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The Moderating Role Of Compensation On The Relationship Between Work Ethic And Job Outcomes

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Abstract

Job outcomes are the results or consequences of the work completed by employees. This research positions that the better the work ethic and with a proportional strengthening of compensation, the job outcomes produced by employees are improved. Compensation acts as a moderator because it represents management's concern for employees, manifested through the provision of compensation, thus encouraging employees to put forth all their capabilities to achieve the desired job outcomes. The distribution of this research questionnaire was conducted among 171 employees of PT. XXX in Makassar City as the population and sample, with a response rate of 78.95%, resulting in 135 employees used as the data analysis unit. This study is explanatory research utilizing a partial least squares-based structural equation model (SEM-Pls4). The results of this research provide evidence that good work ethics and compensation provided to employees, even at a low level, can enhance job outcomes when compensation is strengthened.

Keywords: Compensation, job outcomes, work ethic

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization demands that companies attract and retain their employees by creating a strong work ethic, which leads to job outcomes that reflect their work behavior as a manifestation of their job descriptions and responsibilities. The job outcomes produced by employees play a crucial role in advancing the company; the higher the employee job outcomes, the more sustainable the company grows and develops (Aromega et al., 2019).

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Job outcomes are the achievements of employees from one or several work activities and are influenced by two constraints: internal constraints, which are related to personality and other personal traits (such as work ethic and work discipline), and external constraints, which come from outside the employee (such as leadership and compensation) (Timpe, 1992; Sjahruddin & Anisyar et al., 2021). Referring to the theory of constraints mentioned above, this study posits that employee job outcomes are directly influenced by work ethic, with compensation acting as a moderating factor. Previous research has found empirical evidence that the level of employee job outcomes is influenced by organizational commitment, work ethic, leadership effectiveness, work motivation, organizational climate, career advancement, compensation, work skills, and training (Aromega et al., 2019; Yasdianto et al., 2020; Yuliantari & Ardana 2022; Siregar & Pasaribu 2022; Bilqis & Widodo, 2023; Kusuma et al., 2023; Muliati & Susiana, 2023; Annisa, 2024).

This statement explains that the better the work ethic and the support of compensation, the higher the employee job outcomes will be (Han et al., 2025). Work ethic can be described as the spirit of work that is manifested through a set of positive behaviors and foundations that include the motivations driving them, key characteristics, fundamental spirit, basic thoughts, code of ethics, moral code, code of conduct, attitudes, aspirations, beliefs, principles, and standards set by the organization. Work ethic is crucial for employees to develop and advance the organization they work for and to grow their careers (Darodjat, 2015; Hetrick & Jacobson, 2025).

Previous research has shown that work ethic, measured by diligence, loyalty, work productivity, effectiveness, endurance, adherence to regulations, and trustworthiness, has a significantly positive impact on job outcomes measured by work output quantity, work quality, efficiency in task execution, work discipline, and attention to detail (Bilqis & Widodo, 2022; Epelle et al., 2023). Similar results were confirmed by other researchers who analyzed work ethic using several indicators, such as hard work, discipline, honesty, responsibility, diligence in work, and perseverance. The results of this study proved that work ethic has a significantly positive impact on job outcomes characterized by task completion accuracy, adherence to work hours, attendance levels, and cooperation among employees (Kusuma et al., 2023).

Likewise, findings demonstrated that work ethic, measured using indicators like valuing time, resilience and persistence, desire for independence, and adaptability, also has a significantly positive impact on job outcomes (Ambarita et al., 2020; Saqib et al., 2022). Some findings from previous studies faced rebuttals from other researchers, as

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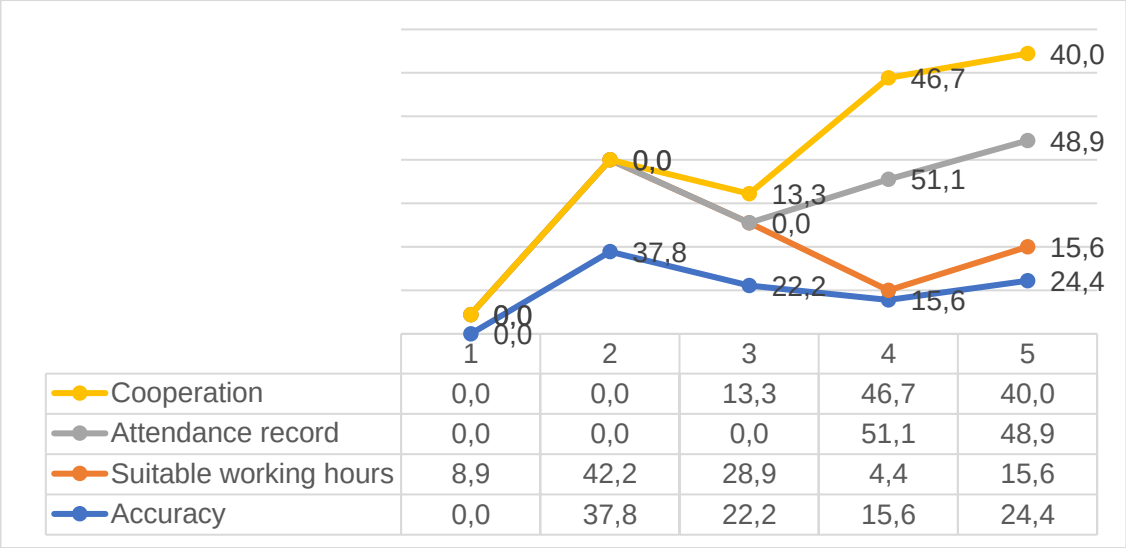
indicated in the study by Nurudeen et al., (2021); Yasdianto et al., (2020), which found that work ethic negatively but not significantly affected job outcomes. Similar results were also shown in the findings of Muliati & Susiana, (2023), which indicated that work ethic has a positive but not significantly impact on job outcomes.

Based on the research gap, there is enough reason to place compensation as a moderator in explaining the influence of work ethic on employee job outcomes. Compensation can act as a moderator in analyzing the relationship between work ethic and job outcomes, as providing appropriate compensation has been proven to strengthen the influence of work ethic on job outcomes (Annisa, 2024). Compensation is defined as a form of reward received by employees in financial terms (in the form of money/material) or non-financial terms (in the form of awards/promotions) either directly or indirectly for the obligations given by the company. The higher the compensation that employees receive, the higher the job outcomes they produce (Larasati, 2021). This statement aligns with research conducted by Siregar & Pasaribu (2022) and Mayastinasari (2023), which found that compensation measured by base pay, overtime pay, incentive bonuses, and allowances has a significant positive impact on job outcomes evaluated by work quality, work quantity, reliability, and attitude. Similar results were also proven in a study conducted by Yuliantari & Ardana (2022), which analyzed compensation using several indicators, namely salary and allowances. The results of this research prove that compensation significantly affects job outcomes, characterized by work performance, responsibility, honesty, collaboration, initiative, punctuality, mistakes in work, and work speed.

This study is a perceptual study of employees at PT XXX, which is one of the manufacturing companies in Makassar. Initial observations conducted by distributing a questionnaire to 45 employees (pre-research survey) showed that if employees' job outcomes are at a low level, it can be demonstrated as follows:

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	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperation	0,0	0,0	13,3	46,7	40,0
Attendance record	0,0	0,0	0,0	51,1	48,9
Suitable working hours	8,9	42,2	28,9	4,4	15,6
Accuracy	0,0	37,8	22,2	15,6	24,4

Figure 1: Employee perception on job outcomes indicators

Figure 1 shows that based on the job outcomes indicators for employees at PT. XXX, it appears that there are still indicators that, according to employee responses, are at a low level, particularly regarding work hour alignment, which serves as the reason for conducting this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Ethic

Ethos is an evaluative aspect that reflects a person's fundamental attitude towards themselves and the world, manifested in their life. A work ethic displayed with enthusiasm and passion for work is seen as positive and right, and it is then realized through a work behavior that believes every task can be completed well. Employees with a good work ethic are believed to be able to develop and advance the organization they work for and enhance their careers (Darodjat, 2015). The work ethic a person has is closely related to their personality, behavior, and character; each individual possesses an internal being that defines who they are. This internal being then sets the response or reaction to external demands. The response of the internal being to the external demands of the work world establishes a person's work ethic (Ginting, 2016; Benedicto & Caelian, 2021).

There are several characteristics associated with work ethic, which are: employees have a very positive assessment of the results achieved among their colleagues; viewing work ethic as a perspective in their work; perceiving work as a meaningful activity for

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themselves; experiencing work as a process; and seeing work as a form of worship. Based on several definitions that have been presented, work ethic can be concluded to be a concept about work or a work paradigm believed by an individual or a group as something good and right, which is then embodied through work behavior (Bataineh, 2020; Abang Ahmad, 2024).

The framework used to analyze work ethic, as seen in studies by Shaheen et al. (2022); Khatun & Salleh (2022); Kusuma et al. (2023) is indicated by several factors, namely; (1) hard work, which refers to activities carried out sincerely without regard for time, aimed at achieving a goal; (2) discipline, which is a condition created and formed through a series of behaviors that reflect values of obedience, compliance, loyalty, orderliness, and tidiness; (3) honesty, which is an attitude of having a clear heart, expressing the truth without lying or saying things that contradict what actually happened (facts); (4) responsibility, which is the willingness to adopt an attitude towards an action or task undertaken and the capacity to bear the risks of the actions taken; (5) diligence in work, which is an effort made continuously with enthusiasm, perseverance, agility, tenacity, high dedication, and broad entrepreneurial spirit in carrying out a task; and (6) persistence, which is the employee's ability to consistently work with enthusiasm accompanied by determination and seriousness.

Compensation

Compensation is defined as the remuneration obtained from the employer. It involves everything that employees receive as a reward for the efforts they have made for the company (Arep, 2013). A similar understanding is expressed by Rivai (2015), who states that compensation is what employees receive in exchange for their contributions to the company. Providing compensation is a key aspect of human resource management that relates to all types of individual rewards given in exchange for performing organizational tasks.

The purpose of offering compensation is not just to acquire and retain qualified human resources. The goals of effective compensation management (Mangkuprawira, 2011; Shahzad et al., 2024) include: (1) attracting qualified personnel; (2) retaining current employees; (3) ensuring fairness; (4) recognizing employee work behavior; controlling costs; (5) complying with applicable legal regulations; (6) enhancing administrative efficiency

There are several indicators in measuring compensation, as used by Mayastinasari (2023); Puspitasari & Dahlia (2020), which consist of: (1) basic salary, this

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is the amount of money paid by the company to employees as a fixed monthly income, excluding allowances, bonuses, or other income; (2) variable salary, which is a component of salary that can change depending on performance, achievements, or specific conditions, meaning it is not fixed and can vary from month to month; (3) indirect compensation, which is a reward program for employees as part of the company's benefits.

Job outcomes

Job outcomes are the results of an individual's efforts achieved through their abilities and actions in specific situations (Byars & Rue, 2011). Other experts explain that job outcomes are the results of work that an individual achieves while carrying out the tasks assigned to them, based on their skills, experience, dedication, and time (Hasibuan, 2017; Nurfaizi & Muafi, 2022; Sjahruddin et al., 2024). Based on several expert views, it can be concluded that job outcomes are a condition of work performance in an organization based on the emotional feelings of an employee, which is reflected in their attitude toward the aspects they face in the work environment, including healthy self-adjustment related to salary, physical and psychological conditions, as well as existing legal regulations (Shahzad et al., 2024).

There are several constructs used to analyze job outcomes (Siddque et al., 2022; Kusuma et al., 2023), namely: (1) task completion accuracy, which is the employee's ability to complete all tasks under their responsibility on time; (2) work hour compliance, which refers to the use and management of working hours as set by regulations, organizations through leadership, utilized by individuals to complete their work; (3) attendance level, signifying the intensity or frequency of employee presence at work; (4) cooperation among employees, which indicates employees' awareness that they cannot finish their tasks without help from coworkers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The distribution of the research questionnaire was conducted among 171 employees of PT. XXX in Makassar City as the population as well as the sample, with a response rate of 78.95%, resulting in 135 employees being used as the unit of data analysis. This study is explanatory research utilizing a partial least square-based structural equation model (SEM-Pls4).

RESULTS

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There are 135 employees used as data analysis units, and a description of the respondents' characteristics can be shown in the table below:

Table 1. Respondents

Description	Male		Female		< 1Th		> 3,1 Th		> 8 Th		Have married		Not married		Diploma		Bachelor	
Gender	89	65,9	46	34,1														
Job tenure					17	12,6	91	67,4	27	20,0								
Marital status											102	75,6	33	24,4				
Educational level															87	78,7	48	9,3

Table 1 explains that the majority of respondents are male, with a total of 89 employees (65.90%), while the remaining 34.10% are female. The male dominance is attributed to the fact that men tend to have a more competitive personality and a higher motivation to work. Additionally, men possess greater skills in job completion within manufacturing companies. Job tenure is dominated by employees who have worked for more than 3.1 years, totaling 91 employees. This indicates that these employees are believed to have sufficient knowledge and work capabilities, allowing them to complete all their tasks and responsibilities. There are more married employees compared to those who are single, with the number of married employees being 102. This situation suggests that employees are highly motivated at work because they have family responsibilities. The knowledge and skills of the employees are supported by their education level, which is mostly at the diploma level, accounting for 78.7%. Descriptive variables are used to provide explanations for the most important constructs of each variable analyzed, as shown below:

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Table 2. Variable description

Constructs	WH	Dis	Hon	Resp	Craf	Perse	WE	BS	VS	Ind.C	Comp	Aot	JoS	AtR	EmCo	JoCo
Work hard	3,3															
Discipline		3,7														
Honesty			3,9													
Responsibility				3,3												
Craft					3,6											
Perseverance						3,4										
Work ethic							3,5									
Basic salary								3,3								
Variable salary									3,5							
Ind.compen										3,8						
Compensation											3,5					
Accuracy of tasks												3,9				
Job suitability													3,3			
Attendance rate														3,2		
Emp. cooperation															3,6	
Job Outcomes																3,5

Respondents' answers regarding work ethic resulted in a score of 3.5, with the highest construct score for honesty (Honesty) at 3.9. For compensation, the score was also 3.5, with indirect compensation (Ind.compen) at 3.8 as the highest construct score. Job outcomes received a score of 3.5, with the accuracy of tasks (Accuracy of tasks) achieving the highest score of 3.9. Overall, the constructs analyzed show decent scores and point towards a good or high level. Measurement Model Test (Outer Model) The outer model testing is used for validity and reliability testing of the model employed. The purpose of the outer model is to assess how reliable and valid a research instrument is. Reflective indicators are considered to have high convergent validity if their correlation with the construct is ≥ 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Convergent validity

Constructs	Ethos	Compt	JOCO
Work hard	0,871		
Discipline	0,851		

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Honesty	0,791		
Perseverance	0,889		
Craft	0,908		
Responsibility	0,885		
Basic salary		0,845	
Variable salary		0,929	
Ind.compen		0,898	
Attendance rate			0,873
Emp. cooperation			0,918
Job suitability			0,750

Each indicator shows cross-loading values > 0.70, so all indicators are considered valid, even though one of them has a value < 0.70, specifically the job suitability indicator, which needs to be removed from the structural modeling. In addition to cross-loading testing, convergent validity testing is also performed to measure the level of association between constructs and latent variables, as seen from the standardized loading factor and AVE (Average Variance Extracted). Next, data is analyzed using the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) scores to determine if a variable can be considered valid if the AVE value > 0.5. The next step is the reliability test, which can be viewed in two ways: through the threshold values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Table 4. AVE

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Compt	0,870	0,921	0,795
Ethos	0,933	0,948	0,751
JOCO	0,805	0,886	0,722

Table 4 shows that in the reliability testing, which can be observed in two ways: through the threshold values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, it indicates that compensation, work ethic, and job outcomes yield values > 0.70, thus declared reliable. In terms of AVE, all variables have met the requirements, with scores above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2020), making them valid. Furthermore, the discriminant validity test of this

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research has indicated that each square root of AVE exceeds the correlation coefficients among other variables.

Table 5. Discriminant (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

FLc	Compt	Ethos	JOCO
Compt	0,973		
Ethos	0,867	0,891	
JOCO	0,850	0,899	0,943

Table 5 shows the discriminant validity values, proving that the square root values of each analyzed variable are higher compared to the square root values in the same column as well as the values in the adjacent column, thus indicating that the resulting FLc meets the testing criteria. Structural Model Testing (Inner Model) The structural model (inner model) is tested through R-Square; this testing on the structural model is conducted to determine R-Square as a goodness-of-fit test for the model (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). R-Square is used to see and evaluate the influence of exogenous variables on intervening and endogenous variables. The R-square value categories include 0.75 as strong, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak (Hair et al., 2019).

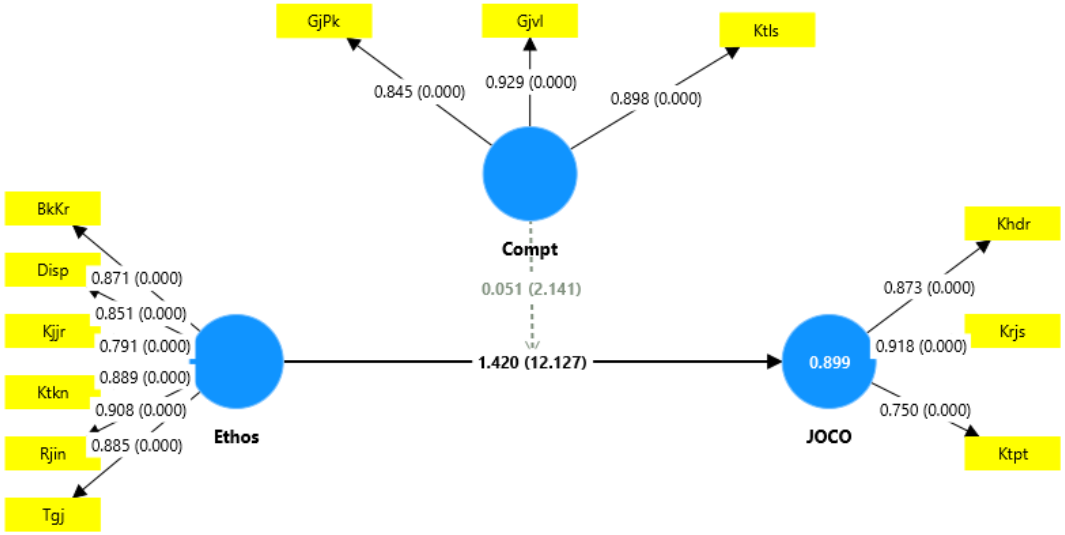


Figure 2. R-Square

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The test results show that the adjusted R-square value is 0.899, indicating that the contribution of work ethics and compensation to job outcomes is 89.9%, meaning that these two variables have a strong influence.

Work ethics on job outcomes

The computation based on the inner model reveals that work ethics has a significant positive effect on job outcomes. This is evident from the positive path coefficient of 1.420. The positive path coefficient indicates that the better of the work ethics, the higher the job outcomes produced by the employees. The t-statistic value of 12.515, supported by a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05, confirms that work ethics positively and significantly influences job outcomes. The better the implementation of work ethics demonstrated by employees, the higher the job outcomes they achieve. This study's findings support previous researchers' findings (Ambarita et al., 2020; Benedicto & Caelian, 2021; Bilqis & Widodo, 2022; Shaheen et al., 2022; Kusuma et al., 2023; Epelle et al., 2023; Abang Ahmad, 2024) that a good implementation of work ethics has been proven to significantly enhance the job outcomes produced by employees; the better the work ethic, the higher the employees' job outcomes (Khatun & Salleh, 2022; Saqib et al., 2022). When employees exhibit strong work ethics, it can improve job outcomes, as reflected in their dedication and commitment, enabling the job outcomes they produce to meet management’s expectations.

Compensation on job outcomes

Data analysis from hypothesis testing shows that compensation has a significant negative influence on job outcomes. This statement can be proven by the original sample value of -0.478. The negative original sample value indicates that the compensation received by employees is at a low level; however, despite being low, it has been proven to increase job outcomes, as evidenced by the t-statistic value of 4.094 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. This suggests that in practice, the low compensation received by employees does not hinder them from producing high job outcomes (Siddque et al., 2022). This study aligns with the findings of previous researchers (Dewi & Ardana, 2022; Siregar & Pasaribu, 2022; Mayastinasari, 2023), showing that compensation can indeed serve as a lever for improving employees' job outcomes. Compensation can enhance employees' job outcomes because employees view it as motivation provided by the company. Additionally, employees see that the company recognizes and rewards them as a

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reflection of their hard work, thus creating a balance between the effort put in and the results obtained.

The moderating effect role of compensation

Testing the moderating effect of compensation on the causality between work ethics and job outcomes can be proven through an original sample value of 0.051 with a t-statistic value of 2.168 > 1.96 and a p-value of 0.031 < 0.05. These statistical results indicate that good work ethics can indeed enhance the job outcomes produced by employees, and this effect is further amplified with effective compensation. This research supports Annisa's (2024) findings that compensation can moderate the effect of work ethics on job outcomes. Compensation acts as a moderator of the effects of work ethics on job outcomes because the compensation provided by the company to employees is a manifestation of the effective motivation that the company applies to recognize and reward employees for the job outcomes they produce and is one of the management's efforts to ensure the company's going concern (Nurfaizi & Muafi, 2022; Shahzad et al., 2024). The recognition and rewards given by management represent compensation, so with the enhancement of this aspect, the results from employees' hard work can experience an increase.

CONCLUSION

The better the work ethics, the higher the job outcomes produced by employees. In practice, work ethics significantly contribute to creating job outcomes. Good work ethics displayed by employees can enhance job outcomes, which is reflected in their dedication and commitment, ensuring that the job outcomes they produce meet management's expectations. Compensation for employees is considered low; however, this low level of compensation does not hinder employees from generating high job outcomes. Compensation can increase employees' job outcomes because they view it as motivation provided by the company. Additionally, employees see the recognition and rewards from the company as a reflection of their hard work, creating a balance between the effort they put in and the results they achieve. Good work ethics have been shown to improve employees' job outcomes, and this improvement increases with stronger compensation practices. Compensation can act as a moderator in the effect of work ethics on job outcomes because the compensation provided by the company is an expression of effective motivation used to recognize and reward employees for their job outcomes, and it's one of the management's efforts to ensure the company's ongoing viability.

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The recognition and appreciation given by management is a reflection of compensation, so strengthening this aspect means that the results of employees' hard work can lead to an improvement in job outcomes. The limitations of this study are shown by the use of respondents as the unit of analysis, which cannot fully generalize employee performance. In addition, the use of job outcome antecedents is only focused on work ethics and compensation, while analyzing job outcomes requires several other variables, such as work environment, perceived organizational support, competence, work engagement, and employees' productive behaviors. Therefore, this research recommends that future researchers use these variables as antecedents on job outcomes.

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