ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA:
ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract
This presentation is an attempt to discuss entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Without recourse to subterfuge, an entrepreneurship – based educational system should continue to be topical in our national discussion up until Nigeria educational policy makers ensure that Nigeria education is entrepreneurially driven. A mono-reliant economy such as we have in Nigeria is like a dance staged on the cliff-edge. Few years of a steep decline in oil prices, Nigeria macroeconomics has been afflicted, infected and affected on all fronts. One of the worst hit is unemployment. The 2014 immigration recruitment exercise, the 2015 Cross-River Forest Police recruitment exercise and the 2016 npower recruitments are instances that indicate that there is no illumination at the end of the tunnel. A way out, as espoused in this paper, will be to revisit the Nigerian educational system. Since a society is as good as its educational content, the sub-sector has to be mainstreamed with an entrepreneurial bent, such that its products will be prepared to combine the virtues of knowledge, attitude and hands-on-skills to maximize the diverse natural resources of the country.

Key Terms: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Nigeria Education

Introduction: Definition of Key Terms:
It is important that we start with attempts to explain the keywords in this talk. This will enable us to be on the same page with the audience as we run through the rest of the presentation.

a) The Entrepreneur: we shall start to tell you who an Entrepreneur is by telling you who he is not. He is not a petty trader. He is not an artisan. He is not a peasant. He is not a necromancer. He is not a star-gazer and he is not a dyed-in-the-wool abracadabra-man. As is the tradition in scholarship, we find the definitions of who an Entrepreneur is in Schumpefer (1934), Carland (1984), Bagby (1988), Gartner (1989), Jarillo (1990), Emmanuel (2008, 26 – 27) and other authorities.

A cursory look at these definitions would indicate that everybody has his own definition of an Entrepreneur. Another serious profession that has suffered the triviality of poly-dimensional definition is that of the ‘Teacher’. However, we shall reserve this as Talk-of-Another-Day.

While we await the Association of Entrepreneurship Educators (AEE) to evolve a professionally and generally acceptable definition, we shall attempt a working definition in the hope that it will not depart defiantly and wildly away from the standards. Simply
put, an Entrepreneur is an intellect-driven person who has been trained to have the capacity to identify a societal need; produces the need and evolves a mechanism to send this need to the end-user in return for a gain.

On one hand, this definition appears to support the proposition that entrepreneurs are made. But it is equally important to note that there is still this belief that entrepreneurs are born.

i. **Entrepreneurship: Heick** Online revealed that until recently, the concept of Entrepreneurship was not connected to education. Then, the Entrepreneur was merely a field-man who rolled up his sleeves and slaved in rain and shine in dirty hands with greases immersed all over his body; a handyman, an odd-job-man and a general factotum kind of person.

But over the years, it has been realized that entrepreneurship is a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional concept that are all inclusive of the totality of human knowledge. Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in particular seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to drive enterprises in a variety of settings. It is interdisciplinary in that it is incorporated within all disciplines such that students have the mindset to create business opportunities.

Craft-making and other technical skills are a subset of entrepreneurship. The discipline is more of acquiring skills that will enable the entrepreneur to make an enterprise out of his area of specialty. He can, as well, operate outside of the area in which he holds certified specializations. It explains the holistic nature of education, especially the one that tasks the sensibilities of the intellect such that the mind can cross boundaries into apparently unrelated disciplines and be able to break new grounds in them. (Emenanjo, 16). This was how Samuelson moved from Physics to Economics. Handel and Schumann from Law to Music. Berlioz from Medicine to Music. John-Boyd-Dunlop from Veterinary Surgery to Pneumatic Tyre Manufacturer and Anezi Okoro from Medicine to Prose Literature. This holistic nature is now beginning to reveal itself in interdisciplinary studies such as Eco-biology, Biostatistics, Sociolinguistics and Zoo-semiotics. And so on and so forth.

ii. **Nigeria Education**: Nigeria Education is about Education in Nigeria. Nigeria is a mirror reflection of its Education. This is why it has been repeatedly said that a society can never be superior to its educational system. This means that an educational system is the hub on which the wheel of a society revolves. It is like the wit and wisdom saying about the snake that must sire a long thing. The educational system is the heart-beat of any society and since every society is goal-bound, the curriculum readily comes to mind as the runway along which that educational system has to go through in the attainment of the set goals. Tyler in
Onwuka (1981:10) is of the view that the curriculum is all of the learning of students which is planned and directed by the school to obtain society goals enshrined in the educational system. These structured embodiments of knowledge should include in this order:

- Objectives
- Materials
- Methodology
- Evaluation

As a living subject, the curriculum grows by discarding outmoded provisions and adding radical experiences which come about as the society continues to evolve. The educator, as a permanent student, keeps abreast with the ever changing trends so as to carry the learner along with the demands of the social and economic order. Our position in this talk is that Nigeria Education has not entirely responded to the challenges of the present times. The self-reliant clause of its national policy is yet to be fully reduced to realizable implementation.

1.1.1 **The Divine Innovation Dimension:** As pointed out elsewhere, the first entrepreneurship or innovation policy was given by the creator Himself as encapsulated in the Good Books:

*And God said, let us make man in our image… and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea… the fowl of the air… the cattle and over all the earth and over everything that creepeth upon the earth… and God blessed them… and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it…*  
(Genesis 1: 26 – 28)

We have emphasized the above five concepts because they are entrepreneurial in all respects. For the avoidance of doubt, the words are listed in the following bullets:

- Dominion
- Fruitful
- Multiply
- Replenish
- Subdue

THEY ARE ILLUSTRATED AS IN FIG. I
Our progenitors were very religious because they obeyed this innovation policy of the Creator. They did not wait for Michael Faraday before they clashed stones to get fire. They did not wait for the Wright brothers before they jumped atop horses to get to distant clans. They did not wait for Leornard shoen (U-Hall) before loading their extra-luggages on Carmel’s back to relocate to new habitations. They did not wait for Julius Berger before they constructed the city walls of Kano. We can go on and on, but have to note that they waited for Mary Slessor before they stopped the killing of twins!

They had dominion over their environment. They sewed a seedling and harvested fruits filled with seeds. They multiplied their livestock by applying different methods in animal husbandry. They replenished their yam-barns in bountiful harvest through crop rotations and so on. They subdued man-eating giant-cats by inventing spears and arrows. All this they achieved by engaging the deep recesses of the intellect. No formal education taught them that the Gown is superior to the Town. No professor taught them that the Brain is superior to the Brawn. They did not need any rocket science to realize that the barrels of thought is more powerful than the barrels of bravado! Created in the image and likeness of God, man the Thinker, excelled.

Another innovation policy in Nigeria is the one enshrined in the National policy on Education (NPE). The NPE is the statutory document that encapsulates the vision and mission of Nigerian’s expectations as they relate to various spheres of education in the country. Accordingly, every level of the education system draws its policy guidelines and curriculum content from the provisions of the NPE. One of the national goals captured in this statute book is that the child should be educated; such that he will acquire the competencies that are necessary for self-reliance and self-sustenance.

This is a very laudable policy that has not been followed with an appropriate implementation framework. Addressing the NAAT/ASUU/NASU/SSANU national
education submit in the later part of 2014, Obanya said, “the emphasis in curriculum organization worldwide has long shifted from how much you know to how well you have learned”. He pointed out that addition of 40 new trade subjects including:
- Machine-woodworking
- Auto-body repair
- Spray and painting
- Printing
- Craft practice
- Fisheries
- Tourism
- Garment-making
- Salesmanship
- Cosmetology
- Insurance
- Mining
and so on to the scheme of senior secondary school (SSS) programmes amount to curriculum overload. We agree with the foremost Educationist. The vicious cycle of dysfunctionality in Nigeria education system can be remedied by adopting what we have referred to as a tepreneurship (i.e. technical plus business) approach to the realization of the self-reliance impetus of the dynamic policy.

This dual-mode approach is elastic enough to swallow the enumerated SSS trade-subjects and drop them down as one subject entry known as Entrepreneurship. In it, the child will be trained not only to acquire the capacity to invent needy products or identify a societal need, but also to acquire the intellect, the thinking alert and the digital mindset to pursue the identified needs in such a manner as to supply, distribute and turn in profit and end-user satisfaction.

1.2 Entrepreneurship in Basic Education

Interestingly, business studies/Entrepreneurship (BSE) is now one of the nine subject-matter-carrier subjects in the Revised 9 – year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC). (Obioma 2014:2). It is introduced in JSS1 and JSS I - III is captured in the new 9 – year Basic Education Structure. The point is that the same JSS I BSE will run vertically to JSS II and through to SSS by re-enforcement and enhancement and satisfying the criteria of continuity, sequence and integration. The contents of these vertical subjects will be selected in keeping with the criteria of validity, significance, utility, interest and learnability. The objectives of the lessons will be S.M.A.R.T to carry the collective
- Specific ----------------------------------------------- S
- Measurable ------------------------------------------- M
consciousness of the learner and task his competencies in the cognitive, affective and the psychomotor domains of learning and lower order learning achievements. Mode of lesson delivery will be modular (broken down into units and activities) in planning, because the details task the learner in the visual, the auditory, the kinesthetic, the tactile (VAKT) and indeed all the sensibilities that provoke him to sit-up in rapt attention.

At the end of training, the child will decide to go into garment – making or printing or auto-body repair/spraying or any identified needs of his choice. This, he will embark on, on a large scale to the extent of employing labour. He will merely be the managing director, directing an effective running of the enterprise. This explains why it is not entirely correct to think that an entrepreneur is a petty, small – time hustler who starts up an SME and ends up an SME operator. Every day we read about start-up operators that started out on a micro scale and ended up as managers and directors of mega enterprises. We enjoin you to google up some of them. Read about U-Hall. Read about the Wright brothers. Read about the e-bay. Back here in Nigeria, operators of now big transport companies started as Morris – Minor – Drivers. Something near to it is the present Keke tricycle. We are referring to the Ekene Dili Chukwus, the Ifesinachis, the Peace Mass, the ABCs and so on. Read about Coscharis. Read about Cletus Ibeto and so on. Coscharis started as a spare parts trader but now holds the Franchise for the automobiles of Ford, Range-Rover and BMW companies. We can go on and on.

1.3 Entrepreneurship in the MDG:
Entrepreneurship in the MDG is the life-skill for young people programme as provided in the Education – for – All (EFA) scheme of the Dakar Framework for Action. The life – skill – programme is one of the six internationally agreed human development goals aimed at the learning needs of young people. For the purpose of mnemonics, the goals address the following:

- Early Childhood and Care Education
- Free and compulsory basic education for all children (girls in particular)
- Acquisition of life-skills for young people
- Adult literacy (at least 50%)
- Gender Equality
- Qualitative Education
EFA is a sub-set of MDG with a target date of 2015. Nigerian representatives attended the year 2000 world Education Forum (WEF) that threw these challenges to the world and the Nigerian representatives brought back reports.

It is important to note that it took Nigeria six years to start reacting to the challenges. This is a fact because it was in 2006 in its 53rd meeting (in Calabar) that the National Council on Education (NCE) directed all Higher Education Agencies to ensure the production of training documents with a view to fast-track the teaching of entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions. By the end of 2015, i.e. the MDG deadline, many Colleges had no Entrepreneurship Development Centres to drive their Research and Development (R&D) activities. SDG, i.e. post – MDG with a 2030 deadline, has featured entrepreneurship (innovation) in its target carriers. Let us leverage on the opportunity created by this ABEN conference to ensure that Nigeria will not fritter away this second chance of evolving a total innovative paradigm to Education in the country. Briefly, we shall discuss the state of entrepreneurship at every level of Nigeria Education System:

1.4 **Entrepreneurship at the Basic Level:** As earlier on pointed out, entrepreneurship is now offered in JSSI of the BEC. We argued that it should run vertically to the SSS.

1.5 **Entrepreneurship in Senior Secondary School:** This obtains as we earlier on presented. Our position remains that the JSSI entrepreneurship should run through to the SSS and that the enumerated trade-subjects should be collapsed into ‘Innovation-Practice’ and run through the HEIs. In other words, kidpreneurship should take primacy of place over Adultpreneurship because as the Igbo say, ‘you do not learn the use of the left-hand at old age’.

1.6 **Entrepreneurship in Colleges of Education:** In compliance to the NCE directive, the NCCE opened an entrepreneurship Desk and joined the Presidential Committee set up for the purpose. The Committee traveled round the globe and brought back models. Before this, the Colleges were not offering any programme of entrepreneurship even in the VTE programmes. It was the third edition of the NCCE Minimum Standards that had a programme of entrepreneurship that was restricted to the VTE programmes. Junaid (2014). But with the activities of the Presidential Committee, the NCCE Curriculum now has a GSE (224) course in entrepreneurship and it is compulsory for all NCE – student – teachers. Also, all the VTE programmes have two courses in entrepreneurship. The directives of the N.C.E. include that each student in HEI will attain, at least, four credits of entrepreneurship before graduation. This is yet to be fully realized in the colleges.
Also NCCE has been organizing training and retraining programmes for College lecturers on entrepreneurship. The memorable one was in 2015 when over 100 lecturers were taken to Aberdeen-Scotland and Dubai for an intensive workshop on the subject. At the end of the workshop, the participants appealed to the NCCE, Tetfund and the ISSL, UK to organize a similar training for Provosts. As College Chief Executives, the training will psych up their sensibilities to be refocused on the paradigm of ‘Education for Self-reliance’ as a Panacea to reducing graduate unemployment and youth restiveness in Nigeria.

1.7 Entrepreneurship in Polytechnics: The case for Polytechnics has not presented any chasm of difference between them and the colleges. Since 1995, (before the NCE directives) the programme was inserted (Kofarmata, 2014:144) into the teaching curricula of ND and HND Business Administration and Management, only. Though the NPE clearly stated that Polytechnic education should provide for practical, technical and skill based knowledge, scholars still believed that entrepreneurship was all about managing a small or medium business. Presently, the NBTE has tried to meet up with the NCE directives. One, training documents for effective implementations of the programme have been developed. They are the curriculum, teacher’s guide and training manual. Two, the programme is now exposed to all the students. Three, every polytechnic now has an EDC. Infact, NBTE has since tied the success of accreditation to the existence of an EDC. Also, polytechnics lecturers have been attending, both local and international, conferences on entrepreneurship.

1.8 Entrepreneurship in Universities: In much the same way with the other two legs of the tripod in tertiary education, the NUC was awakened by the NCE directives. In 2007, it created a department of students support services with entrepreneurship as its major role. Presently, each university offers the programme with a 4 credit unit course at the GST segment as specified in the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS). A curriculum for Bsc in the programme has also been developed. Also, each university has been asked to establish an EDC and appoint a substantive director as the head. There is also an Association of Entrepreneurship Educators (AEE) with headquarters in BUK. (NCCE is the Vice President). Similarly, in a workshop anchored by the NUC at the University of Essex, UK, a network of African Student Entrepreneurs (NASE) was conceived and the hosting right was given to the Kaduna State University. Again, the NUC has facilitated exchange and other collaboration activities in the programme between some Nigerian Universities and their foreign counterparts. Some of them are:
1.9 **State of Unemployment in Nigeria:** In the abstract, we mentioned unemployment and referred to recent recruitment exercises. There are other case studies. The factsheets of the National Bureau of statistics (NBS) can be likened to casualty figures of the police in genocide reports. According to the NBS, unemployment in Nigeria stood at 6.4% for the final quarter of 2014 and increased to 7.5% for the first three months of 2015. What this means is that in Nigeria’s economically active population of 102.8 million people with a labour force of 73.4 million, 75.9% is employed, 16.6% underemployed and only 7.5% is unemployed. Expectedly, these figures have been taken by Nigerians with a pinch of salt. Hussaini Abdu from PLAN International said that ‘this is a very unserious way to deal with a national problem’.

As outrageous as these figures can be, it should be noted that Nigeria’s unemployment trend is more on the increase than the other way out.

We earlier on mentioned the MDG and one of the international development goals was poverty eradication. In other climes, the menace of poverty tends to be in the descendant order but in Nigeria, the reverse appears to be the case. A cursory look at an old CBN release would appear to affirm this claim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>18.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>34.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>39.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>67.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>68.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>70.00</td>
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</tbody>
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(CBN, 2011)

The order is in ascendance. In fact, 70% of Nigerian graduates are not gainfully employed. An estimated 3 million Nigerians, most of them HEI graduates, enter the
labour market every year. Only about 10% of the 100,000 HEI graduates every year find jobs in the formal sector. The picture is not bright at all and this explains why most Nigerian youths want to play football, act films or hide in a tyre compartment of an aircraft and to do an ‘Andrew’.

1.10 An Entrepreneurship Solution: A typical example of entrepreneurship solution of our dream has already started in FCE(T) Omoku with the able leadership of Dr. PAC Ordu. We are referring to the new entrepreneurship farm. Our position on is that one, the student should be trained on how to farm various products extending to animal husbandry. Two, he should be trained on how to access market for sales extending to export. Tell the student that oil has collapsed and farm products are good alternatives that can be exported to earn farm-dollar instead of petrol dollar. Build his capacity to be able to relate with SME friendly commercial banks like the Fidelity Bank, Nigeria Export-Import (NEXIM) Bank and government-SME-supporting agencies like the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC). Make academic – calendar – arrangements to include student-weeks whereupon you organize capacity building workshops. Invite resource persons from Lagos business school, for example to train the student on the operations of these agencies and Banks and how to leverage on their different credit platforms to grow a farm and market products to the level of export.

A perusal of an ILO document (2007) confirms that small businesses including the self-employed are now major vehicles for net job creation in Europe, USA and South East Asia. These countries provide entrepreneurship education (EE) at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. In Africa, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Zambia have adopted models from the above countries. Their universities have gone beyond the first degree to offer master’s and even Ph.D degree programmes in entrepreneurship Education.

Belated though, Nigeria is fast following up on the global trends in the discipline. The first Ph.D in the programme was earned by Dr. Chinonye Emmanuel of covenant University, Ota in Ogun state. Others have joined including Dr. E.A. Dangana of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Dr. PAC Ordu of FCE(T) Omoku, Dr. S. Iheunenkwu of Abia State COE, Arochukwu and so on and so forth. The President of AEE, Prof. M. Sagagi of BUK, has contributed immensely in the area and he is a world – class professor in the discipline. For now, we think he is the first professor of entrepreneurship in Africa.

No other time could have been more revealing than now in inviting us to make this lead presentation. With the epileptic state of oil prices, the low rate of the Naira, the crash in the stock market and the down-turns in the other market economies being operated in Nigeria of today, entrenchment of entrepreneurship in the school system is, somewhat
inevitable. The Nigeria graduate has no choice but to be entrepreneurial. He should be trained to feel, hear, smell and see opportunities (Bamiro, 2014:9); turn them into businesses; create values for them and mobilize resources to transform them into enterprises. The curriculum of the Nigerian Education System should aim at producing a multi-sensory-compliant entrepreneur. Specifically, this graduate should be able to be responsive to an ordered **business plan** as in the following:

- Identify societal needs
- Locate market for the needs
- Make projections for the needs
- Choose an operational base
- Evolve a production strategy
- Adopt a synergizing option
- Adopt a security plan
- Budget for short and long plans
- Pronounce goals to be attained.

This is illustrated as in fig. II:

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Plan
  ↓
Plan 2
  ↓
Plan 3
  ↓
Plan 4
  ↓
Plan 5
  ↓
Plan 6
  ↓
Plan 7
  ↓
Plan 8
  ↓
Plan 9
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This structure is pyramidal. The first plan should stimulate an action for the second plan and so on.

Fig. III

The illustration in fig. III is an inverted pyramid version of the illustration in fig. II. The learning experiences of ECCE reinforce those of the primary, JSS and so on. This shows that the structure of a school based entrepreneurship programme (fig. II) is in inverse proportion to the structure of a vertically curriculum-based educational system. The stages in fig. II are ordered such that number one is a feeder to number two and so on. Any shuffle of the order will be unprofessional and unacceptable. Such an entrepreneur that violates the order of a business plan is a quack and his practice cannot be registrable.

In each of the stages, the teacher is expected to connect the student to the real world skills that will lead to successes. Equally the student is expected to show hunger in imbibing the skills, competencies and attributes of creation, ingenuity, innovation, incubation, inspiration and promise as required in the training frameworks. The two structures presented are fitting templates to the advocacy espoused by the Chief Executive Officer of Best of the World Enterprises limited. She said, “Curriculum review in secondary and tertiary institutions should inspire students to focus on careers and skills with prospects for employment.” (Chinwokwu 26)

1.11 Issues/Challenges/Strategies:

The first issue in the entrepreneurship discussions we have so far raised is the Enterprise-in-Discipline (E-in-D) programme. By this we mean, that the student should be trained to be able to make an enterprise in whatever discipline he specializes in school. If he studied English for instance, he should be able to make an enterprise out of English. This goes for every discipline offered in HEI.
The second challenge is a revisit and emphasis on our earlier position that the graduate can cross over to areas he did not study in school. Cyprian Ekwensi was a pharmacist but he made his marks in prose fictions. Noam Chomsky was a mathematician but he made his marks in linguistics. Adokie Amasiemeka is a lawyer but he made his mark in soccer. Scholarship is inter and intra related and this explains why we have interdisciplinary studies of Biochemistry, Geo-physics, psycho-linguistics and so on. A graduate must not end all endeavours at the door-step of the discipline in which he holds a qualification.

The third issue is on Tetfund and its intervention mechanisms. In 2014, Tetfund appropriated a hundred million Naira to each universities for the construction of EDCs. No kobo was appropriated for polytechnics and colleges. This should be reconsidered in line with the kidpreneurship model we earlier on mentioned. Products of colleges operate in the classrooms of the ECCE, Primary and JSS I – III. A catch-them-young mantra is hereby advocated.

The final challenge to note in this presentation is the concept of life-long-skills. The general opinion is that life-skill applies only to the acquisition of abilities in making saops, mending sole of shoes, hair – barbing and such related penny – earning handiworks. This is wrong. They are rather a sub – set of the entire gamut that is involved in skill acquisition.

Essentially, life – skills are a set of human values acquired through training which the individual applies in sorting out challenges of everyday life. Our position is that the role of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian should inculcate this type of skill in the mindset of the Nigerian children from base to top.

Conclusion: We have discussed the state of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. It does appear that a uniform definition of the entrepreneur has not been agreed upon. It is important to sort this out because where you are going will determine the type of navigation compass that will lead you on. Also, we raised issues and challenges that have been holding down Nigeria’s effort to evolve a functional entrepreneurship school curriculum. Our strategy is two-pronged. One, a scheme of ordered business plan should form the conceptual framework and two, a catch-them-young paradigm should vertically drive the kidpreneurship reality of our educational system. The much funded adultpreneurship is akin to the use of the left hand at old age.
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