THE ROLE OF CLASS TEACHER'S PROXIMITY IN DEVELOPING LEARNERS' SELF-CONFIDENCE AT INDONESIAN SCHOOL IN KUALA LUMPUR MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Learners' self-confidence is an important concern for teachers to ensure the continuity of the learning process. Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur builds learners' self-confidence one of them by emotional approach. This research aims to (1) describe how the proximity of class teachers and learners at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur, and (2) explain the role of class teachers' proximity in developing learners' self-confidence at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur. This type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach. The research subjects were class teachers and learners of Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) at the elementary school level. The type of data used is primary data. Data collection techniques were observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman data analysis technique. Data validity techniques used triangulation of sources, methods, and data. The results showed that the proximity between class teachers and SIKL learners was excellent and closely intertwined. In addition, SIKL learners have a high level of self-confidence with indicators of courage, activeness, comfort, and enthusiasm. Thus, it's important to build proximity between class teachers and learners to develop their self-confidence. This research suggests that class teachers should be able to build proximity with learners so that their self-confidence can develop well, and therefore have a good impact on their learning outcomes.

Keywords: Class Teacher, Proximity, Self-Confidence

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is an important thing that every learner must have because it can be a support in the learning process. Wilis (2015) defines self-confidence as the ability to overcome a problem in the best situation and give others something pleasant. Daniarsi et al. (2022) mention that self-confidence is a person's basic capital to know and understand themselves as

a form of self-actualization development. However, self-confidence is not formed by itself but requires experience and process by each individual.

Self-confidence comes from the word confidence which is taken from English, self-confidence. Self-confidence in the *Oxford Dictionary* means belief or assurance in oneself, trusting one's abilities, judgments, or decisions, either in general or concerning a specific situation or activity. Also called self-assurance. See also the hard-easy effect, overconfidence effect, and unrealistic optimism.

Self-confidence is an attitude in someone confident, optimistic, independent, and able to have everything they want (Liu et al., 2018; Sharour, 2019; Karyati, 2023). Hakim (in Kartini, 2019) defines self-confidence as something that aims to achieve life goals accompanied by positive beliefs in their abilities. Another opinion is from Hambly who defines self-confidence as an attitude to face all situations calmly (Nita, 2022; Asiyah et al., 2019). Based on several opinions that have been conveyed, self-confidence means an ability to convince oneself that one can face any situation.

Risnawati in Amri (2018) mentions several factors that influence self-confidence, including (1) self-concept, (2) self-esteem, (3) experience, and (4) education. In addition, several factors affect self-confidence according to Kartini in Sihotang (2022) including; (1) physical condition: when someone feels they have a physical appearance that is different from the norm, it can lead to discomfort and a tendency to compare themselves with others. This can result in feelings of inferiority and a lack of self-confidence. (2) Self-concept: Self-concept is a belief, feeling, or perspective about everything one possesses. When someone has a positive self-concept, it can lead to feelings of freedom and optimism within themselves. (3) Self-esteem: According to Stuart & Sundeen (1991) is an individual's assessment according to their ideal level. Thus, when someone does something positive according to their judgment, they can develop their potential and boost their self-confidence

(Natalia et al., 2019; Amri, 2018). (4) Social interaction: when someone engages in a social interaction, it will indirectly generate social support that can foster a person's self-confidence. Social support can come from parents, teachers, peers, or the surrounding environment.

The process of forming and developing learners' self-confidence can also be done in school activities. In this matter, of course, teachers have a big role in it, especially class teachers in elementary schools. The class teacher who creates a classroom atmosphere that is comfortable, fun, and not monotonous can encourage the development of learners' self-confidence (Nurhakiki et al., 2022). Obviously, the development process must be followed by an emotional relationship in the form of proximity between class teachers and learners. This makes it possible to help learners feel more comfortable in the classroom so that their level of self-confidence will unconsciously develop.

Basrian (2021) defines proximity as a matter that is close or something close to something else. Proximity is also closely related to the emotional relationship that exists between one individual and another. In this context, proximity can be interpreted as a psychological process whose emergence must involve communication and interaction (Marliah, 2021). Proximity can also be associated with the term sense of belonging, which is defined by Zhao (2012) as an individual's emotional attachment to something. Proximity can also be defined as a psychological condition that can cause certain behaviors (Yayuk, 2022). Based on some of these opinions, it can be concluded that proximity is a feeling that binds individuals through the process of interaction and communication, causing certain behaviors.

The process of establishing a proximity between class teachers and learners can be influenced by several factors, including (1) communication, (2) interaction, and (3) teacher's teaching style. Communication that exists between class teachers and learners can be in the form of teacher efforts to get involved with learners' lives. For instance, simple questions about what

they ate for breakfast or what they brought from home. This can show the teacher's concern for the learners. That way, teachers can win the hearts of learners (Salsabila & Puspitasari, 2020). Interaction between class teachers and learners can be in the form of togetherness when eating at break time or when teachers facilitate learners who have obstacles in the learning process. Efforts in these interactions can make learners feel valued (Ainul, 2023), giving rise to self-confidence. Teachers who create a comfortable, safe, and fun classroom atmosphere will encourage a close relationship between the class teacher and learners. This is because it will attract learners' attention (Salsabila & Puspitasari, 2020), and make them feel comfortable and affectionate towards the teacher.

Amaliah & Sudana (2021) state that the proximity of teachers and learners can be seen through the indicators; (1) recognizing learners' faces and names, (2) recognizing learners' characteristics, needs, and abilities, (3) offering help to learners inside and outside the classroom, (4) willing to help learners outside the classroom, (5) giving praise, (6) giving feedback, (7) pay attention/listen to what learners are saying, (8) available, approachable, and responsive, (9) conduct face-to-face interactions, and (10) friendly tone of voice. Another opinion from Nafis (2022) states that the indicators of teacher and learner proximity are; (1) appreciating learners' efforts and achievements, (2) utilizing things that learners like in learning., and (3) recognizing the characters and needs of learners.

Nana Sudjana in Wuju & Putra (2020) explains that the relationship between teachers and learners can be seen through; (1) question and answer (Q&A) or dialog between teachers and learners; (2) teacher help for learners who have learning difficulties, both individually and in groups, (3) the teacher is always present in the teaching-learning situation as a learning facilitator, and (4) the opportunity to get continuous feedback from the learning results obtained by learners.

Thus, researchers can conclude that the proximity of class teachers and

learners can be reflected in the following indicators; (1) engage in interaction with learners, (2) provide attention and support to learners, (3) show empathy to learners, (4) help learners when there are problems, (5) interacting with learners inside or outside academic activities, (6) use supportive communication, and (7) provide constructive feedback.

According to Kemendikbud in Mukti (2016) learners' self-confidence can be observed based on the following indicators; (1) expressing opinions or engaging in activities without hesitation, (2) being able to make decisions quickly, (3) not easily giving up, (4) not feeling awkward in taking action, (5) brave to present in front of the class, and (6) brave to express opinions, ask questions, or answer questions. Another opinion from Ningsih & Warmi (2021) states that self-confidence encompasses four indicators, including; (1) belief in one's abilities, (2) acting independently in decision-making, (3) having a positive self-concept, and (4) being brave in expressing opinions.

Nursanti (2020) mentions that self-confidence is viewed based on the following indicators; (1) carrying out every activity without hesitation, (2) being able to make decisions quickly, (3) not giving up easily, (4) being brave in taking action, (5) always thinking positively, (6) independent, (7) optimistic, (8) calm in demeanor, (9) creative, enjoys experimenting, and is willing to take risks, (10) not anxious in carrying out actions, (11) feeling free to do what they like, (12) warm and polite in interacting with others, (13) having a drive to achieve, and (14) being able to recognize one's strengths and weaknesses.

Thus, the researcher can conclude that learners' self-confidence can be observed through the indicators; (1) demonstrate comfort and enthusiasm in learning activities, (2) dare to ask questions or express opinions, (3) show courage to try new things, (4) show confidence in completing tasks, (5) show enthusiasm for an activity, (6) not afraid of making mistakes in learning, (7) dare to face learning challenges, (8) show activeness and participation, and (9) respond to feedback.

Based on the preliminary study that the researcher has conducted previously, it was found that learners at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur have a close relationship with their class teachers. Learners show high trust and comfort to their class teachers, for instance by sharing small things, such as the breakfast menu they ate or the lunch they brought. In the learning process, most learners are quite active in learning and show high curiosity. This is triggered by the sense of comfort that learners feel, so they feel freer, and their confidence increases (Muzakir et al., 2024). They are very enthusiastic when their class teacher comes in to start class. Many welcome them at the classroom door and give them a warm hug. This shows the strong interpersonal relationship between the class teacher and the learners. sometimes if the class teacher has not entered the classroom, learners will look for the teacher in the teacher's room and pick her up to start the lesson immediately. In addition, there are still some learners who tend to be calmer and quieter. However, SIKL class teachers still try to form that proximity so that little by little some of these learners begin to be more confident than before.

Based on the above-mentioned background, researchers are encouraged to examine further whether the proximity between class teachers and learners can play a major role in the process of developing learners' self-confidence levels. Looking at previous research conducted by Wuju & Putra (2020), they shows that there is a very strong teacher and learner relationship to the teaching and learning process with a calculated r value of 0.872, so that it can be a reference in this study that when teachers and learners build a strong relationship, it can create a conducive and enjoyable teaching and learning process. Other research from Hilda (2023) explains that teachers who listen actively, show empathy, provide constructive feedback, and create positive bonds in daily interactions can contribute to strengthening the teacher-learner relationship.

Reinforced by Nurhakiki et al. (2022) opinion that the role of the teacher

in building self-confidence in children aged 4-5 years, namely as a guide, motivator, initiator, and facilitator. The results showed that the development of learners' self-confidence has been seen well as evidenced by the ability to socialize, dare to appear in front of the class, and dare to tell the activities that have been carried out while at school. Alfaini (2021) in her research highlighted that teacher communication with learners carried out with a personal approach and effectively can encourage learners' abilities in the classroom so that their self-confidence can increase. Similar research conducted by Adilah (2018) argues that the guidance teacher has a role in developing learners' self-confidence, but in its implementation, it has obstacles due to the lack of participation of parents and class teachers. This proves that the class teacher has an important role in it. Based on the review of relevant research, it can be determined that the topic taken is the same, namely learners' self-confidence. However, it only focuses on the role of the teacher in general and no one has discussed the proximity of class teachers with learners. Based on this research gap, researcher is interested in conducting research entitled The Role of Class Teacher's Proximity in Developing Learners' Self-Confidence at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur.

The proximity intended in this research is the emotional relationship that class teachers have with learners and is established due to communication and interaction. Self-confidence referred to in this research is an optimistic attitude is convinced of the abilities possessed, and can think rationally. Based on the background description that has been described, the hypotheses that will be proposed in this research are as follows; (1) class teachers and learners at Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur have a good emotional proximity or relationship; and (2) the proximity between class teachers and learners has a significant role in developing the self-confidence of Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur.

Based on the background description that has been presented, the researcher formulates the problems including (1) how is the proximity of

class teacher and learners at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur? and (2) how is the role of class teacher proximity in developing the self-confidence of Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur learners? This research aims to (1) describe how the proximity of class teacher and learners at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur, and (2) explain the role of class teacher proximity in developing learners' self-confidence at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur. The researcher hopes that this research can make a positive contribution to the world of education and become a reference for further research on relevant studies.

METHOD

The type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach. Creswell (2007) mentioned that case study research is research to explore phenomena or cases in certain times and activities and use various data collection techniques over a while to collect detailed and in-depth information. The research subjects were class teachers and learners of Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) at the elementary school level. There were seven class teachers who were the subjects of this study with the following criteria: (1) all teachers of grade 1-6 elementary schools in SIKL, (2) teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience, and (3) teachers who have been a class teacher for at least two years. Learners who became the subject of this study were 16 learners with the following criteria: (1) learners in grades 1-6 of elementary schools in SIKL, (2) learners who are active and passive in learning each 1:1, (3) learners who have been taught by their class teacher for at least 6 months, and (4) male and female learners each 1:1. Due to the large number of new or transfer learners, in point 3 the researcher used a duration of proximity to the class teacher of at least 6 months. The research location chosen was Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur which is located at Lorong Tun Ismail Street, Number. 1, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The type of data used is primary data, which is obtained from the first source (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023), i.e. learners who are research participants, as well as the class teacher concerned. Data collection techniques in this research were observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman data analysis technique, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data collection stage, researchers prepare research instruments and then use them to collect data by means of in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Data reduction stage, researchers filter and eliminate data that is not relevant to the research based on data that has been collected previously. Data display stage, researchers present data results in tabular and narrative form that can interpret how the proximity of class teachers and learners in developing their self-confidence. Conclusion drawing stage, researchers draw conclusions from the data that has been analyzed.

Data validity techniques used triangulation of sources, methods, and data. Source triangulation served to compare data from all data sources that had been collected through several data collection techniques, while method triangulation used various methods to obtain data, including observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data triangulation is used to ask for feedback from research informants regarding the results of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observations that have been made, the data shows that the proximity between class teachers and learners of Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) is excellent and close. Learners have a full sense of trust and comfort with SIKL teachers. This is reinforced by the opinion of one informant who said that the proximity was not only to learners but also to their parents. In line with Kholil (2021) who explains that teachers, especially class teachers, are substitutes for parents at school who should

build proximity with learners to develop all the abilities and potential they have. This is also supported by the opinion of Amaliah & Sudana (2021) that the interaction between teachers and learners must continue to occur inside and outside the classroom with their parents.

The following is a recapitulation of the proximity observation results of class teachers and learners of Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Observation Results of Class Teachers' Proximity to Learners at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur

Indicator	Observed Aspects	Score
Engaged interaction	The teacher and learners engage in two-way interaction that is harmonious and mutually supportive.	100% Always done
Provides attention and support	The teacher provides individualized attention and support to learners.	100% Always done
Show empathy	The teacher shows empathy towards learners' feelings.	100% Always done
Helps learners when there are problems	The teacher offers solutions to learners who have problems.	75% Often done
Interacting outside academic activities	The teacher interacts with learners outside of academic activities.	100% Always done
Use supportive communication	The teacher uses supportive and constructive communication.	100% Always done
Provides constructive feedback	The teacher gives constructive feedback on each learner's effort.	100% Always done

Source: Observation Results

It is known that overall, the indicators set have been carried out by teachers to form proximity with learners who reach the "Always" scale. Only the indicator of helping learners when there is a problem is still implemented at 75% on an Often scale, based on informant feedback which explains that letting learners solve their problems personally first. That way, they will get used to solving their problems. Even so, the teacher still monitors learners, if

it is felt that they have reached their limits, then the teacher intervenes to help. This is in line with the concept of learning constructivism which encourages learners to build their understanding (Aulia & Desmita, 2024; Sulistiyono, 2021; Qowim, 2024).

SIKL teachers foster proximity between teachers and learners of SIKL in several ways, including by first recognizing the background of learners (Asiyah et al., 2019), to know how the treatment should be applied later (Monica, 2024). In addition, treating learners with compassion (Asnawi et al., 2023), giving praise when they succeed in doing something (Novita & Sumiarsih, 2021), providing support when they try, and providing small challenges that they can complete. Positive interactions inside and outside class hours are allocated to build proximity. These direct quotes from interviews describing individual experiences of the teacher-learner relationship can provide a more in-depth depiction of the influence of the relationship on learners' experiences.

> *"Our teacher always listens to us attentively. She makes us feel important and valued. It makes me more confident when learning in class." -Grade 3 learner*
>
> *"I feel very lucky to have a caring and considerate teacher like Mrs. Aan. Mrs. Aan can always create a fun and warm learning atmosphere, and most importantly always encourages me to dare to express my opinion. Even though sometimes I am wrong, Mrs. Aan still appreciates me, so I am not afraid to be wrong and try my best." - Grade 2 learner*
>
> *"Mrs. Lina gets to know each learner personally and understands our strengths and weaknesses. When I face difficulties in lessons, Mrs. Lina always patiently explains something difficult in a way that is easy to understand, so I was initially afraid of being wrong and didn't dare to raise my hand, now I am more courageous thanks to Mrs. Lina." -A 6th grade learner*
>
> *"I used to be afraid of speaking in front of the class. But thanks to Mr. Muhajir, I became more confident than before. He always encourages me to participate in class discussions and when I make mistakes, he gives correct examples with easy-to-understand explanations, instead*

of just blaming me. I now feel more comfortable speaking in front of my friends and have become more confident in expressing my opinions." -5th grade learner

Thus, the results of the interview are also in line with Hilda (2023), explains that teachers who listen actively, show empathy, provide constructive feedback, and create positive bonds in daily interactions can contribute to strengthening the teacher-learner relationship. The followings are the opinion of the class teacher during the interview regarding how to develop proximity between teachers and learners.

"We have to know how the form of proximity that learners like, for example, there are those who prefer physical touch, such as hugging and others, or only through words of affirmation. That way, we can give the appropriate treatment." -Grade 3 teacher

"If we want to be heard by learners, be their friend. I have a belief that learners listen to teachers more than their parents, and they listen to their friends more than their teachers. So, I'm trying to be their friend. When the teacher can be part of the learner's friend, then they will be very open." -6th grade teacher

Based on the data, it can be seen that SIKL teachers have various strategies to build relationships with their learners. This means that SIKL teachers have understood that the relationship between teachers and learners can directly affect the level of learner confidence. These findings are also reinforced by Wuju & Putra (2020) who show that there is a strong teacher and learner relationship to the teaching and learning process with a calculated r value of 0.872 so that it can be a reference in this study that when teachers and learners build a strong relationship, it can create a conducive and enjoyable teaching and learning process. When the learning process is conducive and enjoyable, learners can be more confident (Asiyah et al., 2019). The statement about SIKL teachers trying to be their "friend" is corroborated by Muhiddinur (2019) that teachers must be professional and fun, in addition to acting as loving parents to their children.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Observation Results of Self-Confidence of Learners at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur

Indicator	Observed Aspects	Score	
Demonstrate comfort and enthusiasm	Learners look comfortable and enthusiastic in participating in class.	100% done	Always
Dare to ask questions or opinions	Learners dare to ask questions or opinions in class.	100% done	Always
Show courage	Learners show courage to try new things in learning.	100% done	Always
Show confidence	Learners show confidence in completing tasks.	100% done	Always
Show enthusiasm for an activity	Learners show enthusiasm in participating in learning activities.	100% done	Always
Not afraid of making mistakes in learning	Learners are not afraid of making mistakes and see them as part of the learning process.	75% Often done	
Dare to face learning challenges	Learners are able to face learning challenges with a positive attitude.	50% Always and 50% Often done	
Show activeness and participation	Learners are active and participative in class activities.	100% done	Always
Respond to feedback	Learners respond to teacher's feedback with an open and positive attitude.	75% done	Always

Source: Observation Results

Based on the results of observations made, the data obtained that the level of self-confidence of Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur learners varies. Most have shown high self-confidence and some are still lacking. This is corroborated by the results of in-depth interviews, where informants explained that basically, their level of self-confidence varies depending on the individual character and the support environment they receive. In line with the theory (Amri, 2018; Sihotang, 2022; Natalia et al., 2019) learners' self-confidence is also influenced by several factors. Apart from this, the level of self-confidence of SIKL learners is good, as evidenced by many indicators that have reached the Always scale. Only a few indicators are still at the Often

stage, but the value is still relatively high because the difference between the Often and Always scales is only a few indicators.

Some indicators of concern are (1) not afraid of being wrong in learning, (2) brave in facing learning challenges, and (3) responding to feedback. Each has a different score. Based on the results of these observations, it is recommended that SIKL class teachers pay attention to some of these indicators in order to increase and develop learners' self-confidence.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is found that the level of self-confidence of Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) learners can be considered high. This is directly proportional to the proximity that class teachers and SIKL learners have, which shows a deep proximity. Thus, it is known that the proximity of class teachers to learners plays an important role in developing learners' self-confidence.

The data is reinforced by the opinion of informants who assume that when teacher-learner proximity has been established, it can provide a sense of comfort and security, which then motivates learners to actively participate in learning (Kamil, 2023). The proximity of the teacher allows them to feel more free to ask questions and when facing difficulties in the lesson, they are not afraid to be criticized (Nursanti, 2020). In addition, when teachers give constructive feedback and praise for their efforts, learners feel valued, which directly increases their self-confidence (Nafis, 2022; Ningsih & Warmi, 2021).

The proximity between class teachers and learners can lead to changes in learners' confidence. Some learners who still look afraid of being wrong in the learning process show changes, where they have started to dare to try new things without being afraid of being wrong after being given an approach by the class teacher. This supports Zhao's theory in Shofi (2018) regarding individual emotional attachment to something, where the proximity between class teachers and learners is extremely important.

Thus, teacher proximity not only works to build emotional connections but also creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. This

can help learners face academic and social challenges with a more confident demeanor. In addition, they become more confident in their abilities and motivated to keep improving (Amaliah & Sudana, 2021).

Looking back at the results of Wuju & Putra (2020), which presents that there is a very close relationship between teachers and learners, which can then make the teaching and learning process conducive and enjoyable. This is directly proportional to the results of this study, where strong teacher-learner relationships can develop learners' self-confidence, so that they can be more easily directed (Lestari, 2023; Widyaningsih et al., 2022) and the class becomes more conducive (Arisanti et al., 2021; Amaliyah & Rahmat, 2021) and creates a pleasant atmosphere (Asnawi et al., 2023; Prayitno et al., 2023; Tawas et al., 2024). This is also directly proportional to research from Alfaini (2021) which highlights that the proximity of teachers and learners can increase learner confidence and encourage learners' abilities in the classroom. Research of Hilda (2023) is also directly comparable to this study which mentions the importance of teacher-learner relationships in the learning process. Therefore, it is important to build a good and close relationship between teachers and learners. That way, learners' self-confidence can increase, so that it can have a good impact on their learning outcomes.

The difference in findings from previous research lies in several components. The difference with research of Wuju & Putra (2020) consists of the research methods used and the results of the study, where the study only mentions the correlation rate of teachers and learners in increasing learners' self-confidence, and does not explain in detail how the form of proximity and how to form it. In reasearch of Alfaini (2021) the difference lies in the research subject, where the research chose teachers as a whole and learners, but in this study it is more specialized in class teachers. The difference with research of Hilda (2023) consists of the research subjects who chose teachers in general, while this research focuses on class teachers. In addition, the

study did not discuss learners' self-confidence but only discussed the importance of teacher-learner relationships in the learning process.

However, this study has several limitations that require attention as evaluation and consideration for future research. The limited scope of the study, which only involved teachers and learners at Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, means that the results may not be fully generalizable to other schools, especially those outside the overseas Indonesian School (Sekolah Indonesia Luar Negeri, SILN) environment or in schools that have different cultural and social contexts.

CONCLUSION

The proximity between teacher and learners at Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur is excellent and close. Thus, the level of self-confidence of learners in the education unit is good and quite high. The high level of courage, activeness, comfort, and enthusiasm shown by learners inside and outside of learning activities is evidence that the proximity of teacher and learners plays an important role in developing their self-confidence. Thus, this research can serve as a guideline that it is important to build proximity between teacher and learners. This research suggests that teachers should be able to build proximity with learners so that their self-confidence can develop properly, thereby it can also have a good impact on their learning outcomes.

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