

# Making Inclusion Work: Teacher Characteristics as Critical Determinants of Education for Learners with Physical Disability in Inclusive Primary Schools in Western Kenya

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**Abstract:** Since independence in Kenya, there have been several policies and working papers concerning education for the pupils with physical disability and generally inclusive education such as the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018). However, even with all this, the academic performance of learners with physical disability in inclusive schools continue to record low performance compared to those without disability. Inclusive education was supposed to provide learners to provide equal educational opportunities to both learners with and without physical disability. The objective of this paper therefore was to determine the influence of teacher characteristics which included attitude, satisfaction and teaching strategies on academic performance of learners with physical disability in Western Kenya inclusive schools. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed method design in five inclusive schools for pupils with physical disability. Data was generated from among 65 teachers, 52 pupils with physical disability and 73 regular pupils by use of a questionnaire and an observation guide. For inclusion to be successful as a framework, this scrutiny is required in order to improve the learners' overall academic outcomes.

**Key Words:** Inclusion; Determinants; Physical Disability

## I. INTRODUCTION

By and large, the term disability is utilized to allude to singular working, including physical debilitation, sensory weakness, impairments related to cognition, intellectual disability, illnesses related to mental state and different kinds of chronic sickness (Nazarov & Lee, 2012). Disability can likewise be said to be a condition or capacity decided to be essentially impeded comparative with the typical norm of an individual or group (Disabled World, 2019). The World Health Organization (2011) views disability as any limitation or absence of ability to do an activity in the way or within the reach considered typical for an individual. Physical disability is an impediment on an individual's actual working, movement or endurance. Garden (2010) notes that physical disability influences how an individual controls body movement.

According to the Salamanca Statement, each child is qualified for the right to education (Kiru & Cooc, 2018). Children who have disability of any kind are not exempted from the

statement. The Salamanca Statement additionally voices that the unique capacities, interests, adapting necessities and abilities of children with disabilities ought to be put into consideration in the arrangement of inclusive education provision to the children. This suggests that the unique capacities and characteristics of the children with disability ought to be considered to guarantee that they have equivalent admittance to schooling actually like those without disability. Consequently, majority of countries are encouraging equality for learners with disabilities and promote inclusive education as the preferred option. Considered in general terms, inclusive schooling addresses a shift from a teaching approach that works for most learners to one that includes the production of learning openings for each learner. The Ministry of Education (2018), through the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities argues that inclusivity in education turns into an overall standard, upholding for the right of learners with disability to be placed in regular classrooms along with their peers without disability. In this way, to address variety of difficulties in classrooms, it is important that instructors adjust their practices of instruction. A significant requirement for adaptable instruction is instructors' analytic ability, which is viewed as a focal component of professionalism of a teacher (Artelt & Rausch, 2014).

Earlier research in inclusive schooling recurrently assessed the academic results of learners concerning learning. Most of these examinations demonstrated that learners with special education needs accomplish higher performance in academics in inclusive school settings than in special schools (Oh-Young & Filler, 2015). For regular pupils, no academic performance difference was observed between non-inclusive classes and inclusive classes in a study by Ruijs et al. (2010). Nonetheless, concerns have been raised about the academic ramifications of policies of inclusion on management of schools and fruitful learning (Koster et al., 2010). Studies done globally also have raised worries about the policies of inclusion on academic performance (McCoy & Banks, 2012). In actual fact, as indicated by Steen et al. (2012), learners with disability typically perform lower than regular learners academically on standardized tests.

A report by UNESCO (2009) on framework for inclusive education as referred to by Rishaely (2017) uncovers that teachers' positivity in terms of attitude towards inclusivity relies firmly upon their involvement with their learners who are seen as those with disability, education of the teacher, classroom support, size of the classroom and in general responsibility of inclusive class teaching. An investigation by Peterson (1994) as cited by Gudyanga et al. (2014) found out that teachers showed positive attitude towards inclusion. The educators unequivocally upheld the conviction that the classes that were inclusive were academically superior to special classes.

Satisfaction of the teacher in inclusive schools is also significant in guaranteeing educators keep up both a positive perspective towards inclusivity and a conviction that they can teach comprehensively. According to Emam and Mohamed (2011), a ton of studies centre around experiences in training on the grounds that there is an extremely solid connection between academic performance in inclusive schools and teachers' satisfaction towards inclusion. In a study by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011) on inclusive teachers in South Africa, educators appear to be adequately contented to make a few adaptations to the normal environment of the classroom and may even do strategy adoption to help offer additional help to those with disability. However, in a similar study on satisfaction of teachers towards inclusivity, Ananti and Nisreenand (2012) in schools in United Arab Emirate noted that teachers were dissatisfied with inclusivity. Teachers' dissatisfaction was pegged on absence of monetary help for resources together with services in the inclusive schools.

Teaching strategies used in inclusive schools also assume an essential part in determining performance academically of the learners in inclusive schools. Schuelka (2018) upholds this thought by expressing that eventually, fruitful execution of inclusive education happens at the class level. This means that for many learners with physical disability, the way to achievement in their classes lies in having in place proper adaptations, facilities and alterations made to teaching and other exercises in class. Practices relating to inclusive teaching enhance academic performance of most if not all learners in an inclusive class (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018; Sailor, 2015). Seemingly, teachers appear to be adequately contented to make a few alterations to the normal classrooms and may even embrace systems to help offer additional help to learners with disability, however with no consideration being paid to adjusting pedagogical methodologies this doesn't address inclusivity (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011).

Arbeiter and Hartley (2002) believe that one of the issues adding to the problem is the overarching instructional method; the inclination for teachers in inclusive setting to utilize a teacher centred way to deal with their practices in classes though inclusivity demands that teachers utilize a child centred policy. The duo in a study carried out in Uganda, discovered that despite the fact that teachers in Uganda had

the option to provide details regarding what sort of strategies could be utilized to make their classrooms further inclusive (like giving individual consideration and grouping of the leaners) these were not frequently seen being practiced.

The previewed literature prompts the inquiry on the influence of teacher characteristics in impacting on academic performance in inclusive school settings. By looking at this angle, this paper gives an exceptional chance to generally evaluate true inclusion in public primary schools for the pupils with physical disability in Western Kenya.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Western Kenya formerly known as Western Province of Kenya. Purposive sampling was utilized in selection of the teachers and learners in the five inclusive schools for the pupils with physical disability where 65 teachers, 73 regular pupils and 52 pupils with physical disability formed the sample for the study. The questionnaire was the main data generation tool for quantitative data and for qualitative data, an observation guide was used. Data has been presented using narratives, tables, frequencies and percentages.

## III. RESULTS

This section presents results on the academic performance of the pupils with physical disability as compared to those without disability. It further presents data on the influence of attitude of the teachers towards inclusivity, level of satisfaction on inclusive school settings and the teaching strategies used in the inclusive classrooms on academic performance of learners with physical disability.

### 3.1 Comparison of academic performance of learners in inclusive schools

The first objective of this study was to determine the academic performance of the regular learners and those with physical disability where the overall scale on which academic performance was measured ranged from 0-500. This means that scores between 0-200 indicated low academic performance, scores between 201-300 indicated average academic performance and scores between 301-500 indicated high academic performance. The scores for the academic performance of the regular pupils and those with disability were computed and compared. The mean scores and the standard deviations are as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Mean Difference of Academic Performance of Learners in Inclusive Schools

Learners	Gender of the pupils	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regular learners	Male	39	194.87	.647
	Female	34	223.53	.923
	Total	73	208.22	.795
Learners with Disability	Male	22	159.09	.73414

	Female	30	156.67	.56832
	Total	52	157.69	.63697
<b>Total</b>		125	182.96	

Table 1 presents results of one-sample statistics and it indicates that the mean score for the regular pupils was 208.22. In terms of gender of regular pupil's, male pupils had a mean score of 194.87 while female pupils had a mean score of 223.53. On the other hand, the mean score for pupils with disability was 157.69. In terms of gender of pupils with

disability, male pupils had a mean score of 159.09 while female pupils had mean score of 156.67. This means that the regular pupils had a higher academic performance than the pupils with disability. The standard deviation for the regular pupils was 0.79501 and for the pupils with disability was 0.63697. The overall mean score was 182.96.

Consequently, a t-test was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the academic performance of the regular pupils and those with physical disability and the results are as indicated in table 2.

Table 2: T-test of mean difference in academic performance of learners in inclusive schools

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Regular - Disability	.50000	.77964	.10812	.28295	.71705	4.625	51	.000

From table 2, it was noted that the Sig (2-Tailed) value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 hence study concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between mean score of regular pupils and that of pupils with disability. These findings are similar to a study cited by Dyson et al. (2004) which investigated two groups of pupils, one which consisted of children with special needs and the other did not. The findings demonstrated that there were no great differences between the two groups. As much as there was a significant difference in academic performance between the pupils with disability and the regular pupils, Affleck et al. (1988) as cited in Dyson et al. (2004) refuted this claim and concluded that there were no huge differences between the performance of two groups of pupils who attended inclusive classrooms. This is quite dissimilar to the findings of this study.

mean score of 182.96. However, it can be noted that the academic performance of the regular pupils is average. The girls' academic performance was average but the boys had low academic performance. On the other hand, the pupils with disability have low academic performance. This may mean therefore that the as much as the children with disability are in an inclusive setting, they are not benefitting from the program. This scenario may be speculated on teacher characteristics which end up affecting academic performance of learners with physical disability as discussed in this paper.

According to the results in tables 1 and 2, the performance of pupils in inclusive schools is low basing on their average

3.2 Attitude of teachers towards inclusion

Regarding their attitude towards inclusivity, teachers were asked to answer questions in the questionnaire which were used to ascertain their attitude towards inclusion. Data obtained was expressed in a tabular form and is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Teachers' Attitude towards inclusion

Item	Attitude											N	Index
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree				
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
TAIQ 1	13	20.0%	28	43.1%	10	15.4%	11	16.9%	3	4.6%	65	2.43	
TAIQ 2	10	15.4%	38	58.5%	7	10.8%	5	7.7%	5	7.7%	65	2.34	
TAIQ 3	17	26.2%	29	44.6%	7	10.8%	7	10.8%	5	7.7%	65	2.29	
TAIQ 4	11	16.9%	16	24.6%	11	16.9%	18	27.7%	9	13.8%	65	2.97	
TAIQ 5	5	7.7%	17	26.2%	9	13.8%	18	27.7%	16	24.6%	65	3.35	
TAIQ 6	16	24.6%	33	50.8%	3	4.6%	11	16.9%	2	3.1%	65	2.23	
TAIQ 7	10	15.4%	27	41.5%	6	9.2%	14	21.5%	8	12.3%	65	2.74	
TAIQ 8	20	30.8%	29	44.6%	6	9.2%	7	10.8%	3	4.6%	65	2.14	
TAIQ 9	24	36.9%	24	36.9%	5	7.7%	8	12.3%	4	6.2%	65	2.45	
TAIQ 10	12	18.5%	26	40.0%	2	3.1%	16	24.6%	9	13.8%	65	2.75	

TAIQ 11	12	18.5%	30	46.2%	6	9.2%	10	15.4%	7	10.8%	65	2.42
TAIQ 12	11	16.9%	20	30.8%	4	6.2%	16	24.6%	14	21.5%	65	3.03
TAIQ 13	6	9.2%	18	27.7%	10	15.4%	21	32.3%	10	15.4%	65	3.17
TAIQ 14	11	16.9%	30	46.2%	4	6.2%	12	18.5%	8	12.3%	65	2.63
TAIQ 15	11	16.9%	17	26.2%	6	9.2%	13	20.0%	18	27.7%	65	3.15
TAIQ 16	15	23.1%	36	55.4%	4	6.2%	9	13.8%	1	1.5%	65	2.38
TAIQ 17	30	46.2%	18	27.7%	6	9.2%	4	6.2%	7	10.8%	65	2.08
TAIQ 18	25	38.5%	28	43.1%	8	12.3%	2	3.1%	2	3.1%	65	1.89
TAIQ 19	1	1.5%	13	20.0%	13	20.0%	27	41.5%	11	16.9%	65	3.52
TAIQ 20	16	24.6%	16	24.6%	7	10.8%	10	15.4%	16	24.6%	65	2.91
<b>Total Teacher's Attitude Rating</b>											<b>52.5</b>	

From the results in table 3, the overall index of the teachers' attitude towards inclusion was computed. The mean score was found to be 52.5 or 2.6. When the scores were compared to the scoring procedure, it was established that the scores were under ambivalent category. This indicates that the teachers had in general relatively neutral attitudes towards inclusive education. For inclusivity to work, it is clear that teachers need to be effectively prepared and hold positive attitudes towards inclusion. The results of this study corroborate with similar studies that have been conducted. For instance, Magumise and Sefotho (2020) examined parent and teacher perception of inclusive education in Zimbabwe and reported mixed results that they categorized into positive, mixed and negative perceptions. Chavuta et al., (2008) carried out a study on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion in Malawi and also reported negative teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Similarly, Haitembu (2014) identified negative teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in Namibia as a hindrance towards the effective implementation of inclusive education.

In a study by Muwana and Ostrosky (2014), more experienced teachers have a tendency to be less positive about inclusion than those who are newly qualified. Although this study did not look into teachers' experience, the findings are contrary to this. Therefore, it is likely that as much as trainings in colleges and in-service trainings may have an impact on improving the attitudes of teachers towards inclusivity, efforts still need to be made in order to improve the same. Since teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are likely to influence their personal effort towards professional development in that area, it is worrisome that neutral attitudes have been reported because it can be the reason for the poor performance of the learners with physical disability in the inclusive schools.

### 3.3 Satisfaction of teachers with inclusive school conditions

It should also be noted that satisfaction with inclusive conditions of teachers is crucial when it comes to influencing academic performance of learners in any inclusive school. Whether or not teachers were satisfied with inclusive conditions was an important variable in this study. A summary of these findings is presented as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Teachers' Level of Satisfaction with Conditions in Inclusive Primary Schools

Item	Level of satisfaction										
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Index
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
TSLQ 1	14	21.5%	44	67.7%	2	3.1%	1	1.5%	4	6.2%	2.03
TSLQ 2	12	18.5%	37	56.9%	12	18.5%	4	6.2%	0	0	2.12
TSLQ 3	11	16.9%	30	46.2%	10	15.4%	14	21.5%	0	0	2.35
TSLQ 4	14	21.5%	32	49.2%	6	9.2%	9	13.8%	4	6.2%	2.34
TSLQ5	20	30.8%	29	44.6%	7	10.8%	9	13.8%	0	0	2.18
TSLQ 6	34	52.3%	25	38.5%	5	7.7%	1	1.5%	0	0	1.58
TSLQ 7	34	52.3%	25	38.5%	5	7.7%	1	1.5%	0	0	1.58
TSLQ 8	33	50.8%	26	40.0%	5	7.7%	1	1.5%	0	0	1.60
TSLQ 9	24	36.9%	33	50.8%	2	3.1%	2	3.1%	4	6.2%	1.91
TSLQ 10	23	35.4%	33	50.8%	2	3.1%	3	4.6%	4	6.2%	1.95
TSLQ 11	39	60.9%	13	20.3%	3	4.7%	5	7.8%	4	6.3%	1.75

TSLQ 12	16	24.6%	31	47.7%	3	4.6%	9	13.8%	6	9.2%	2.35
TSLQ 13	21	32.3%	28	43.1%	5	7.7%	6	9.2%	5	7.7%	1.86
TSLQ14	25	38.5%	20	30.8%	4	6.2%	13	20.0%	3	4.6%	2.22
<b>Total satisfaction level</b>											<b>28.1</b>

From table 4, the researcher computed the overall index of the level of satisfaction of the teachers. It was found that the score was 28.1 or 2.0. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the teachers had positive level of satisfaction with the inclusive conditions in schools. In a study by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011) on inclusive teachers, teachers seem happy enough to make some adjustments to the basic classroom environment and may even adopt strategies to help provide extra support to children with disabilities. This proposition aligns itself with the findings of this study where seemingly teachers are satisfied with the provided conditions for inclusion. Satisfaction of teachers is directly related to how they will be able to conduct their teaching activities which have an overall effect on academic performance of learners in inclusive schools.

According to Ananti and Nisreenand (2012) in their descriptive study on including students with disabilities in United Arab Emirate schools, inclusive school teachers were dissatisfied with inclusivity. Teachers' dissatisfaction was pegged on a lack of financial support for resources and services in schools. This finding is dissimilar to that of the current study. It might be that as much as teachers feel everything is okay, learners especially those with disability feel that there is not enough that has been done to accommodate them. This might manifest in their academic performance and can be the reason for the poor performance witnessed.

### 3.4 Teaching strategies used in inclusive classrooms

Observation on the teaching strategies was done by the researcher. There were four categories in the observation schedule that were scrutinized. These categories were: classroom environment, time management, lesson presentation and adaptive instruction in relation to pupils with physical disability. The researcher established that the computed score for the class environment was 4.0. This meant that the classroom environment was average. Generally, there was no citation of rules in responding to disruptive behavior. Some of the teachers only concentrated in the front part of the classroom and could not always position themselves strategically in all the areas of the classroom to enhance attention. Though, some of the teachers administered praise to all the pupils and the physical space arrangement was satisfactory.

It was also found that the computed score for time management was also 4.0 meaning it was average. As much as there was allocation of generous amounts of time for instruction and monitoring of transition, there was less frequency in circulation of the teachers to assist students and monitor progress. Further, it was observed that some teachers

indicated no clear lesson routine that could signal a beginning and end of the lesson. Teachers could be seen trying their best to state the expectations for seatwork and transitions in advance and there was gaining and maintenance of the pupils' attention.

Lesson presentation was another category that the researcher observed in the classrooms. It was established that the computed overall score was 7.0. This indicates that the lesson presentation techniques were good. Among other strengths, the teachers reviewed the previous lesson concepts and linked them to the lesson they were teaching. Seatwork tasks were given and the summarization of the lesson was done. However, there was lower accurate responding rate in teacher-led activities and generally, there was less active modeling and demonstration of concepts, learning strategies and procedures related to effective problem solving.

Adaptive instruction was another item that was observed by the researcher. The computed overall index was 2.0 which was a signal of poor adaptive instruction. As much as most of the teachers reported positively in their questionnaire on adaptive instruction, observation done stated otherwise. Most of the teachers did not pay special attention to the pupil with disability in relation to checking what they were doing to ensure they were doing it well. Further, there were fewer enhancements of pupils with disability's participation in class and there were unequal chances of participation in classroom activities. This may be attributed to the teachers being allocated less time in order to be able to accommodate well the pupils with disability in class.

The computed overall index for the teachers' teaching strategies observation rating was found to be 17.0. When compared to the scoring procedure, it was established that the use of teaching strategies was average. In a study done by Donohue & Bornman (2015), there are still a lot of teachers who don't have the practical or theoretical knowledge base from which to design inclusive lessons. These findings are similar to those of this study. This can be evidenced by the computed overall index for adaptive instruction and classroom management skills. This is a concern as some teachers cannot fully manage an inclusive classroom despite many of them have diplomas and degrees in the field of special education. This gap might be attributed to lack of sensitization on the importance of adaptive content delivery in classrooms in order to enhance interest in learning thus fostering academic performance of the pupils.

From the questionnaire that the researcher gave to the teachers, obtained results relating to the teaching strategies can be summarized as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Summary of teaching strategies Responses

	Teaching Strategies									
	Extremely Concerned		Very Concerned		A Little concerned		Not at All concerned		N	Index
Item	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
TSQ 1	14	21.5%	24	36.9%	6	9.2%	21	32.3%	65	2.52
TSQ 2	30	46.2%	31	47.7%	3	4.6%	1	1.5%	65	1.62
TSQ 3	31	47.7%	30	46.2%	3	4.6%	1	1.5%	65	1.60
TSQ 4	10	15.4%	38	58.5%	14	21.5%	3	4.6%	65	2.26
TSQ 5	20	30.8%	32	49.2%	9	13.8%	4	6.2%	65	1.95
TSQ 6	22	33.8%	21	32.3%	18	27.7%	4	6.2%	65	2.06
TSQ 7	11	16.9%	31	47.7%	17	26.2%	6	9.2%	65	2.18
TSQ 8	20	30.8%	35	53.8%	9	13.8%	1	1.5%	65	1.86
TSQ 9	28	43.1%	29	44.6%	6	9.2%	2	3.1%	65	1.66
TSQ 10	28	43.1%	19	29.2%	11	16.9%	7	10.8%	65	1.95
TSQ 11	18	27.7%	18	27.7%	15	23.1%	14	21.5%	65	2.38
TSQ 12	19	29.2%	30	46.2%	14	21.5%	2	3.1%	65	1.98
TSQ 13	20	30.8%	31	47.7%	13	20.0%	1	1.5%	65	1.92
TSQ 14	26	40.0%	30	46.2%	7	10.8%	2	3.1%	65	1.77
TSQ 15	25	38.5%	33	50.8%	3	4.6%	4	6.2%	65	1.78
TSQ 16	19	29.2%	33	50.8%	9	13.8%	4	6.2%	65	1.82
TSQ 17	28	43.1%	24	36.9%	8	12.3%	5	7.7%	65	1.78
TSQ 18	27	41.5%	25	38.5%	8	12.3%	5	7.7%	65	1.86
TSQ 19	29	44.6%	19	29.2%	11	16.9%	6	9.2%	65	1.82
TSQ 20	27	41.5%	26	40.0%	8	12.3%	4	6.2%	65	1.83
<b>Total Teaching Strategies Rating</b>										<b>38.98</b>

The overall score for the teaching strategies was found to be 38.98 or 2.0. This therefore means that the score lies under the category of positive. It can be concluded that teachers believe there is adequate use of teaching strategies to enhance inclusivity in the classrooms. However, the findings through the questionnaire do not fully match what was observed as already discussed.

Studies by Donohue & Bornman (2015) and Hettiarachchi & Das (2014) conclude that inadequacy in use of teaching strategies is due to lack of preparation amongst those charged with delivering new inclusive education policies contributing towards high levels of stress experienced by teachers and leading to concerns about the practical realities of inclusion. This might be the case for the reasons for the findings especially on what was observed. It might be that inclusive school teachers are not properly prepared for the realities in their classrooms hence do not understand fully what to do and what not to do. Hence, as much as they believe their teaching strategies are okay, they are not adequate thus reducing the effectiveness of inclusivity of learners with physical disability

thus reflecting in their academic performance as already indicated.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that pupils in the inclusive schools recorded poor academic performance. As much as the means score of the regular pupils was average at 208.22, the mean score for the pupils with physical disability was below average at 157.69. When the two scores are averaged, a mean score of 182.96 is arrived at which is an indication of academic performance being below average in the inclusive schools for the pupils with physical disability.

It was also concluded that teacher ambivalent attitude and satisfaction level influence academic performance of learners in inclusive primary schools for the pupils with physical disability. Further, it was established through the questionnaire that as much as teachers feel they adopt the required teaching strategies, the observed results indicate that their use of effective teaching strategies is still wanting. All these factors might be contributing to the poor academic performance of the learners with physical disability in the

inclusive schools as they affect the extent to which teachers are willing and able to implement inclusive practice.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

The teachers deployed in inclusive schools by the government should be properly sensitized so that they can develop a clear understanding of dispositions of inclusive settings. Such training should be geared towards building positive attitude towards inclusion and effective use of teaching strategies that are required and accommodative which are important and more beneficial especially for learners with physical disability in inclusive school settings.

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