Assessing the Role of Technology in Enhancing Knowledge Management Systems in Indian MNCs

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Abstract

In today's knowledge-intensive and globally distributed business environments, where long-term competitiveness depends on the efficient use of organisational knowledge, knowledge management (KM) has become a crucial strategic function. This study's main goal is to investigate how knowledge management might improve organisational performance and growth, with a strong focus on technology-enabled KM methods used by Indian multinational corporations (MNCs). The study aims to identify common KM techniques, assess the efficacy of KM technologies, and examine the technological and organisational issues arising in the course of KM implementation

A systematic questionnaire was used to gather primary data from knowledge workers working for certain Indian multinational companies in a diverse range of industries, such as manufacturing, financial services, information technology, and pharmaceuticals. The intensity of KM technology adoption, the perceived efficacy of KM systems, and their effects on knowledge sharing, organisational learning, employee productivity, and the overall organization performance were all assessed using quantitative methods including inferential analysis and descriptive statistics.

The findings indicate that among the most popular KM technologies in Indian MNCs are collaborative platforms, document management systems, intranet-based knowledge repositories, and enterprise information systems. The main advantages of technology-enabled knowledge management strategies, according to respondents, are increased organisational learning, quicker decision-making, and better information accessibility. However, a number of issues limit these systems' efficacy, such as poor organisational culture, opposition to information sharing, a lack of strategic alignment between KM programs and company goals, and inadequate staff awareness and training. By highlighting the necessity of an integrated knowledge management approach that synchronises technology infrastructure with organisational culture, leadership commitment, and continuous learning mechanisms, the study draws attention to significant managerial consequences.

Keywords: Knowledge Management Systems, Technology Adoption, Indian MNCs, Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Learning, Digital Tools.

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Introduction

The methodical process of recognising, capturing, organising, sharing, and implementing knowledge in the form of organisational procedures, documentation, human expertise, and technical resources is known as knowledge management, or KM. Knowledge can be found explicitly in organisational structures and procedures or implicitly inside individuals. Organisations may transform individual and group knowledge

into strategic assets that improve creativity, efficiency, and long-term competitiveness through effective knowledge management. Even though the idea of knowledge management only began to gain traction in the late 1990s, when only a small number of organisations reportedly had fully developed KM systems, The rapid evolution of information and communication technology has profoundly redefined the processes of acquiring, storing, and sharing knowledge. From simple document archives to sophisticated, technologically enabled information ecosystems, the majority of businesses today function within some kind of knowledge management framework. Prominent academics like Karl Wiig, who is considered a pioneer in the discipline, highlighted the significance of methodically managing knowledge capital to promote organisational performance and decision-making.

- By promoting knowledge exchange, getting rid of unnecessary procedures, and allowing the creation of more creative and effective workflows. In contemporary businesses, knowledge management is essential to improving business operations. Organisations of all kinds, especially multinational firms, are increasingly recognising information as a key strategic resource as knowledge-intensive labour continues to dominate modern economies. The need for structured knowledge management (KM) practices to manage geographically dispersed knowledge workers and complex operational environments has increased in India due to the expansion of multinational corporations in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals, information technology, manufacturing, and financial services

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Successful knowledge administration cannot be ensured by technology alone, despite the widespread availability of technological tools like databases, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, management information systems (MIS), web-based portals, artificial intelligence applications, collaboration platforms, video conferencing, and online discussion forums. According to research, KM projects frequently fall short when companies try to impose technical solutions without coordinating them with business strategy, employee motivation, and organisational culture. Persistent issues include a lack of leadership support, resistance to information sharing, and insufficient integration of KM procedures into regular work routines. There is a lack of empirical research on the effectiveness of these technologies in use, how much they help organisational learning, and the difficulties experienced during their introduction, despite the growing use of KM tools in Indian multinational firms. This gap emphasises the necessity of conducting a thorough examination into the real-world implementation of technology-enabled knowledge management in Indian business settings. In order to close this gap, the current study aims to investigate knowledge management (KM) practices in Indian multinational firms, concentrating on the technologies used, their perceived efficacy, and the organisational obstacles affecting successful KM adoption.

Literature Review

Rapid advancements in digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and the emergence of Industry 4.0 ecosystems have led to a significant shift in knowledge management (KM) research, as evidenced by recent publications. Instead of viewing knowledge management as a static system of repositories and documentation, studies are increasingly conceptualising it as an analytics-driven, intelligent, and adaptive capability. This evolution reflects the growing intricacy of organisational information flows in globally distributed, digitally networked companies.

AI-Driven Knowledge Management

AI is a major facilitator of next-generation KM systems, according to several research. Machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and knowledge graphs improve automated knowledge extraction, classification, and retrieval, according to research published in journals like the Journal of Knowledge Management, Information & Management, and Decision Support Systems (Rai et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023). It has been demonstrated that AI-driven chatbots, recommender systems, and intelligent search engines increase access to organisational information while lowering cognitive burden and reliance on manual codification.

Modern research, however, also takes a critical attitude. Researchers warn that an over-reliance on algorithmic knowledge management could undermine experiential learning, contextual understanding, and tacit knowledge exchange (Faraj et al., 2021). Emerging problems include algorithmic bias, explainability, and confidence in knowledge produced by AI. As a result, hybrid human-AI KM models—in which AI enhances human judgement and social learning processes rather than replaces them—are becoming more and more popular in recent research.

Knowledge Management in the Digital Workplace

After 2021, KM research underwent a dramatic transformation due to the COVID-19 epidemic and the ensuing normalisation of remote and hybrid work. Research on digital workplaces highlights how social knowledge networks, cloud-based KM platforms, and enterprise collaboration technologies like Microsoft Teams and Slack support organisational learning (Leonardi, 2021; Meske & Junglas, 2021). According to empirical research, digitally enabled knowledge management improves organisational agility, continuity, and resilience.

Simultaneously, new research reveals issues like decreased informal learning, fractured knowledge exchange, digital fatigue, and information overload. In order to promote efficient knowledge management in virtual environments, research emphasises the significance of digital leadership, trust, and psychological safety. For Indian multinational firms overseeing geographically scattered teams and culturally diverse knowledge workers, these insights are especially pertinent.

Knowledge Management and Industry 4.0

By integrating knowledge into cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructures, and data-driven production settings, Industry 4.0 has further broadened the scope of knowledge management. According to recent research, KM in Industry 4.0 settings facilitates innovation, continuous learning, and predictive decision-making using real-time analytics and digital twins (Mariani & Borghi, 2022; Pereira et al., 2023). A growing number of people see knowledge as a dynamic resource that is jointly produced by intelligent systems and humans. However, the study also highlights persistent challenges, such as a shortage of skilled personnel, problems with system interoperability, cybersecurity threats, and restricted organisational learning capacities to assimilate machine-generated information. These difficulties highlight the necessity of integrated knowledge management frameworks that match workforce upskilling and organisational learning mechanisms with technology complexity.

Emerging Research Gap

Even though knowledge management research has advanced significantly, several important gaps remain, particularly in the context of developing countries such as India. First, there remains a shortage of empirical data evaluating the true efficacy of AI-enabled knowledge management systems, despite the evidence that recent studies are progressively highlighting their potential. A number of issues continue to remain unresolved about how AI-driven knowledge management systems operate in resource-constrained, culturally diverse, and quickly expanding organisational environments typical of emerging markets because the majority of the material currently in publication is conceptual in nature or concentrated on developed nations. Second, little study has looked at how Indian multinational businesses strategically integrate digital collaboration tools with formal knowledge management frameworks, despite the fact that the digital workplace has emerged as a dominating organisational reality in the post-pandemic era.

The alignment, governance mechanisms, and long-term effects of digital workplace technologies and knowledge management initiatives on organisational learning and performance in global settings are frequently ignored in existing research. Third, little is known about how organisational culture, technical maturity, and knowledge management efficacy interact in Industry 4.0 settings. Although earlier studies recognise the significance of culture and leadership, limited empirical research has been conducted on staff competencies, cultural preparedness, and legacy systems affect the success or failure of sophisticated knowledge management technology.

Furthermore, KM is rarely studied as a socio-technical system that necessitates the simultaneous alignment of technology, people, and processes. Lastly, there aren't many frameworks designed specifically for Indian multinational firms that take organisational preparedness and technical complexity into account. The current study aims to close these gaps by conducting empirical, context-driven research that looks at technology-enabled knowledge management via an integrated managerial, cultural, and technological perspective.

Research Objectives

- To evaluate the current level of knowledge management strategies used by a few MNCs in India.
- To determine the main technical facilitators and obstacles affecting the efficiency of knowledge management systems in Indian multinational corporations.
- To investigate how technology-enhanced knowledge management affects employee productivity and organisational success in Indian multinational corporations.

Research Methodology

Research Design:

The current study uses a descriptive and empirical research design that combines a quantitative, survey-based methodology with an in-depth analysis of the body of existing literature. The empirical component allows the analysis of current KM practices and their effects on organisational outcomes in Indian multinational corporations (MNCs), while the literature review offers a conceptual framework for

determining important variables related to technology-enabled knowledge management systems (KMS).

Target Population and Sample Design:

Knowledge workers actively engaged in knowledge-intensive roles in Indian multinational corporations, including operations, customer service, research & development, management, and information technology, make up the study's target demography. The study focuses on Indian multinational corporations (MNCs) in knowledge-driven industries, such as manufacturing, financial services, pharmaceuticals, and information technology. For statistical reliability and representativeness, a sample size of roughly 100 responders is thought to be sufficient. Purposive sampling will be to select respondents, as the study specifically requires participants with firsthand experience with knowledge management techniques and tools. To provide equal representation across various organisational contexts, stratification based on industrial sector and functional role would be used whenever possible.

Survey Instrument Design:

A standardised survey created based on ideas from a comprehensive analysis of the body of knowledge management and technology-enabled KMS literature will be used to gather primary data for the project. The purpose of the questionnaire is to fully record respondents' opinions and experiences on knowledge management procedures in Indian multinational firms. It is divided into four principal parts. In order to offer contextual background and facilitate meaningful classification of replies, the first part gathers demographic and organisational data, such as the respondent's industry, occupational role, years of experience, and organization size.

The second section highlights the extent to which technology is being used for knowledge management, including intranet-based knowledge repositories, artificial intelligence-based applications, and collaborative platforms. The purpose of this part is to evaluate how thoroughly and methodically these technologies are integrated into organizational knowledge management processes.. Using statements on knowledge sharing, information accessibility, decision-making support, and organisational learning facilitation, the third section gauges the perceived efficacy of knowledge management systems.

The influence of KMS on organisational outcomes is assessed in the fourth phase, with a focus on staff productivity, innovation capacity, and overall organisational performance. A five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) will be used to record responses to all perceptual statements. This will make it possible to analyse attitudes and perceptions quantitatively. Before final data collection, a pilot study may be carried out to verify the clarity, reliability, and internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Domain experts will assess the questionnaire for content validity to guarantee the instrument's quality.

Data Collection Procedure and Period:

Depending on organisational accessibility, data will be gathered using both online and offline survey methods within a timeframe of two to three months. Respondents will be contacted by email invites, corporate communication channels, and professional networks, with prior consent sought from

participating organisations as needed.

Data Analysis Techniques:

Statistical software, such as SPSS, will be used to code and analyse the collected data. The prevailing situation and trends of KM technology adoption will be investigated using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation). Although multiple regression analysis will evaluate the predictive effect of technology-enabled KM practices on employee productivity, innovation capacity. With organisational performance, correlational analysis will be employed to identify connections between KM technologies and variables related to organisational performance.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Adoption of Knowledge Management Practices

Knowledge Management Practice	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Adoption % (High/Very High)	Adoption % (Low/Very Low)
Knowledge Creation Process	3.85	0.79	72%	8%
Knowledge Sharing through Technology	4.12	0.67	81%	5%
Knowledge Storage (Digital Repositories)	3.94	0.74	76%	7%
Knowledge Retrieval & Access	3.72	0.83	68%	10%
Formal KM Policies	3.42	1.01	58%	19%
Use of AI/Analytics in KM	3.18	1.08	52%	25%
Training on KM Systems	3.63	0.97	65%	12%
Integration with External Knowledge Sources	3.29	1.02	54%	21%

Interpretation: Several significant trends that represent both advancement and new opportunities are shown by analysing the existing usage of knowledge management methods across a subset of multinational companies doing business in India. With more than 75% of respondents reporting a high or very high level of implementation, the findings indicate that information sharing within teams and technology-based knowledge sharing channels are extensively utilized KM approaches. Such high levels of adoption indicate that Indian multinational corporations (MNCs) are becoming more familiar with the strategic value of technology-enabled collaboration, especially when it comes to project coordination, internal communication, and the sharing of organisational knowledge across functional and geographic boundaries.
The extensive usage of intranet platforms, digital collaboration tools, and shared information repositories indicates a deliberate organisational attempt to include knowledge sharing into routine work procedures. Additionally, the comparatively long-standing use of digital knowledge storage technologies, such document management systems and centralised databases, implies a continued emphasis on the systematic gathering and preservation of organisational knowledge. In addition, frequent KM system-related training programs show an organization's dedication to fostering staff preparedness and proficiency in the efficient

use of knowledge management tools.

All of these results point to significant advancements in the establishment of fundamental and process-oriented knowledge management methods by Indian multinational enterprises. These procedures improve decision-making consistency, decrease knowledge loss, and support operational efficiency. Despite these benefits, the results also point to areas that still require development. Advanced technology integration, standardised knowledge management (KM) rules across organisational units, and organised channels for external knowledge collaboration with partners, research institutions, and industry networks seem to receive little attention.

Indian MNCs must transition from basic knowledge management techniques to more strategic and innovation-driven methods in order to use knowledge management as a long-term source of competitive advantage. This entails implementing more sophisticated analytics, KM technologies powered by AI, more transparent governance frameworks, and more robust inter-organizational knowledge collaborations. Organisations could change knowledge management from an operational support function to a long-term strategic competence by filling in these gaps.

Table 2: Enablers & Barriers Affecting Knowledge Management Systems (KMS)

Factor (Enabler/Barrier)	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	% Respondents Agreeing
Cloud-based KM Platforms	4.21	0.84	84%
Real-time Collaborative Tools	4.35	0.71	87%
AI for Knowledge Retrieval	3.92	0.91	78%
Big Data for Knowledge Analysis	4.02	0.86	80%
Ease of Access to Knowledge Portals	4.18	0.79	82%
Lack of Employee Training	3.45	1.02	68%
Data Security Concerns	3.72	0.89	74%
Integration with Legacy Systems	3.31	1.08	63%
Management Resistance to KM Tech	3.25	1.12	61%
Technology Costs	3.57	0.96	70%

Interpretation:

A number of significant insights into the advantages and continuing difficulties of technology-enabled knowledge management (KM) projects are revealed by the examination of technology-related facilitators and barriers affecting KMS in Indian multinational organisations. Cloud-based knowledge platforms and real-time collaborative tools were observed to be the most successful technical enablers based on responses from 100 participants. These elements demonstrated a significant consensus among managers and employees about their crucial role in supporting knowledge management procedures, as evidenced by high mean scores over 4.0 on a five-point scale and agreement levels above 80%.

The popularity of cloud-based systems highlights their usefulness in offering scalable, adaptable, and location-independent access to organisational knowledge—a crucial feature for international firms with

globally distributed teams. In a similar vein, real-time collaboration tools promote organisational learning and responsiveness by facilitating instantaneous information exchange, improving cross-functional coordination, and fostering group problem-solving. These findings suggest that Indian multinational corporations are increasingly utilising contemporary digital infrastructures to get beyond temporal and spatial obstacles to knowledge exchange.

Conversely, a number of organisational and technological obstacles were identified, but only with minimal effects. The mean scores ranged from 3.25 to 3.57, with agreement levels between 60% and 70%, for inadequate staff training, difficulties integrating new KM technology with legacy systems, and managerial opposition to implementing new digital tools. These findings suggest that although these obstacles are still important, the degree of their impact differs greatly among organisations. Through ongoing training initiatives, gradual system updates, and aggressive leadership assistance, some MNCs seem to have effectively addressed these issues.

The variation in responses indicates that Indian multinational businesses have varying degrees of technical maturity and change management efficacy. Organisations are better positioned to overcome these obstacles if they make investments in talent development, encourage digital literacy, and match KM technologies with business strategy. Overall, the findings indicate that although cutting-edge technologies are effective knowledge management facilitators, their complete potential can be attained only with the help of sufficient training, smooth system integration, and a strong managerial commitment.

Table 3: Technology-Enhanced Knowledge Management's Effects on Employee Productivity and Organisational Performance

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Technology Adoption Score (TAS)	3.85	0.72	2.0	5.0
Organizational Performance (OP)	4.10	0.68	2.5	5.0
Employee Productivity (EP)	4.05	0.65	2.8	5.0

Interpretation:

Within the chosen Indian multinational firms, key variables offer significant insights into the existing condition of technology adoption and its perceived influence on organisational performance and staff productivity. With a mean score of 3.85 on a five-point scale and a standard deviation of 0.72, the Technology Adoption Score (TAS) shows that, on average, the participating organisations have embedded technology within knowledge management systems to a moderate to high degree. This implies that the majority of MNCs are actively using digital tools to support knowledge generation, storage, and sharing processes, going beyond simple or trial adoption.

The comparatively small standard deviation indicates a reasonable degree of consistency in respondents' technology adoption, but it also draws attention to discernible variations in the ways that different departments, companies, or functional units employ technology for knowledge management. This discrepancy could be explained by variations in employee skill levels, managerial support, technology infrastructure, or the strategic emphasis given to KM activities inside particular organisations. The idea that technology-enabled knowledge management is typically linked to favourable organisational outcomes,

such as increased staff productivity. Better decision-making and more operational efficiency are also made possible by the descriptive statistics.

Higher levels of technology use was linked additionally to respondents' perceptions of the advantages of more efficient workflows, quicker access to pertinent information, and enhanced teamwork. These outcomes are in line with earlier research that highlights how digital platforms and intelligent systems support organisational learning and performance. The observed variation in replies, however, suggests that not all company has fully benefited from technology-enabled knowledge management. System usability issues, insufficient training, resistance to change, or a lack of alignment between KM technologies and business processes may still be problems for some departments or companies. These differences show that in order to guarantee more consistent and efficient use of technology in knowledge management systems across Indian multinational corporations, specific managerial interventions are required, such as employee capability development, process redesign, and increased leadership commitment.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to a selected sample of MNCs operating in India, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to all sectors and organizations.

- Data collection relies heavily on self-reported responses from employees and managers, which may introduce response bias.

- The study focuses specifically on MNCs in India, thus excluding domestic firms and MNCs in other emerging economies, limiting global comparability.

- The study primarily emphasizes technology-enabled knowledge management and might not adequately convey the human and behavioral dimensions of exchanging knowledge and utilization.

Further Scope of the Study

- Future research can expand the sample size to include a wider range of sectors and a larger number of MNCs, enhancing the generalizability of findings.

- Comparative studies can be conducted to analyze technology-driven knowledge management practices in domestic Indian companies versus foreign MNCs operating in India.

- Future research can adopt a longitudinal approach to track how technological advancements (e.g., AI, machine learning, blockchain) evolve and shape KM systems over time.

- There is scope to develop sector-specific KM technology frameworks, particularly for industries such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and IT, where knowledge management needs and technological integration vary significantly.

Suggestions

Indian multinational companies should take a methodical and forward-thinking approach to technology adoption in an effort to enhance the effectiveness and strategic value of knowledge management systems (KMS). Sophisticated technology, such as big data analytics, cloud computing, digital technology, artificial intelligence,and intelligent collaboration platforms should be the focus of strategic investments. By facilitating quicker knowledge search, individualised knowledge access, and real-time insights, these technologies can improve an organization's capacity for learning and making decisions.

Employee capability development is as important to the accomplishment of technology-enabled KMS. To guarantee that employees may utilize new technologies and platforms efficiently, organisations should put in place ongoing initiatives for digital literacy and skill development. Ongoing learning methods, like workshops, microlearning modules, and peer-led knowledge sessions, can assist employees adjust to changing technology and lessen resistance to change, as opposed to one-time training activities. Leadership has a major impact on the effectiveness of knowledge management initiatives. By establishing clear objectives, assigning resources, and modelling knowledge-sharing behaviours, Top management ought to actively assist digital transformation and information sharing. Leadership engagement promotes employee participation at all organisational levels and communicates the strategic significance of KMS.

Additionally, an open and cooperative organisational culture is essential to the success of knowledge management. Employers should foster a culture that encourages employees to share ideas, experiences, and best practices without fear of repercussions by fostering an atmosphere that values openness, trust, and ongoing learning. Positive knowledge-sharing behaviours may be further encouraged by reward and recognition programs. Organisations should integrate old systems with contemporary knowledge management (KM) solutions in a methodical and progressive manner. Gradual integration helps companies find and fix compatibility problems early on and minimises operational disruptions. Before implementing new technologies widely, organisations can assess their usability, efficacy, and return on investment by using pilot programs to test them in controlled environments.

Lastly, in order to regularly evaluate the success of their KMS activities, organisations should set up strong feedback and assessment systems. Organisations may improve their knowledge management strategies and make sure they are in line with changing business goals by conducting regular monitoring using performance indicators, user input, and impact assessments. When taken as a whole, these strategies can assist Indian multinational corporations in turning knowledge management into a long-term source of competitive advantage.

Recommendations

- Create unambiguous technology adoption guidelines that are in line with organisational objectives and supported by a cost-benefit analysis.

- Establish strong cybersecurity frameworks to handle system vulnerabilities, access control, and data privacy.

- Create a sector-specific, tailored knowledge management system with clear procedures and KPIs.
- Assign digital change agents to teams to facilitate digital transformation and lead peer mentorship.
- Motivate upper management to use incentives, acknowledgement, and goal alignment to promote knowledge-sharing behaviour.
- To guarantee seamless integration of legacy systems with contemporary platforms, utilise middleware and APIs.
- Using data analytics tools, assess KMS efficacy on a regular basis and match enhancements to business performance indicators.
- Form alliances with academic institutions, business leaders, and technology companies to maintain current and competitive knowledge practices.
- Encourage communities of practice and internal knowledge networks to improve organisational memory and creativity.

Conclusion

The current study emphasises how important technology is to improving knowledge management systems (KMS) in Indian multinational firms that operate in situations that are increasingly complicated and knowledge-intensive. The results unequivocally show that core knowledge management processes, including as knowledge production, storage, sharing, and utilisation, are much improved by the deliberate deployment of digital technologies. Artificial intelligence, cloud-based platforms, big data analytics, and collaborative digital tools are examples of technologies that have emerged as crucial enablers that enhance employee productivity, organisational learning, and overall business performance.

However, research indicates that there are difficulties in implementing technology-enabled KMS successfully. The full potential of these projects is nevertheless constrained by concerns about data security and privacy, low employee digital literacy, opposition to technological change, and challenges integrating contemporary knowledge management technologies with legacy systems. These results support the claim that successful knowledge management cannot be ensured by technology alone. Rather, the alignment of organisational culture, leadership support, staff capabilities, and technology infrastructure determines how effective KMS is.

Significantly, according to the report, businesses that take a comprehensive and integrated approach to knowledge management—combining cutting-edge technologies with ongoing training, encouraging leadership, and a culture that promotes knowledge sharing—show greater levels of innovation, quicker and better decision-making, and enhanced worker performance. This emphasises the necessity for Indian MNCs to see knowledge management as a strategic organisational competence integrated into business procedures and human resource procedures as opposed to only as an IT-driven activity. The study concludes with a useful framework that might help Indian multinational firms use technology to improve their knowledge

management systems. MNCs may better handle fast technological advancements and volatile business environments by implementing a balanced strategy that incorporates organisational preparation, technological investments, and cultural transformation. Thus, by providing practical insights into maximising technology-enabled knowledge management for long-term organisational growth, the study advances both scholarly understanding and managerial practice.

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