# 직무자원으로서 ESG 활동 인식이 직무만족과 친사회적 행동을 통해 직무수행능력 향상에 미치는 영향, 콜센터 직원들을 대상으로

김준형<sup>\*</sup>, 박소라<sup>\*\*</sup> 제주한라대학교 호텔경영학과 조교수<sup>\*</sup>, 전남대학교 경영학부 조교수<sup>\*\*</sup>

# Employees' Environment, Social, and Governance Activity Recognition as Job Resource Enhancing Job Performance via Job Satisfaction and Prosocial Behavior among Call Center Employees

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**요 약** 이 연구는 콜센터직원의 ESG 활동 지각이 직무만족, 친사회적 활동 및 직무 성과에 미치는 영향을 본다. 연구 를 수행하기 위하여, 국내 주요 보험사의 콜센터직원 264명으로부터 데이터를 수집한 후 SmartPLS 4.0을 사용하여 분 석을 수행하였다. 분석 결과에 따르면, ESG 활동에 대한 직원 인식이 직무만족을 유의하게 향상시켰다. 하지만 ESG 활 동 지각이 친사회적 행동에 미치는 영향은 유의하나 상대적으로 미미했다. 직무만족은 직원의 친사회적 행동과 직무 성 과를 긍정적으로 높이는 역할을 수행하였다. 또한, 친사회적 행동은 직무 성과에 긍정적으로 높여주었다. 중요한 시사 점으로는 직원의 기업 ESG 경영 활동에 대한 지각이 그들의 직무자원 역할을 한다는 것을 밝혀낸 것이다. 이러한 직원 들의 지각이 직원의 태도, 행동 및 성과에 영향을 준다는 사실은 기업의 윤리적 행동을 직원에게 홍보하는 것에 대한 장점을 보여준다.

#### 주제어 ESG 활동 지각, 직무 요구-자원 모델, 직무 만족, 친 사회적 행동, 직무 성과

Abstract This study examines the role of Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) activity recognition on job satisfaction, prosocial activities, and job performance among customer representatives working in call center environments. After gathering data from 264 call center workers in major South Korean insurance companies, the analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4.0. This study's findings reveal that employee recognition of ESG activities significantly enhanced job satisfaction. The impact of ESG activity recognition on prosocial behavior was positive but relatively weak. Job satisfaction influences both prosocial behavior and the job performance of employees. Finally, prosocial behavior positively influences job performance. The most significant finding is that employees' recognition of companies' ESG management practices serves as a job resource. This recognition enhances employees' attitudes, behavior, and performance, signaling the potential benefits of informing employees about corporations' ethical behaviors.

Key Words ESG activity recognition, Job Demands-Resources model, Job satisfaction, Prosocial behavior, Job performance

Received 07 Apr 2024, Revised 17 Apr 2024 Accepted 22 Apr 2024 Corresponding Author: So Ra Park (Chonnam National University) Email: doorae0207@jnu.ac.kr ISSN: 2466-1139(Print) ISSN: 2714-013X(Online) © Industrial Promotion Institute. All rights reserved. This is an openaccess article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (http://creativecommons.org/ licenses/by-nc/3.0), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

# 1. Introduction

The adoption of ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance) management is another significant trend in business. ESG is devised to measure current corporate sustainability and strategically promote it using the ESG framework. The essential goal of ESG management is to prioritize the interests of diverse stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability of the organization. Economies, including the EU and South Korea, are enforcing ESG-related disclosure (e.g., Integrated Reporting to explain how ESG performances lead to their long-term sustainability and EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive requiring businesses to disclose their ESG management practices) and certifications (e.g., EU's Fit for 55 Package, a suite of thirteen legislative proposals impacting climate, energy, land use, transportation, and taxation). In addition to legal pressures. important stakeholders. including industry partners, customers, and financial institutions, are compelling corporations to be ESG-attested [1]

Service literatures have highlighted the significant role of prosocial behavior in frontline employees in the context of service environments [2], [3]. Prior research has focused on customer orientation, conflicts with customers, employee's job satisfaction, and performance, with significant emphasis on customers' perspectives [1]. However, little attention has been paid to understanding the relationship between employees' perceptions of ESG corporate activities within service organizations.

Although recent studies have attempted to understand the antecedents of frontline service employees' job satisfaction grounded in job-demands resource theory [2], [3], there is limited understanding of the role of employees' recognition of ESG activities in predicting employee attitude, behavior, and job performance in the context of a call center. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the structural relationship between employees' overall recognition of ESG activities, employees' job satisfaction, prosocial behavior, and job performance within the high-tech insurance call center industry.

# 2. Theoretical background

#### 2.1 Job demand-resources model

The job demands-resources model theory relates to job demands and job resources. In contrast, job demands, including work overload, emotional demands. and work-home conflict. bring physiological and/or psychological costs, and job resources, for instance, autonomy, social support, and performance feedback, help employees achieve work goals, as well as reduce job demands and associated costs from job demands [4]. Job demands deplete mental energy and cause mental burnout through a straining process [5], whereas the job resources provide opportunities to learn, and task resources include time control and method control [5], [6]. High job demands are related to engagement via self-efficacy [6], flow [7], and reduction of absence duration [4], whereas the absence frequency [4] and emotional distress [8] are related to lack of job resources. In this way, job resources further broaden people's thought-action modes and build their enduring resources, triggering gain cycles.

Building on the job demand-resources model theory, call center research has demonstrated the relationship between various job demand-resources and employee well-being [4], [5], [9]. Bakker et al. [4] describes two processes based on JD-R. The energy-driven process relating to emotional demands, task changes, and sickness absence) generates work pressure and computer problems, which subsequently influences employees' health and turnover intentions. Conversely, the motivation-

driven process is related to job resources such as social support, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and time control, which predicted call center employees' involvement. Molino et al.'s [9] study discusses the relationship between JD-R and emotional dissonance, a characteristic that emotional distress call center workers may experience. They discovered that certain demands (customers' verbal aggression and workload) add to emotional dissonance, resulting in the final dependent. affective discomfort. Additionally, customer's verbal aggression (a demand) directly increased affective discomfort. Moreover, job autonomy (a resource) negatively affected emotional dissonance, and supervisory support and job autonomy directly reduced affective discomfort. This demonstrates that job resources reduce both emotional dissonance and affective discomfort. Schaufeli et al.'s [5] longitudinal research indicates that fluctuations in job demand and resources affect burnout, work engagement, and "involuntary" sickness absenteeism. Furthermore, positive job engagement can produce a positive gain spiral, leading to increased work engagement.

Importantly, although platform businesses that adopt technological enablers of fourth-generation industry revolution may cause job insecurity, prior studies supported the effect of technology on employees' reduced well-being and job satisfaction and associated behavior [10].

### 2.2 Employees' ESG activity recognition

ESG widens the corporate focus of management activities from maximizing financial performance to managing all relevant material issues in the pillars of ESG to ensure corporate sustainability [11]. Some material issues regarding the three pillars include environmental concerns such as greenhouse gas emission, pollution, water, and biodiversity, social concerns such as labor practices, employee development programs, product safety, protection of customer data, and community issues; and governance concerns such as shareholder right, board diversity. executive compensation. female representation on the board. Therefore. organizational ESG activities are concerned with reflecting upon diverse stakeholders' needs and finding solutions that are not always financially sound. Therefore, a many ESG studies focus on the relationship between ESG ratings and companies' financial performances [1].

Research on employees' CSR/ESG perception/ recognition predicting employees' attitudes and behaviors, micro-CSR research, was largely overlooked in academia until recently. However, employees are enablers in ESG management, important stakeholders subject to ESG management, and crucial participants in ESG-enabled corporate culture [12]. Therefore, how they are recognizing ESG management seems to be highly relevant to individual and organizational outcomes. Ko et al. [13] defined CSR activity recognition as employees' positive acknowledgement of corporate CSR activities. They identified how employees' perception of CSR activity recognition leads to employees' organizational citizenship behavior through organizational identity. Piao et al. [14] investigated how ESG activities influenced occupational stress longitudinally among Japanese employees who worked in 11 corporations. Social activities mostly influence employees' psychological well-being positively, and certain environmental activities related to corporate procedural and sourcing issues reduce occupational stress. Further. ESG/CSR perception is known to change the organizational culture [15]. employees' cognition such compassion at work [12], and employees' behavior such as performance [12], organizational citizenship behavior [13], [16].

Several studies are looking into employees' perception of ESG/CSR activities and the cate-

gorization of ESG activities by concerned stakeholders or by pillars of activities. ESG activity recognition was perceived as a single construct with sub-constructs in the E, S, and G pillars in multiple research including Jin and Kim's [15]. The research reveals that employees who recognize an organization's ESG activities find changed meaning in their work tasks and, consequently, perform better at their tasks via their change support behavior, innovative organizational culture, and job crafting. Those three mediating variables can be classified as job resources since they create a better work environment and work performance [4]. Hur et al. [12] created and implemented the composite score of employees' recognition of corporate ESG activities for various stakeholders. including customers, shareholders, the board of directors, employees, and society. Their composite score includes the social and governance aspects of ESG activities. Employee's CSR perception increased intrinsic motivation of hotel employees which in turn increased their organizational commitment among the hotel service workers.

#### 2.3 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the emotional evaluation of service workers on their job situation and experiences. Job demands and resources, such as the quality of the coworkers and supervisor, and pay levels influence job satisfaction for service employees. Job satisfaction is important, especially for service employees, since employees' behavior following job satisfaction is a crucial factor in service quality. According to Lee et al. [17], job satisfaction increased with employee training, and service rewards positively affected employees' role-prescribed prosocial behavior towards customers. Further, employees' work attitudes influence behavioral outcomes that are important for organizations, such as organizational commitment [17], organizational performance, quality of products and services, and customer satisfaction. Moreover, maintaining a quality workforce is important in service industries. Job satisfaction predicts behavioral outcomes such as the intention to switch jobs, the degree of absenteeism, and turnover.

# 2.4 Prosocial activities

It is argued that prosocial behaviors exhibited by contact employees may be directed at coworkers and/or consumers while benefiting the individual or organization [18]. Bettencourt and Brown [19] highlighted that contact employees' prosocial behaviors that benefit the firm, include employees' discretionary behaviors exceeding formal roles, expected customer service provided by employees, and cooperative behaviors toward other employees. Prosocial activity may include actions taken by employees to protect the organization as suggested by McNeely and Meglino [20]. An original concept of organizational citizenship behavior, which is a subset of prosocial organizational behavior, is defined as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization [18]". Prior studies investigating employees' prosocial behavior have been associated with benefiting both the organization and coworkers [21], [22], Literature on service employees paid significant attention to the concept of prosocial behavior. Meanwhile, prosocial behaviors play a significant role in terms of customer-oriented service provision in various service settings. Frontline employees' prosocial behaviors may delight the customers by going "out of the way" or "beyond the call" [19].

# 2.5 Job performance

Job performance can be derived from the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and capabilities, especially

when employees exert effort to achieve organizational goals because of their concern for the organization. While an organization's goals can be achieved when employees perform their job efficiently, contributing to the smooth operation of the organization, this is related to both 'formally requested outcomes' and/or 'discretionary behavior'. Specifically, Lee and Jo [23] have investigated in-role performance and extrarole performance in the context of digital transformation at the company. They indicated that inrole performance relates to personal performance producing formal outcomes, while extra-role performance relates to the facilitation of effective functioning [24]. Similarly, various researchers have investigated job performance with regards to task performance (i.e., performance related to work tasks and activities) and contextual performance (i.e., positive behaviors toward coworkers or the organization) [25], [26],

# 3. Hypothesis and Research Model

#### 3.1 Proposed research model

The current research aims to determine whether employees' recognition of corporate ESG efforts influences employee job performance through job satisfaction and prosocial behavior among insurance call center employees.

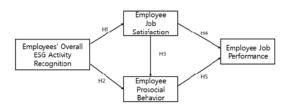


Fig. 1 Research model

#### 3.2 Research hypothesis

This study employs a job demands-resources perspective to study the mechanisms through which

recognition of ESG activities influences employee job satisfaction, prosocial behavior, and ultimately, job performance. We posit that a work environment where employees can easily perceive and recognize corporate activities for sustainability can serve as a job resource that enhances employees' job satisfaction and their prosocial behavior towards employees. The following are the hypotheses for this study.

Lee and Park [11] found that parcel service employees' recognition of their companies' ESG environmental and social activities increased their job satisfaction. Additionally, employees' job satisfaction was found to increase through service training and service rewards related to social ESG activities [16].

Hypothesis 1: Employees' ESG activity recognition positively influences their job satisfaction.

Ozkazanc-Pan [27] explains how an organization's CSR can be understood as a corporation's CSR activities. Social identity theory explains how members of a group align their goals with the group goals. Employees who perceive organizational ESG efforts can also perform prosocial behaviors independently. Bettencout & Brown [18] demonstrated that employees' perception of workplace fairness, a social part of ESG, well predicted the prosocial behavior of contact center employees in the banking industry. Public service ethos, "emphasizes service, duty, and obligation, rather than financial viability, profit or shareholder value" [28]. For British public servants, increased organizational citizenship behavior is one aspect of prosocial behavior [22].

Hypothesis 2: Employees' ESG activity recognition positively influences their prosocial behavior.

Employees' job satisfaction has a marginally significant influence on the prosocial behavior of call center employees when considering the impact of workplace fairness on job satisfaction [19]. Furthermore, Lee & Park [11] observed that service employees' satisfaction with their job leads to quality customer service, which is an essential aspect of service prosocial behavior. Lee et al. [17] found that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of employees prosocial behavior, particularly their role-prescribed service behavior. Therefore, job satisfaction will have a positive impact on employees' prosocial behavior as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Employees' job satisfaction positively influences their prosocial behavior.

There are several research that indicate employees' job performance as the final dependent variable of ESG activities. Jin & Kim's [15] research indicates that increased job performance results from employees' recognition of corporate ESG activities; change support behavior, innovative organizational culture, and job crafting as mediators. There is a correlation between environmental management practices and labor productivity [29], [30]. Delmas & Pekovic [29] studied over 5000 French companies' adoption of environmental management practices with ISO certification and demonstrated the impact on labor productivity either directly or through mediators such as training and interpersonal contact. Ma et al. [30] demonstrated that Chinese companies with ISO 9001 exhibited better labor productivity, due to their high level of quality management.

Hypothesis 4: Employees' job satisfaction positively influences their job performance.

Social exchange theory posits that employees are motivated to support the other party, building on mutual obligation and trust [21]. Employees tend to exhibit a willingness to engage in prosocial behavior at both individual and organizational levels. In organizations that support employees, it has been proposed that employees also support supervisors within the organization, which in turn benefits the organization throughout the organization-supervisor exchange relationship [21]. Literature suggests that when employees are motivated to go the extra mile, they are more likely to demonstrate high performance. For instance, Rayner et al. [22] demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior, an extra-role prosocial behavior, influenced their job performance within the public service context. The prior study also confirmed the positive influence of employees' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in their work on both in-role and extra-role performance.

Hypothesis 5: Employees' prosocial behavior positively influences their job performance.

# 4. Research Method

# 4.1 Measurement development and data collection

Employee's overall ESG activity recognition was measured using items from Jin & Kim's [15] study. For instance, four items were used to measure environment-related ESG activity recognition, four items for the social aspect of ESG activity recognition. and three items for the recognition of governancerelated ESG activity. Four items on employee job satisfaction [31] were adapted to consider this study's context. Questions regarding prosocial behaviors were adopted from Bettencourt and Brown's [19] research to align the context of this research. Five job performance measurement items are from Jin & Kim's [15] study. To investigate the proposed relationships, the current research collected survey data from call center workers in the four large insurance companies running high-technology call centers in South Korea between April 2023 and December 2023. To test the hypotheses, we gathered and analyzed 230 responses.

Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
ESG Activity Recognition (roh_A=.917)	E_ESG	.724	.899	.902	.758
	S_ESG	.945	]		
	G_ESG	.926			
Job Satisfaction (roh_A=.915)	Satis1	.875	.909	.909	.715
	Satis2	.735			
	Satis3	.922			
	Satis4	.830			
Prosocial Behavior (roh_A=.868)	Proso1	.642	.838	.849	.656
	Proso2	.890			
	Proso3	.874			
Job Performance (roh_A=.920)	Perf1	.796	.919	.919	.695
	Perf2	.843			
	Perf3	.859			
	Perf4	.851			
	Perf5	.818			

Table 1. Tests of measurement validity and reliability

# 4.2 Measurement development and data collection

Before conducting the PLS-SEM analysis, tests for convergent validity, internal consistency, and discriminant validity were performed. As shown in Table 1, all standardized loadings exceeded the criterion of .5, ensuring convergent validity. Moreover, all the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), another test of convergent validity, exceeded .656 (the minimum criteria $\rangle$  .5). For internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The values ranged between .838 and .919, meeting the minimum of .7. In addition, rho\_A(pA) ranged between .868 and .920 (the minimum criteria  $\rangle$  .7), while the composite reliability ranged between .849 and .919 (the minimum criteria $\rangle$ .7).

For the assessment of the discriminatory validity of latent variables, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings analysis, or HTMT (heterotraitmonotrait ratio) can be used. This study utilized HTMT to test the validity because it is a more conservative test than the others [32]. The minimum criterion of HTMT is .90, and all calculated values are less than the minimum criteria, indicating discriminatory validity among latent variables.

Table 2. HTMT for discriminatory validity analysis

	ESG Activity Recognition	Job Satisfaction	Prosocial Activity	Job Performance
ESG Activity Recognition				
Job Satisfaction	.606			
Prosocial Activity	.518	.673		
Job Performance	.583	.854	.774	

Ind. Variable	Dep. Variable	VIF	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	f2	Q2
ESG Activity Recognition	Job Satisfaction	1.00	.306	.446	.296
ESG Activity Recognition	Prosocial Activity	1.446	.379	.038	.202
Job Satisfaction	Prosocial Activity	1.446		.277	
Job Satisfaction	Job Performance	1.562	.683	.687	.271
Prosocial Activity	Job Performance	1.562		.231	

Table 3. Tests of multicollinearity and explanatory power

# 4.3 Results

Based on the reliability and validity of the measurements and the constructs, VIF is calculated to test for collinearity. PLS-SEM utilizes  $R^2$ , f2, and Q2 to evaluate the appropriateness of the structural model [32]. All VIF values range between 1.00 and 1.562. No multicollinearity is observed because all values are well below the baseline of 5. R-square adjusted (adjusted  $R^2$ ) explains the variance in the endogenous variable explained by the exogenous variable(s).

Job satisfaction has an  $\mathbb{R}^2$  value of .306, prosocial activity .379, and job performance .683. When an

 $R^2$  value is .67, it indicates substantial explanatory power, 0.33 moderate and .19 weak power [33]. Therefore, the current model has significant explanatory power for job performance, a medium power for prosocial activity, and a moderately smaller explanatory power for job satisfaction. f2 indicates a change in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  when one of the exogenous variables is omitted from the model. This change in  $R^2$  should demonstrate whether the omitted variable is essential in explaining the endogenous variable. According to Cohen [34], an f2 effect size equal or greater than, 35 signifies large effect; between .35 and .15 medium; and between .15 and .02 small. As shown in Table 3. ESG activity recognition has a large effect on job satisfaction (.446), and a small effect on prosocial activity (.038). Job satisfaction has a medium effect (.277) on prosocial activity and a significant effect on job performance (.687). Finally, prosocial activity has a medium effect on job performance (.231), Q2 demonstrates predictive relevance of endogenous constructs when the value is greater than 0. All variables show Q2 values greater than 0.

Table 4. Resul	ts of	hypothesis	testing
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Hypothesis	Coeff.	T val.	P val.	Result
H1 ESG Activity Recognition → Job Satisfaction	.607	9.804	<.001	Supported
H2 ESG Activity Recognition → Prosocial Activity	.172	1.775	>.05	Fail to Support
H3 Job Satisfaction → Prosocial Activity	.569	6.014	<.001	Supported
H4 Job Satisfaction → Job Performance	.616	12.156	<.001	Supported
H5 Prosocial Activity → Job Performance	.352	4.214	<.001	Supported

As shown in Table 4. all the hypothesis except for hypothesis 2 was supported by the analysis.

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

This study sought to understand the structural relationship between employees' overall ESG activity recognition, employee job satisfaction, employee prosocial behavior, and employee job performance in the context of call center service employees. This study contributes significant knowledge to the call center service environment, which is characterized by emotional dissonance and digital shadow work caused by employees' unseen work, stress, and effort related to technology with little compensation.

First. ESG activity recognition is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Prior studies have provided an understanding of the effect of employees' perceived CSR activities on their job satisfaction; however, it is suggested that CSR perception influences job satisfaction through organizational identification, justice, and trust [12], [35], By expanding on the aforementioned relationship, this research extends the understanding of ESG, which is one of the under-explored relationships in the service literature. This finding aligns with Piao. Xie. and Managi's [14] study which confirmed the positive effect of corporate ESG activities on psychological well-being. Second. ESG activity recognition marginally increased prosocial activity at t=1,775 (p=.076) but did not have a significant influence (H2). This result is similar to Kim & Kim's [16] research. which demonstrated that perceived ESG management influenced organizational citizenship behavior only through an attitudinal construct, social value orientation. Furthermore. Piao et al. [14] have emphasized a thorough examination of corporate governance, which was established to negatively influence occupational stress, despite the positive influence of corporate social activities on job satisfaction. Third, this study has demonstrated the positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee prosocial behavior. This indicates that satisfied employees are likely to demonstrate role-prescribed customer service, extra-role customer service, and cooperation. This finding has reinforced a previous understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and employee's prosocial behavior [20]. The current study has extended the research context from secretaries at a university to service employees at call centers. Fourth, this study has confirmed the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Its finding is consistent with the definition of organizational citizenship behavior, conceptualized as an enhanced social and psychological context that leads to task performance [36] and the service-profit chain perspective, which theorizes the relationship between job satisfaction and high-performance levels [37]. Finally, the current study confirmed the positive association between employee prosocial behavior and employee job performance. Although prior studies have demonstrated the association between prosocial motivation and job performance [26], this study deepens the understanding of how contact employees exhibit prosocial behavior, resulting in employee job satisfaction in the context of call center where both the energy- and motivation-driven process exists [4].

There are several limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research address these limitations. First, this study focused on the role of ESG activities within the insurance call center context. However, ESG activities influence employees' psychological well-being and may be dependent on employees' job tasks. Piao et al. [14] indicated that social activities mostly influence employees' psychological well-being positively, and some environmental activities related to corporate procedural and sourcing issues reduced occupational stress. However, other environmental activities (such as activities to reduce pollution, waste, and contamination) involving employees' active partici-

pation increased workload and health risks, and governance activities (such as global accounting compliance and other requirements to enhance corporate governance) were related to occupational stress levels. This research model can be tested in different industries and compared with results. Secondly, current research examined comprehensive ESG activity recognition to test the assumptions. However, separately examining ESG activity recognition can reveal the differential influence of respective ESG management pillars. Therefore, future research should observe the impact of individual pillar activity recognition on the dependent variables. Thirdly, the findings of the research is hard to generalize outside the insurance industry utilizing call centers. Fourthly, the understanding of the results is rather limited. Therefore, using a qualitative approach, to investigate employees' ESG activity recognition should enhance the understanding of the quantitative results from this research. Finally, this study focuses on only the job demand side of the job demands-resources model. Research on how technology-related and emotional-labor-related demands can work with ESG-related resources can better highlight the impact of ESG management on employees' attitudes and behaviors.

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