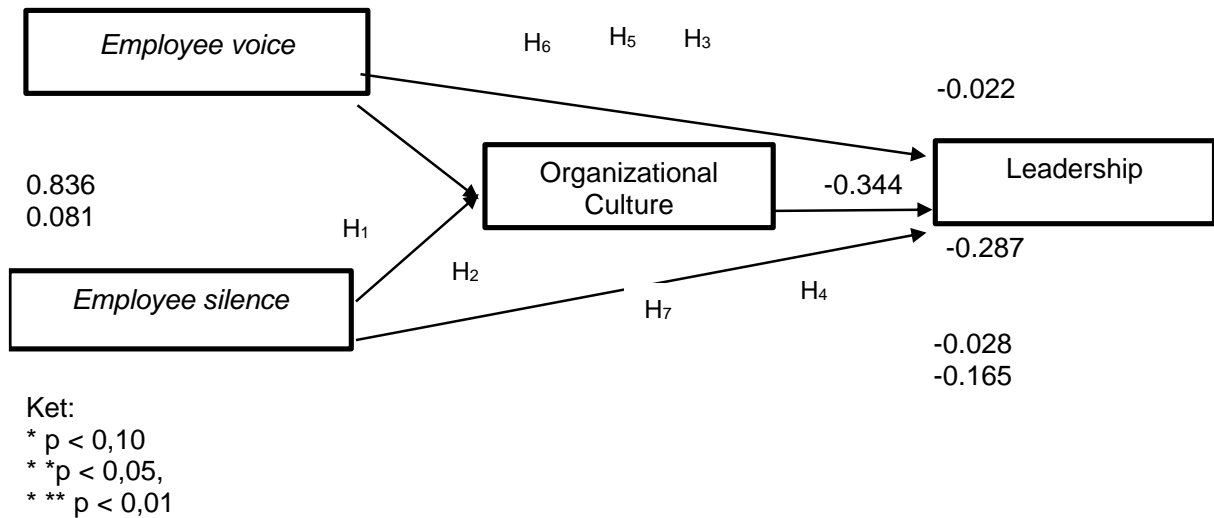


Figure 2. Path Chart.

Significance Test Results

Table 1. Significance Test Results

Relationship between variables		Path Coefficient	
Eksogen	Endogen	Coeff.	P-value
Employee Voice	Leadership	0.836	<0.001
Employee Silent	Interpersonal Communication	0.081	0.145
Employee Voice	Organizational Culture	-0.022	0.388
Employee Silent	Organizational Culture	-0.165	0.015
Leadership	Organizational Culture	-0.344	<0.001
Employee Voice → Leadership → Organizational Culture		-0.287	0.306
Employee Silent → Leadership → Organizational Culture		-0.028	<0.001

Notes. Data Olahan, 2023

Structural model testing results After evaluating the measurement model, this research then evaluated the structural model. As mentioned in the previous chapter, evaluation of the structural model aims to test all the hypotheses that have been proposed. Furthermore, Table 4.11, Figure 4.5 reveal the path coefficient values produced by SEM-PLS analysis of the research model proposed in this study. The first hypothesis (H1) predicts that Employee Voive has a positive effect on Leadership. The results in table 4.11 This table shows that Employee Voice directly has a positive and significant effect on leadership with a statistical value ($\beta = 0.836, p < 0.001$).

The second hypothesis (H2) predicts that employee silence has a positive and significant effect on leadership. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show that this hypothesis Employee silence does not influence leadership. This result is supported statistically ($\beta = 0.081, p = 0.145$). The table shows that the Employee silent variable has no significant effect on Leadership.

The third hypothesis (H3) predicts that Employee Voice has a positive and significant effect on Organizational Culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.022$, $p = 0.388$). The table shows that the Employee Voice variable is negative and has no effect on Organizational Culture.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) predicts that Employee Silent has a positive and significant effect on Organizational Culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.165$, $p = 0.015$). The table shows that the Employee Silent variable is negative and yet has a significant effect on Organizational Culture.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) predicts that leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.344$, $p < 0.001$). The table shows that the Leadership variable is negative and yet has a significant effect on Organizational Culture.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) predicts that leadership is positive and significant in mediating the effect of Employee Voice on Organizational Culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.287$, $p = 0.306$). The table shows that the leadership variable is negative and has no significant effect on organizational culture.

The sixth hypothesis (H7) predicts that leadership is positive and significant in mediating the effect of Employee Silent on Organizational Culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.028$, $p < 0.001$). The table shows that the leadership variable is negative and significant to organizational culture.

Discussions

Voice behavior is conceptualized as a part of extra-role behavior (Van Dyne et al., 1995). At the end of the 1990s, research conducted no longer saw voice behavior only as an expression of dissatisfaction, but also as an important part of extra-role behavior (Morisson, 2014). Extra-role behavior is behavior that, with freedom of choice, has the potential to benefit other people or the organization, and exceeds one role beyond expectations (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). This means that this behavior is not contained in the job description in a company and is a personal initiative of the individual. The research also states that voice behavior has a contribution that can make the company's performance more effective. Apart from that, voice behavior is the willingness of employees to provide their ideas and thoughts related to work processes and is something that needs to be learned by work teams in the organization. Voice is also informal communication or in other words, employees are free to communicate ideas, suggestions, concerns, information regarding problems within the company or in relationships with co-workers to people who have the authority to make decisions with the aim of bringing about better change. (Morisson, 2014; Detert & Burris, 2007).

When discussing voice, it will always be related to silent. As a form of behavior, voice and silent appear as two opposite poles. When compared briefly, silence is behavior that "deliberately" withholds information, while voice is behavior that says and reveals information. But employees who don't do voice behavior are not necessarily silent. This is because someone who doesn't voice it could be because they don't have ideas, concepts or other things that can be voiced. Silent also does not mean that an employee experiences a "lack of speech". However, silence is employee behavior that does not express the actual situation or information they have about the state of their organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

Theoretically, of course, this research will add to the richness of literature in the field of management studies, especially those that discuss the relationship between subordinates and leaders. In other words, the results of this research will increase the knowledge of academics regarding the relationship between research variables such as employee voice, employee silence, leadership and organizational culture. Like research conducted by Joseph and Shety 2022 which found that silence and voice in an organization have an impact on organizational culture. Leaders violate organizational integrity by undermining goals, results, assets, and the well-being of coworkers. Thus, the results of this research found that there is an influence of employee voice on leadership and an influence of leadership on organizational culture. The silent attitude of employees is of course also determined by the leadership in the organization.

Apart from having theoretical implications, this research also has several practical (managerial) contributions or implications. The findings of this research provide useful insight for organizations to design strategies in an effort to improve good leadership because it influences subordinate behavior, especially the attitude of powerful employees and the attitude of silent employees.

Apart from that, through this research it can also be explained that leadership plays an important role in mediating between organizational culture and the silence of employee voices. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the organization to take the necessary steps in determining the direction of leadership.

In other words, every organization must move towards having an open cultural environment. Opening the culture increases collaborative work in strategic decision making, operations and results. This leads to continuous experimentation and learning rather than blame.

Employee voice and silence depend on the leader's motives and behavior. At the same time, it depends on the type of culture the organization has. Silence is slowly becoming a culture in our society, and this could be dangerous because it will lead to destructive leadership which is contrary to transformational leadership which is considered a leadership attitude that motivates subordinates. Organizations must deliberate to create a culture of voice rather than silence.

Conclusion

This research provides a valuable contribution to management studies, in understanding organizational behavior, especially the relationship between leaders and employees. Based on the results of this study, of the seven hypotheses proposed, four hypotheses were accepted and three hypotheses were rejected with the following explanations.

The first hypothesis (H1) shows that Employee Voice has a direct positive and significant effect on leadership with statistical figures ($\beta = 0.836$, $p < 0.001$). This means the hypothesis is accepted.

The second hypothesis (H2) shows that this hypothesis Employee silence does not affect leadership. This result is supported statistically ($\beta = 0.081$, $p = 0.145$). The table shows that the Employee silent variable has no significant effect on leadership. This means the hypothesis is rejected.

The third hypothesis (H3) shows statistically ($\beta = -0.022$, $p = 0.388$). the Employee Voice variable is negative and has no effect on Organizational Culture. This means the hypothesis is rejected.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) shows statistically ($\beta = -0.165$, $p = 0.015$). The table shows that the Employee Silent variable is negative and yet has a significant effect on Organizational Culture. This means that the hypothesis is accepted.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) shows statistically ($\beta = -0.344$, $p < 0.001$). The table shows that the Leadership variable is negative and yet has a significant effect on Organizational Culture. This means that the hypothesis is accepted.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) shows statistically ($\beta = -0.287$, $p = 0.306$). The table shows that the leadership variable is negative and not significant to Organizational Culture, the hypothesis is rejected.

The sixth hypothesis (H7) predicts that leadership is positive and significant in mediating the effect of Employee Silent on Organizational Culture. The results in table 4.11 and figure 4.5 show statistically ($\beta = -0.028$, $p < 0.001$). The table shows that the leadership variable is negative and significant to organizational culture. Hypothesis accepted.

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