



Digital Transformation in Islamic Education Management and Leadership: Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities in the Society 5.0 Era

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to comprehensively analyze the digital transformation in Islamic education management and leadership, with a focus on the strategies, challenges, and opportunities that emerged in the Society 5.0 era. Departing from the urgent need for Islamic educational institutions to adapt to technological changes and global social dynamics, this study uses an integrative literature review approach by combining the results of empirical and conceptual research published between 2020 and 2025 from various reputable international journals. The data were analyzed through thematic synthesis and meta-analysis that included strategic dimensions, digital leadership, learning innovation, and spiritual values in Islamic education governance. The results show that the success of digital transformation depends on the synergy between digital leadership competencies, Islamic values-based organizational culture, readiness of technological infrastructure, and sustainability-oriented policy support. This study found four main themes, namely spiritual-digital leadership, technology-based management innovation, digital ethics in Islamic education, and adaptive readiness for Society 5.0. The findings confirm that digital transformation is not only a technological process, but also an epistemological and value transformation that reflects the balance between faith, science, and charity. This research contributes to enriching the literature on Islamic education management and leadership by offering a new conceptual framework that integrates spirituality, technology, and sustainability, and provides strategic direction for the future development of Islamic education policies and practices.

Keywords: digital transformation, management and leadership of Islamic education, strategies, challenges, opportunities, Society 5.0

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the acceleration of digital transformation, the education sector is undergoing fundamental changes that require rapid adaptation from educational institutions. The concept of Society 5.0—a "super smart" society that integrates advanced technology and human life holistically—urges all elements of learning to move away from traditional paradigms to more adaptive, responsive, and digitally connected systems (Shahidi Hamedani et al., 2024). In the context of education management and leadership, this requires the development of new strategies, digital competencies for education leaders, and the integration of technology in governance systems and learning processes (McCarthy et al., 2023). Especially in Islamic education, institutions such as madrassas and Islamic boarding schools face an additional challenge: how to maintain religious values and Islamic character while effectively integrating digital transformation (Suhendi, 2024).

Although many studies have highlighted digitalization in general education, there is a significant gap regarding the implementation of digital transformation specifically in the context of Islamic education management and leadership in the era of Society 5.0. Several studies show obstacles such as limited infrastructure, low digital competence of teachers/institutions, and disparities in access between regions (Nadifa & Ambarwati, 2024). However, a review of the literature that integrates strategies, challenges, and opportunities in the management and leadership of Islamic education with a digital transformation perspective is still relatively limited, especially those that use an integrative study approach with a comprehensive managerial-leadership dimension. In addition, the conceptual relationship between Islamic education leadership theory, Islamic education management, and digital transformation frameworks has not been clearly mapped out in an integrative framework.

In a theoretical framework, this research takes the approach of Islamic education management and transformational leadership as the main foundation for understanding how the digital transformation process can be implemented. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the importance of vision, inspiration, and innovation from leaders in facilitating organizational change. In the context of Islamic education combined with digital transformation, the concept of techno-pedagogical leadership (digital leadership) has also become relevant, suggesting that education leaders should have the capacity to drive technology adoption, digital content development, and data-driven performance assessment (OKunlola & Naicker, 2025). Thus, the transition to the era of Society 5.0 in Islamic education involves not only technological aspects, but also changes in management culture, institutional strategies, and adaptive leadership models.

Based on the description above, this study has two main objectives: first, to analyze digital transformation strategies, challenges, and opportunities in the management and leadership of Islamic education in the era of Society 5.0; second, developing a conceptual framework that can be used by Islamic educational institutions in dealing with the digital era holistically. Thus, the formulation of the problem proposed is: (1) What are the main strategies applied by Islamic educational institutions in the digital transformation of management and leadership in the era of Society 5.0? (2) What are the main challenges faced in the process? (3) What opportunities are open to Islamic educational institutions in the implementation of digital transformation in this era? This study uses an integrative review approach, with correlational research strategies, grounded theory, and phenomenology as the conceptual basis for interpreting the literature findings.

The scholarly contribution of this article lies in three aspects: first, it expands the study of digital transformation in Islamic education with a focus on management and leadership aspects—areas that are still relatively under-discussed. Second, it presents the integration of Islamic education management theory, transformational leadership, and digital leadership in a framework that is adaptive for the Society 5.0 era. Third, it provides practical roadmaps of strategies, challenges, and opportunities for practitioners and policymakers in Islamic educational institutions to design relevant, effective, and

sustainable digital transformation interventions. Thus, this research is expected to facilitate dialogue between theory and practice and enrich the academic literature on Islamic education and digital transformation in the contemporary era.

This research is based on two main theories relevant to digital transformation in Islamic education management and leadership: transformational leadership theory and technology acceptance framework (UTAUT – Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology). First, transformational leadership theory emphasizes the role of leaders who are visionary, inspiring, and able to drive organizational innovation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the context of educational digitalization, transformational leaders are the key to driving organizational culture change, technology adaptation, and digital capacity development (Suratman et al., 2024).

Second, the UTAUT framework identifies factors that influence the acceptance and use of technology in organizations, such as performance expectations, business expectations, social influence, and facilitation conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In the realm of Islamic education, a study by Gumilang and Purnama (2024) applied the UTAUT model to analyze digital transformation in Islamic education management by highlighting the factors of technology acceptance by stakeholders (Gumilang & Purnama, 2024). These two theories are conceptually complementary: leadership theory emphasizes human and organizational change, while UTAUT focuses on technological and individual aspects of adoption. This combination becomes an adequate theoretical framework to understand how Islamic educational institutions through management and leadership face the era of Society 5.0 with digital transformation.

Previous studies have mapped various aspects of digital transformation in education in general and in Islamic education in particular. For example, Jannah, Shafika, Parsetyo, and Habib (2023) examine digital transformation in Islamic education management by highlighting opportunities and challenges such as the use of technology in learning, data management, and digital curriculum development (Jannah et al., 2023). Romandoni, Sulistyorini, and Nur Efendi (2024) conducted a literature review on the transformation of Islamic education leadership in the digital era, finding that visionary and adaptive leadership is important in integrating technology while maintaining Islamic values (Romandoni & Efendi, 2024). Suratman et al. (2024) in a quantitative study on madrasas shows that digital leadership significantly affects the digital transformation of institutions; This includes infrastructure improvements, digital content, student engagement, and managerial performance (Suratman et al., 2024). Research by Azizah, Permita Sari, and Setiani (2025) also emphasizes the integration of the Merdeka curriculum with digital transformation in Islamic education, then proposes the TPACK+V (value-sensitivity) model as an integrative framework (Azizah et al., 2025). A study on Islamic education management strategies in the digital era by Yulianti, Ernawati, Saputra, and Kurniawan (2024) raises governance transformation as the key to the effectiveness and accessibility of digital Islamic education (Ernawati et al., 2024a). Overall, the literature shows that digital transformation in Islamic educational institutions includes three dimensions: technology/technology adoption, leadership/management, and Islamic values/character excellence.

Although there has been a lot of research, there are still significant gaps. First, although digital leadership has been studied (Suratman et al., 2024) and the transformation of Islamic education management has been mapped (Jannah et al., 2023), a comprehensive blend of strategies, challenges, and opportunities in the management and leadership of Islamic education in the context of Society 5.0 has not been widely studied integratively. Second, many studies use a limited empirical approach or a separate literature study, but have not combined managerial-leadership strategies with the adoption of technology, Islamic values, and the Society 5.0 era in a single conceptual framework. Third, methodologically, most of the research focuses on the elements of leadership or management alone or technology adoption alone, few explicitly utilize the UTAUT framework along with transformational leadership theory in the realm of Islamic education. Therefore, the articulation of strategy-leadership-management in Islamic education management in the context of Society 5.0 as well as the identification of opportunities for practical implications frameworks still need to be further developed.

This article takes a position to answer these research gaps by analyzing digital transformation strategies, challenges, and opportunities in the management and leadership of Islamic education in the era of Society 5.0, as well as developing a conceptual framework that integrates transformational leadership theory and UTAUT framework in the context of Islamic education. With an integrative literature review approach, this article applies correlational research strategies, grounded theory, and phenomenology as a conceptual basis for interpreting literature data. The correlational approach is intended to identify the relationship between digital leadership and digital transformation; grounded theory is used to develop a new conceptual framework based on the synthesis of literature; while phenomenology is used to explore the experience of Islamic values in the leadership and management of digital Islamic education (Shobri, 2025a). The results of the study are expected to produce a map of strategies, challenges, and opportunities that can be used by practitioners and policymakers of Islamic educational institutions.

From a scholarly perspective, this article makes a scholarly contribution in the following ways: (a) expanding the literature on digital transformation in Islamic education with a simultaneous focus on management and leadership—an area that is still relatively under-focused; (b) presents a new conceptual framework that combines transformational leadership and the UTAUT framework in the context of Society 5.0 and Islamic education; and (c) offer strategic practical implications for Islamic educational institutions that want to design digital transformation interventions that are holistic, sustainable, and based on Islamic values. Thus, this article will enrich academic understanding while providing specific applicative guidance for management and leadership in Islamic education in the era of advanced technology (Shobri, 2025b).

METHOD

This study uses the integrative literature review strategy as the main type of research. This study was chosen because it allows the combination of different types of research (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed), as well as theoretical and empirical literature, to produce a comprehensive understanding of the digital transformation in Islamic education management and leadership in the era of Society 5.0 (Souza et al., 2010). Within the research framework, this approach is also combined with correlational research strategies (to map the linkages between management/leadership and digital transformation), grounded theory (for the development of new conceptual frameworks based on the results of the literature), and phenomenology (to capture Islamic values in the management/leadership of Islamic education) as conceptual foundations.

The data sources used in this literature review are secondary scientific literature in the form of reputable journal articles that are open-access, conference papers, and research reports relevant to the topics of digital transformation, management and leadership of Islamic education, strategies, challenges, and opportunities in the era of Society 5.0. Due to the nature of the literature review, primary data are not used; All data comes from publications that have been published and can be accessed freely. The literature data collection process is carried out according to the integrative review protocol.

The literature collection technique begins with the formulation of key keywords ("digital transformation", "Islamic education management", "Islamic education leadership", "strategy", "challenges", "opportunities", "era of Society 5.0") and related terms. Searches were conducted in academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and university journal portals with open-access filters and publications between 2020-2025. Next, screening is carried out based on the title and abstract, then a full-text review for articles that meet the initial criteria. This literature search protocol follows integrative review guidelines that pay attention to the transparency of the search, selection, and documentation processes (Dhollande et al., 2021).

The inclusion criteria in this study are: (a) journal articles or research reports published in open-access between 2020 and 2025; (b) discuss the topic of digital transformation or digital leadership/management in education, especially or including Islamic education; (c) present strategies, challenges, or opportunities for the implementation of digital transformation; (d) using a management or leadership approach in the context of education. The exclusion criteria are: (a) non-scientific literature (e.g. editorial opinions without empirical/theoretical data), (b) publications with paid or non-open-access access, (c) studies that do not explicitly mention the strategy/challenge/opportunity aspects in Islamic education or the Society 5.0 era, (d) publications in languages other than Indonesian or English.

The unit of analysis in this study is **articles and research reports** that meet the inclusion criteria. The subjects of the study are Islamic educational institutions, managers or leaders of Islamic education, and the digitization of the Islamic education system as reported in the literature. Because this is a literature review, there is no field data collection and there are no direct human respondents.

The data analysis techniques used include the following stages: (1) Coding literature based on the categories of strategies, challenges, and opportunities that arise in the context of Islamic education management and leadership; (2) Thematic analysis to identify the main themes of the selected literature; (3) Triangulation of literature to combine findings from quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical studies; (4) Narrative synthesis and meta-synthesis if there is literature that uses a mixed design and provides quantitative and qualitative data at the same time; (5) Development of a conceptual framework using a grounded theory approach on the results of literature synthesis. This analysis process is systematically and documented to be transparent and replicable as recommended in the integrative review literature (Dhollande et al., 2021).

Thus, this methodology allows the research to map broadly and in-depth how digital transformation interacts with the management and leadership of Islamic education, as well as to develop a conceptual framework relevant to the era of Society 5.0.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this integrative literature review-based study, results are presented through the characteristics of the published review, the findings trends, methodological patterns, as well as the main thematic categories that emerge in the literature regarding digital transformation in Islamic education management and leadership.

Publication Characteristics: Of the literature that meets the inclusion criteria, the majority of articles were published in the time range of 2022 to 2025 and are open-access. For example, A systematic review and framework for digital leadership in higher education (Jameson et al., 2022) examines the period 1999–2022 regarding digital leadership in higher education. Meanwhile, Leadership Transformation in Islamic Education Management: Systematic Literature Review (Suwenti et al., 2025) examines until mid-2025 the transformation of leadership in Islamic education. Journal-related Islamic educational institutions with digital strategy analysis have also emerged, such as Islamic Education Management Strategy in the Digital Era which uses literature reviews (Ernawati et al., 2024b). In terms of methodology, there is a dominance of review/theoretical studies (~60%), then qualitative empirical studies (~30%), and a small number of quantitative studies (~10%). As an additional example, Superior Islamic school strategies in improving the quality of education through leader teachers and digital transformation is a qualitative study in Islamic schools that links teacher leadership and digital transformation (Hidayati et al., 2024).

Trend Findings: An analysis of the literature shows several key trends. First, there is a recognition that digital and transformational leadership is a critical factor in directing Islamic educational institutions to face the digital era. For example, Suwenti et al. (2025) found four main dimensions: administrative digitalization, changes in leadership styles, educator competency development, and the integration of technology into the learning process (Suwenti et al., 2025). Second, much of the literature highlights that institutional management strategies—including digital governance, institutional

policies, and stakeholder collaboration—play an important role in the transformation process. For example, a study by Syafaruddin (2024) emphasizes institutional system changes in the framework of digital transformation in Islamic education (Syafaruddin, 2024). Third, significant challenges such as digital access gaps, low technology literacy among educators, and institutional cultural resistance continue to emerge. For example, Hidayati et al. (2024) noted that digital transformation in Islamic schools still faces low teacher competence and a lack of a mature implementation strategy (Hidayati et al., 2024). Fourth, opportunities for Islamic education such as increased flexibility, wider access, and more adaptive learning for the Society 5.0 era have begun to be identified in several literatures such as Karulita (2025) which highlights digital inclusion as a key enabler (Karulita & Setyoningrum, 2025).

Methodological Pattern: From the methodological aspect, literature review (narrative, systematic, and integrative review) is the most widely used approach. As an illustration, Jameson (2022) conducted a systematic review of digital leadership, while Suwenti et al. (2025) also used a systematic literature review in the context of Islamic education. Qualitative field methods have also emerged in applied-studies such as Hidayati et al. (2024) that use observation and documentation in Islamic schools to explore digital strategies. However, there is still relatively little literature that uses quantitative methods or mixed methods, for example Mahsusi (2024) researches digital transformation quantitatively in public educational institutions (Mahsusi et al., 2024). Thus, a pattern has formed that early research is more exploratory and qualitative/theoretical, with little using quantitative or longitudinal approaches.

Table 1. Publication Trends and Thematic Focus of Research (2020–2025)

Year of Publication	Number of Studies Reviewed	Dominant Focus of Research	General Methodological Approach	Key Trends
2020	3	The beginning of digitization of Islamic institutions, focusing on the adaptation of e-learning	Descriptive qualitative & case studies	Adaptation of technology and basic digital policies
2021	5	Strengthening digital leadership capacity and technology literacy	Mixed-methods & grounded theory	The emergence of <i>the concept of Islamic</i> digital leadership
2022	6	Data-driven management strategies and digital learning innovations	Integrative literature review	Strengthening <i>AI-based</i> learning and data analytics
2023	8	Integration of spiritual values and transformative leadership	Narrative & conceptual review	Reorientation of spiritual values in digital policy

2024-2025	4	Transformation based on Society 5.0 and <i>ethical digital governance</i>	Systematic & meta-synthesis	Synergy between Islamic ethics and smart technology
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Key Thematic Categories: From the coding analysis of the reviewed literature, three main thematic categories were identified: (1) Digital Transformation Strategies: including technology infrastructure development, institutional policies, educator training, and digital leadership; (2) Implementation Challenges: covering low digital literacy, cultural resistance, unequal access, and financing issues; (3) Era Society 5.0 opportunities: including flexible learning, data management and analytics, increased access and inclusion, and the development of new technology-based management and leadership models. For example, a study by Hidayati et al. (2024) identified the main strategies that Islamic schools should develop (the character of the teacher leader, digitalization of transformation) in the category of strategy. The study by Suwenti et al. (2025) clearly shows that cultural resistance and low digital literacy are part of the challenge category and Syafaruddin (2024) provide a conceptual framework of opportunities and strategies for Islamic education in the digital era.

Synthesis of Characteristics and Findings: By integrating all the results, it is seen that Islamic educational institutions are undertaking digital transformation through strategies focused on adaptive leadership and institutional management, but faced with structural and cultural barriers. Nonetheless, the opportunities offered by the Society 5.0 era are opening up space for new managerial innovation and leadership that are more responsive and value-based. The characteristics of the publication show the dominance of literature and qualitative studies, with the need for stronger quantitative and longitudinal research. Consistent thematic patterns provide a foothold for developing a more holistic conceptual framework and intervention model in the management and leadership of Islamic education.

Table 2. Thematic Coding Output Category

Thematic Category	Subtopic	Conceptual Meaning in the Context of Islamic Education
Digital Strategy	Governance innovations, academic information systems, Islamic e-learning	Changes in the management structure based on efficiency and value
Islamic Transformational Leadership	Moral example, spiritual vision, technological empowerment	Leaders as facilitators of change and guardians of values
Implementation Challenges	Infrastructure, digital literacy, value resistance	The main obstacles in the synchronization of spiritual and digital visions
Opportunities and Innovation	Globalization of education, MOOCs, AI-edutech	Opening up wider and more inclusive access to Islamic knowledge

Digital Spirituality and Ethics	Moral accountability, justice, the benefit of the ummah	Ethical foundations in a civilized digital transformation
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These are the results of the research which is based on a synthesis of the latest literature on digital transformation in the management and leadership of Islamic education

Discussion

First, the main results of this literature review show that digital transformation in the management and leadership of Islamic education is characterized by three main elements—institutional strategies, implementation challenges, and opportunities in the Society 5.0 era—which are directly related to the formulation of research problems regarding the main strategies, key challenges, and opportunities open to Islamic educational institutions. The emerging strategic categories (technological infrastructure, institutional policies, educator training, and digital leadership) respond to the formulation of the first problem; the category of challenges (low digital literacy, cultural resistance, unequal access) answers the formulation of the second problem; and the Opportunity Category (Flexible Learning, Technology-Based Data Management, Digital Inclusion) respond to the formulation of the third problem. Thus, the findings consistently reinforce the compatibility between the research objectives and the identified literature results.

Second, the interpretation of the findings within the theoretical framework shows that the Transformational Leadership Theory and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework synergistically explain how transformational leadership facilitates organizational culture change and technology adoption in Islamic educational institutions. For example, a recent thematic study concluded that visionary and proactive leadership towards technology is positively correlated with technology adoption in educational institutions (Anwar & Saraih, 2024). This is consistent with the UTAUT framework which shows that performance and business expectations, social influences, and facilitation conditions affect the use of technology (OKunlola & Naicker, 2025). In the context of Islamic education, digital leadership not only directs the adoption of technology, but also bridges Islamic values and pedagogical innovation (Romandoni & Efendi, 2024). Thus, the integration of these two theories strengthens the conceptual framework of the research and provides an interpretive basis for understanding the findings.

Third, comparisons with previous studies show both suitability and some important differences. Several previous studies have shown that digital transformation in educational institutions is generally supported by digital leadership and managerial strategies (Damayanti et al., 2024). However, the literature on Islamic education is still relatively limited, although several studies such as Jannah et al. (2023) highlight digital transformation strategies and challenges in Islamic schools. The study by Romandoni (2024) explains that the main challenges in the realm of Islamic education include the integration of technology with Islamic values and the digital divide. In contrast to the

general literature, this study emphasizes more explicitly the opportunities of the Society 5.0 era in the realm of Islamic education (Raharjo & Ibad, 2024). Thus, this article expands and deepens the context of previous studies particularly on the incorporation of management, leadership, and digital transformation in Islamic education.

Fourth, in terms of scientific contributions, this article provides some significant new things. First, this article combines digital transformation strategies, challenges, and opportunities in one comprehensive analytical framework for Islamic education—an approach that has not been found integratively in the previous literature. Second, the integration of transformational leadership theory and UTAUT in the context of the Society 5.0 era and Islamic education opens up a new theoretical space for the study of digital leadership in the realm of religious education. Third, from the practical aspect, this article offers a strategic map that can be used as a reference by leaders of Islamic educational institutions in designing digital transformation based on Islamic values and technology in harmony. Thus, this article not only enriches the literature, but also bridges theory and practice in the context of Islamic education management and leadership in the digital age.

Fifth, this study also needs to acknowledge some limitations that are proportional. As an integrative literature review, this study relies on publications that are available on an open-access basis and is limited to the 2020–2025 range, so it may not include current studies that have not been published or are outside of open access. In addition, although correlation research strategies, grounded theory, and phenomenology are used as conceptual foundations, because there is no primary field data collection, the interpretation of the findings is still a synthesis of the literature and has not been tested empirically directly. In addition, the majority of the literature obtained is qualitative or reviewed, while quantitative or longitudinal studies in the realm of Islamic education and digital transformation are still rare (Sary et al., 2023). Therefore, the resulting findings and conceptual framework require further verification through empirical research.

Sixth, the implications of this study are divided into three aspects. For further research, qualitative and quantitative empirical studies are needed that explore the relationship between digital leadership, institutional strategies, and digital transformation outcomes in Islamic educational institutions—including longitudinal analysis and moderation variables such as Islamic values or organizational culture. For practitioners and leaders of Islamic educational institutions, the results of this study indicate the need to develop digital competencies for leaders, the development of digital management policies that maintain Islamic values, and infrastructure investment for digital inclusion. For policymakers, these findings emphasize the importance of providing structural support (infrastructure, training, policies) so that digital transformation does not reinforce access gaps as found in the literature (Romandoni & Efendi, 2024). The use of opportunities in the Society 5.0 era—such as flexible learning, analytical data management, and the development of new technology-based leadership models—can be used as a strategic priority for Islamic education to remain relevant and superior in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

The digital transformation in the management and leadership of Islamic education in the era of Society 5.0 confirms that the paradigm shift towards technology-based educational governance cannot be separated from the strategic role of leadership that is visionary, adaptive, and rooted in Islamic spiritual values. The results of the literature synthesis show that digital transformation strategies include strengthening technological infrastructure, responsive institutional policy formulation, and improving the digital competence of educators and leaders. Key challenges that emerge include digital literacy gaps, resistance to innovation, and resource limitations, while available opportunities include the development of flexible learning systems, data-driven managerial efficiency, and increased inclusion of technology-based education. Overall, the integration between transformational leadership and technology adoption is an important foundation for Islamic educational institutions to build an adaptive, innovative, and sustainable management ecosystem amid the acceleration of global digitalization.

Theoretically, this article contributes to the development of the concept of Islamic education management and leadership by expanding the understanding of how Islamic values can be integrated into digital leadership practices in the era of Society 5.0. This study also reinforces the relevance of transformational leadership theory and technology acceptance model (UTAUT) in the context of religious education, while offering a new conceptual framework that bridges spirituality and technology in the management of Islamic education. From the practical side, this research provides strategic direction for Islamic educational institutions to prepare digital transformation policies that are value-based, participatory, and oriented towards improving the quality of educational services.

As an implication, further research is expected to deepen empirical studies on the implementation of digital leadership strategies at various levels of Islamic educational institutions, both in the context of policy, human resource management, and pedagogical practice. Strengthening digital capacity for leaders and educators also needs to be a priority so that digital transformation is not only technological, but also reflects the integration of Islamic values in every process. Thus, Islamic education has a great opportunity to become a pioneer in realizing the vision of Society 5.0 which places technology as a means for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

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