



ANTECEDENTS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A PERSPECTIVE REINFORCEMENT THEORY

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Abstract - *The power of praise in the workplace can move employees from apathy or resentment to happiness and productivity. Reinforcement such as positive reinforcement makes people feel appreciated and encouraged, which can be motivating and rewarding. In this research, the writer researches IEC Malaka Medan that locates at Jalan Malaka no 29/59 Medan. IEC (International Education Centre) was the well-known image in English Education Centre. In conducting the research, the writer uses a questionnaire containing ten questions, with each question having five answers to be chosen, distributed to 30 respondents. The questions are designed by using interval data which uses a Likert Scale rating. For analyzing the collected data, the writer will use statistical formulas, which are correlation formulas for test whether it is valid. Cronbach's Alpha for testing reliability, Pearson's product moment for correlation test, normality test to identify whether the data is normal, determination formula and linear regression for identifying relationship between variables and z-test for hypothesis test. In analyzing data, the writer used some methods such as the validity test, the reliability test, the statistical data, the normality test, the correlation test, the determination test, the linear regression test, and the hypothesis test. The percentage of reinforcement towards employees' performance is 49.7% and the remaining 50.3% is impacted by other factors. The coefficient correlation between variable x and variable y resulted in 0.705, which means that there is a relationship between reinforcement and employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan.*

Keywords: *Reinforcement, Employees Performance*

1. INTRODUCTION

The power of praise in the workplace can move employees from apathy or resentment to happiness and productivity. Positive reinforcement makes people feel appreciated and encouraged, which can be motivating and rewarding. Knowing the pluses and minuses can help implement an effective positive reinforcement program that maximizes productivity and contentment. Positive reinforcement at work occurs when a person is rewarded to encourage a behavior. In the workplace, positive reinforcement can occur in praise, awards and recognition,

bonuses, and promotions. The most common, the simplest form of positive reinforcement is commending someone for a job well done. For example, managers may dole out praise for completing a project on time, handling customers well, rising to the occasion when challenges come up, successfully leading a team on a project, or performing exceptionally well.

Reinforcement theory is an instrument used by managers to increase or decrease employees' behaviours. As performance and effectiveness are more emphasized nowadays, it is essential to understand and motivate staff. Positive reinforcement is the most effective way of motivating a team to perform better in organizations. Employees are encouraged to do better as they know that they will be rewarded when each desired behaviour is shown. The rewards can be intrinsic or extrinsic, or a combination of both. Rewards can be bonuses based on performance, additional benefits, verbal encouragement, and empowerment. Employees feel satisfied when their work is recognized, and their hard work is paid off. Punishment is another technique applied to reduce or remove specific behaviour. Those who are given penalties show better discipline. However, punishment is often not favoured as it may bring down some of them. Managers should be able to decide strategically which method to use when eliciting or removing a behaviour. A consequence-based technique is very effective in managing an individual or even a team of staff. According to Wiard (2012), to keep your employees engaged and have good performance, you must give them positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is designed to increase desirable behaviours, so in the workplace, positive reinforcement encourages better performances, increased productivity, and approving project results. As an English course in Medan, IEC (International Education Centre) was a well-known English Education Center image. They have a motto as "Get The Best Headstart on Education in Life." But as time goes by, there are so many English education centres in Medan. And IEC (International Education Centre) now is facing the effect of competition. Many of their customers move to another English course because they are not satisfied with IEC in educating their children. IEC cannot provide satisfactory customer services, and the quality of education is also declining, as shown in the table below:

Table 1
Total students from the year 2012-2015

Year	Students	Percentage
2012	576 students	-
2013	500 students	13%
2014	400 students	30.5%
2015	346 students	39.93%

Source: IEC Malaka Medan (2015)

The table above shows that in 2012 there 576 students who study at IEC Malaka Medan. In 2013, the number of students who study at IEC Malaka Medan was 500 students, and it is declining from 576 students in 2012 with the percentage of decline are 13%. In 2014, 400 students study at IEC Malaka Medan, and it is fewer than in 2013 with a percentage of



30.5%. In 2015, the students who study at IEC Malaka Medan were 346 students, which are declining from previous years with the rate of 39.93%. As time goes by, there are many English courses in Medan, and in order to face other English courses, IEC should increase the quality in educating students and service in the company. So, IEC can compete with other English courses.

To increase the quality of educating the students and service in the company, the company should pay more attention to all the employees. It's as easy as telling employees what they have done well when they accomplish a relevant task. Everyone likes to be told and praised when they do the job well, primarily if they have worked hard. So even if the whole study has not been done correctly, it's essential to look for the good things and remark them before deciding what has to be changed or considered next time.

This way, employees will work harder and be innovative trying to get the manager's approval, but it's praise. On the other hand, if the manager only approached when things didn't come out as expected, the employee would be more worried about not making mistakes rather than improving.

When the writer observes this company, the writer found that employees do not perform better, although the company gives bonuses for employees. The writer also works as a teacher in this company and do observation; the writer found that the manager never provide praises for all employees; even employees do the job well. But when employees make some mistakes, the manager will be angry and give punishment.

This problem happened to ADM staff. Whether they performed well when service customers give a clear explanation or handle customers' complaints patiently but never get any rewards or praises from the manager, all ADM staff will get punishment if there are complaints from the customer.

There is a case that happened to a teacher named Selly. She always performed better and gave her best to the company. For example, she always gives her extra time to students or parents who need more explanation, always smile and warmly welcome students, but at the moment, she made small mistakes because she gives wrong information about the holiday date to the customer. As a result, she got a tirade from the manager. The manager does not understand the case but invective the teacher. This situation makes all employees who worked in this company performed well only when managers are presented. The poor performance showed as poor standards of work, such as frequent mistakes, do not on time, do not discipline, many absences, not following a job through, unable to cope with instructions given. The consequence of the poor standard of work is the employee won't get any bonus if the employees keep doing it or for the next term in teaching, the employee won't get any class to teach, which means they are fired. Inability to cope with a reasonable volume of work to a satisfactory standard can lead to poor interpersonal skills, lack of commitment and drive, lack of apparent skill in tasks/method of work required.

Positive reinforcement is based on the fact that everyone enjoys being acknowledged when they work hard is paid off. It's a great tool to motivate employees, leading to better results in human resource management and, therefore, in business results. Based on the problem described above, the objective of the study is to know the impact of reinforcement on employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan

2. LITERATURE REVIEW



According to Watson (2012), reinforcement is A behavioural construct where control is achieved by manipulating the consequences of behaviour.

A business manager using reinforcement theory might employ rewards for desirable behaviour by staff and punishments for undesirable behaviour to help steer employees toward intended performance goals.

In a management context, reinforcements include salary increases, bonuses, promotions, variable incomes, flexible work hours, and paid sabbaticals. One particularly common positive reinforcement technique is the incentive program, a formal scheme used to promote or encourage specific actions, behaviours, or results from employees over a defined period.

Incentive programs can reduce turnover, boost morale and loyalty, improve wellness, increase retention, and drive daily performance among employees. Motivating staff will, in turn, help business outcomes and increase efficiency.

Managers are responsible for identifying what behaviours should be promoted and what should be discouraged and carefully considering organizational objectives.

Griffin (2010) Stated, Reinforcement is "The strength of a response may be measured with such as the intensity of emotion experience, the degree of physicality in the response or the alacrity with which the response is gained." The response frequency may be measured by the probability of the response, given a stimulus, and the number of times that the response is achieved. Timing is important in reinforcement. When reinforcement is applied immediately after a behaviour, then the causal connection is easier for the other person to identify and internalize. When there is a delay, that connection becomes increasingly difficult to make and hence the reinforcement becomes less effective or takes longer to effect the desired change.

Behaviourist Skinner (2012) derived the reinforcement theory, one of the oldest theories of motivation, to explain behaviour and why we do what we do. The theory may also be known as Behaviorism, or Operant Conditioning, which is still commonly taught in psychology today. The theory states that "an individual's behaviour is a function of its consequences.

Behaviourism evolved out of frustration with the reflective techniques of humanism and psychoanalysis. Some researchers were dissatisfied with the lack of directly observable phenomena that could be measured and experimented with. In their opinion, it would make the discipline of Psychology more "scientific" and on par with the core sciences. These researchers turned to explore only the behaviours that could be observed and measured and away from the mysterious workings of the mind. (Funder, 2010). The science of psychology often associated with the current era may be considered objectionable to those who follow Skinner's beliefs. Psychology has frequently been associated with the human mind and the evolution of cognitive awareness, causing Skinner to move in a different direction. By applying his thoughts on adjusting motivation through various stimuli, industries such as business, government, education, prisons, and mental institutions can gain a broader understanding of human behaviour. In understanding why any organism behaves the way it does, Skinner saw no place for dwelling on a person's intentions or goals. For him, it was outward behaviour and its environment that mattered. His most important contribution to psychological science was the concept of reinforcement, formalized in his principles of operant conditioning. This was in contrast to Ivan Pavlov's principles of classical conditioning, which along with J.B. Watson's extreme environmentalism, strongly influenced his thinking.

According to Skinner (2012) and Purwanto et al.(2021), Positive reinforcement is the addition of a reward following a desired behaviour to increase the likelihood the behaviour will occur again. Thus, when a positive outcome or reward occurs after an action, that particular



response will be reinforced."

Reinforcement is meant for behaviour to be increased, while punishment should be used effectively. This means that the right guidelines for discipline should be followed. The teaching/learning process in the school can be positively enhanced if the actors (in this context, the learners, administrators/principals, and teachers) are adequately motivated through rewards. This can be catalyzed through a consistent process of reinforcement. In applying Skinner's theory in the classroom, he believed that teachers should supply immediate feedback to students. That is, not allow students to complete a complete worksheet before giving feedback. The teacher should work with the students on one question at a time, not allowing the students to continually make the same mistakes repeatedly. On the other hand, he also argued that teachers and school districts determine classroom rules and the punishments and reinforcements that go along with breaking or obeying such rules.

Reinforcement theory has been used in many areas of study to include animal training, raising children, and motivating employees in the workplace. Reinforcement theories focus on observable behavior rather than needs theories that focus on emotional states. Reinforcement theory is a form of operant conditioning and focuses on the environmental factors contributing to shaping behavior. There are four primary approaches to reinforcement theory: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction, and punishment. Positive reinforcement is a technique to elicit and strengthen new behaviours by adding rewards and incentives instead of eliminating benefits (Catania, 2001). It can be applied in the workplace through fringe benefits, promotion chances, and pay. Positive reinforcement is Any pleasant or desirable consequence that follows a response and increases the probability that the response will be repeated (Watson, 2012).

Negative reinforcement is psychological reinforcement by the removal of an unpleasant stimulus when the desired response occurs. Skinner used the rat to demonstrate positive reinforcement, but he also utilized the same test to prove negative reinforcement. Skinner placed an electric current inside the box, which was an unpleasant stimulus for the rat. The rat inadvertently hit the lever and learned that this turned the electric current off. Through several trials, the rat learned that it would turn off the current if it went straight to the lever. (McLeod, 2012) Reinforcement theory provides two methods of eliminating undesirable behaviors. One is negative punishment and the other is positive punishment. Punishment creates a set of conditions which are designed to eliminate behaviour (McLeod, 2012) .Positive reinforcement is a technique for gaining and reinforce new behaviors by adding rewards and incentives. Participatory leadership is another way through where there is positive employee engagement with a focus on group decision making, encouraging creativity and thus higher organizational growth. Positive reinforcement instills trust among the employee, the belief that he or she is capable complete the task successfully. This paves the way for accepting further challenges and complications without fear and anxiety. This will ultimately be reflected in higher standards of job performance

Employee performance can be defined as the productivity of each employee in a company. Managers can measure performance through different mechanisms (Saleem and Amin, 2013). Various factors affect employee performance, such as monetary benefits, non-monetary benefits, supervisory support, training programs, organizational support, quality work-life, job pursuit intention, etc. Employees are one of the most crucial stakeholders in an organization since their performance will contribute to the company's performance and, in turn, will decide the company's success or failure (Sun and Yu, 2015). Employee performance begins from the top line management, but the outcomes

are achieved from the bottom line (employees). High-performing companies indicate a higher degree of employee satisfaction, whereas companies with poor financial performance also have the same degree of employee satisfaction. According to Jessica et al. (2020); Juliana & Tarigan (2019), job, training, and work motivation positively influence employee performance. According to Juliana & Djakasaputra (2019), there was an influence of leadership and compensation on employees' job satisfaction. Study Chauhan & Thakar (2020) In a workplace where employees cannot use their full potential and not heard and valued, they are likely to leave because of stress and frustration. In a transparent environment, while employees get a sense of achievement and belongingness from a healthy work environment, the company is benefited with a stronger, reliable workforce harbouring bright new ideas for its growth. Study Wei & Yazdanifard (2014) One of the most commonly used methods are positive reinforcement, in which one's behaviour is strengthened or increased based on consequences.

Employee's performance is ascertained through multipurpose capacities like human, technological, organizational, and institutional levels. It starts from top-line management, but outcomes are achieved from the bottom line (employees). High-performing companies show greater satisfaction levels among their employees, while sometimes companies indicating poor financial performance also have the same satisfaction scenario among their employees. According to professionals and academics explanations, performance and results depend upon the ways/methods organizations adopt to manage their employees. The business outcome can be improved by adopting special measures that include employees job involvement, empowerment, job redesign, skill-based training and development programs, appraisal and reward systems (Ahmad et al., 2015)

3. RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative research design was followed. A field survey was conducted to create a statistically testable sample with the help of significance of relations among variables were measured, and a hypothesis testing design was followed with the measure of association method. All of the writer's data needs for her research get from directly interviewing with company's managers and questionnaires approved by the Owner of IEC Medan. The sample is selected part of the population that is taken to represent the whole population; in determining the number of samples, the writer will use the theory of Arikunto. It can be explained as if the research sample is less than 100 people, and it is better to apply the entire sample so that the research is sample research. Then, if the sample is large, the sample used is 10% - 15% or 20% - 25% or more.

Based on Arikunto (2016) theory, the writer will take all population as a sample for doing this research, which means the writer takes 30 of the company's employees as a sample, which is also known as the census non-probability sampling method.

The population taken is a group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analyzed. The total population of employees at IEC Malaka Medan is about 30 employees with non-probability sampling methods. The reinforcement variable consists of productivity, accuracy, fluency dimensions, and employee performance, consisting of competency, commitment, and cooperation. The data collection method consists of primary data and secondary data. According to the Likert Scale, the variables for Reinforcement (Variable X) and Employees' Performance (Variable Y) will be indicated by five appraisers' values, named: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Moderate, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. The writer uses some methods to analyze the data gained from the research: validity test, reliability test, normality test, linear regression.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To start the descriptive statistic, the writer will classify respondents or samples referring to their identities, including gender and age and their education level. The classification is as shown in the following tables:

Table 1. Respondent's Gender

Respondent's Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	20	67%
Male	10	33%
Total	30	100%

Source : Primary Data (2020)

This table shows that female respondents have a greater number than male respondents at IEC Malaka Medan.

Table 2. Respondent's Age

Respondent's Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 30 years old	15	50%
30 – 40 years old	5	16.7%
40 – 50 years old	7	23.3%
Above 51 years old	3	10%
Total	30	100%

Source : Primary Data (2020)

About 50 % (15 respondents) of the respondents are 20 – 30 years old, 16.7% (5 respondents) are between 30 – 40 years old, 23.3% (7 respondents) from 40 – 50 years old, and the rest 10% (3 respondents) are above 51 years old.

Table 3. Respondent's Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SMU	2	6.6%
D1	5	16.7%

D3 /S1	23	76.7%
Total	30	100%

Source : Primary Data (2020)

Two respondents, or 6.6% from the total sample, are SMU graduates, five respondents or 16.7% are D1 holders, and the rest 23 respondents or 76.7% are D3 / S1 holders. This shows that most employees are intellectual people, which means that this company has a great image and qualifies as English Centre.

Validity Test

A validity test was done to know whether the questionnaire that is distributed to the respondents is valid or not. According to Sugiyono (2017) "The number of respondents to test the instrument, there are no selected numbers required; however, it is suggested to use 10-20 respondents". The writer will use ten people not from the sample size to be used to determine how valid the questionnaires are.

The validity pre-test of Variable X and Y are elaborated at the following tables:

Table 4 Pre-test Variable X

Respondents	Question Number					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
1	1	3	2	1	4	11
2	3	5	4	3	2	17
3	2	1	3	2	3	11
4	4	3	3	1	5	16
5	2	2	2	1	3	10
6	1	3	3	3	2	12
7	5	3	1	3	3	15
8	3	1	4	5	4	17
9	4	2	2	2	1	11
10	3	4	2	2	2	13

Source : Primary Data (2020)

Table 5 Validity Test Variable X

Questions	R _{count}	Validity
Q1	0.773	High Validity
Q2	0.782	High Validity

Q3	0.847	Very High Validity
Q4	0.786	High Validity
Q5	0.781	High Validity

Source : Primary Data (2020)

Table 6 Pre-test Variable Y

Respondents	Question Number					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
1	1	1	3	3	1	9
2	3	2	2	3	3	13
3	3	2	4	4	2	15
4	2	4	2	2	3	13
5	1	3	3	1	1	9
6	1	1	2	2	1	7
7	4	2	1	3	3	13
8	3	1	3	2	2	11
9	2	5	3	2	2	14
10	1	3	1	2	4	11

Source : Primary Data (2020)

Table 7 Validity Test Variable Y

Questions	Rcount	Validity
Q1	0.849	Very High Validity
Q2	0.794	High Validity
Q3	0.881	Very High Validity
Q4	0.850	Very High Validity
Q5	0.783	High Validity

Source : Primary Data (2020)

From the table above, it can be seen that the validity value of the questions is in high validity and very high validity. It means that the questions can be used for further tested in reliability.

Reliability Test

A reliability test is to test whether the data is reliable or not. The test is done to know whether the questionnaires that are distributed are consistent enough or not

Table 8. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.922	10

Source: Output of SPSS 25

The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.922, which means the questions are in High Data Reliability. Since the collected data is reliable, it can be used for the following analysis and testing.

Normality Test

Normality test is used to determine whether data collected are normal distribution that is obtained from a normal population. In this research, Kolmogorov Smirnov testing is used to examine the normality with the result as follows:

Table 9. Normality Test

		Reinforcement	Employees Performance
N		30	30
Normal Parameters ^a ,	Mean	11.80	11.17
	Std. Deviation	2.219	2.214
	Most Extreme Differences		
	Absolute	.136	.137
	Positive	.096	.137
	Negative	-.136	-.137
Test Statistic		.136	.137
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.165	.156

Source: Output of SPSS 25

From the table above, it can be obtained significant, or probability value for reinforcement is 0.165. For employees' performance is 0.156, which the results are greater than 0.05, then the data is a normal distribution.

Coefficient of Correlation

The coefficient of correlation test is used to know whether there is a relationship between reinforcement with employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan. To determine the relationship level between reinforcement and employees performance, the writer uses the test of correlations as follow:

Table 10. Correlations

		Reinforcement	Employees Performance
Reinforcement	Pearson Correlation	1	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Output of SPSS 25

From the above table, the value of the result from the calculation is 0.705. This value indicates a strong positive correlation between variables X and Y. The increase in the value of variable X as Reinforcement will increase the value of variable Y as Employees Performance. Meanwhile, the decrease in the value of variable X, Reinforcement will also decrease the value of variable Y, Employees Performance at IEC Malaka Medan.

Determination Test

A determination coefficient test is done to identify how large the variable X will determine the portion of variable Y. The result of the determination coefficient test is as follow:

Table 11. Determination Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.705 ^a	.497	.635	2.938

Source: Output of SPSS 25

From the calculation above, the determination coefficient resulted is 49.7%. This shows that 49.7% of variable Y, Employees Performance is impact and determined by the value of variable X, Reinforcement, while the remaining 50.3% is impacted by other factors.

Linear regression

Linear regression is used to know the significant and linear relationship between reinforcement as an independent variable towards employee performance as the dependent variable.

Table 12. Linear regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.760	2.160		1.278	.212
	Reinforcement	.857	.120	.705	7.171	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employees Performance

Source: Output of SPSS 25

From the table above, it can obtain the regression equation is $Y = 2.760 + 0.857X$. It means that with every increase in one unit of reinforcement, the value of employees' performance will be increase by 0.857. Suppose every decrease of one team of reinforcement means that employees' value will decrease by 0.857. From this equation, the company should give the employee reinforcement to increase the employees' performance.

$$Y = 2.760 + 0.857X$$

$$X = 0 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(0) = 2.760$$

$$X = 1 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(1) = 3.617$$

$$X = 2 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(2) = 4.474$$

$$X = 3 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(3) = 5.331$$

$$X = 4 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(4) = 6.188$$

$$X = 5 \rightarrow Y = 2.760 + 0.857(5) = 7.045$$

Based on the calculation above and the data which gather from respondents by using some questionnaires, the writer can conclude as below:

1. The test of validity test for variable X as Reinforcement and variable Y as Employees Performance has proven that the ten questions at the questionnaire are valid with high validity and very high validity, and acceptable to be used at the next test of data quality.
2. The reliability test is reliable and can be used as a research instrument with high data reliability.
3. From data of normality test, Variable X as Reinforcement is 0.165 and Variable Y as Employees Performance is 0.156, the results are more significant than 0.05. The data distributions have a normal distribution.
4. For variable X as Reinforcement, the mean, median, and mode are the employees who disagree with the reinforcement at IEC Malaka Medan. While for variable Y as Employees Performance, the mean, median, and mode.
5. According to the correlation coefficient, the relationship between reinforcement and employee's performance at IEC Malaka Medan is 0.705, which means that there is a strong positive correlation between variable X and variable Y. It means that reinforcement can impact employees' performance.
6. According to the determination test, which shows the result of 49.7%, the variable X, Reinforcement, contributed as much as 49.7%, which influences employee performance.
7. From linear regression, it can be stated that if reinforcement increased in one unit, then employees'

performance will increase by 0.857.

8. According to the result of a hypothesis test, the value of Zcount is on the area of reject H_0 and accepted H_A . So, it means that reinforcement can impact employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan.

5. CONCLUSION

. The conclusion of this research is reinforcement can impact employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan. There is a strong positive relationship between reinforcement with employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan. Based on the determination result, which shows that the result of 49.7% , the variable X, Reinforcement contributed as much as 49.7%, which impacts employees' performance, so reinforcement can impact employees' performance at IEC Malaka Medan. Based on the conclusion mentioned above, the writer list down some recommendation to IEC Malaka Medan.

The recommendations are as follows: After several research, the writer found out that the company can reinforce the employees. Maybe the company can analyze more about which employee can get a pay rise. So, if the company does that, hopefully, the employee can increase their teaching performance. So the employee will think that their hard work is paying off. The writer suggests the company to do job measured or gives promotion to teachers or employees who are qualified and can achieve the company's goal. This promotion can also challenge others to perform better and increased their performance in working. The company can also arrange examinations or games to challenge employees' brains and ideas to be more creative in teaching. The company also can make entertainment or recreation activities with the employee, for example, have lunch/dinner or going to someplace together with the employee, so the company can interact or know more about the employee and what to do to increase the employee performance at IEC Malaka Medan.

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