



Strategies for Integrating Multicultural Education and Religious Education to Strengthen the Multicultural Character of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Religious education and multicultural education in elementary schools are considered very important in addressing the increasing issue of moral decay among children. This study aims to describe the strategy of integrating the interconnection of religious and multicultural education in strengthening the character of elementary school students. This study uses a qualitative approach of the case study type with the objects of the principal, teachers, and students. Research data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data were then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Researchers use triangulation techniques and triangulation sources to obtain data validity. This study found that integrating the interconnection of religious education and multicultural education strengthens the character of elementary school students by integrating-interconnecting certain values in the curriculum and the learning process, namely equality, unity, justice, kinship, tolerance, and love of peace. The results of this study not only provide theoretical contributions to character formation through religious and multicultural education and offer practical insights for elementary schools in forming students' characters through the integration of religious and multicultural education.

Keywords: Integration; Multicultural Education; Religious Education; Character



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known for its pluralistic or multicultural society (Sutiah, 2020). This diversity is reflected in groups of different races, tribes, religions, and socio-cultural backgrounds (Dody et al. et al., 2021). Currently, there are around 13,000 large and small islands in the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Its population exceeds 200 million and consists of 300 tribes who speak around 200 different languages. In addition, they adhere to different religions and beliefs such as Islam, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and various other beliefs and religions. This diversity creates different cultures, making this country one of the largest multicultural countries in the world (M. Ainul Yaqin, 2019).

Of course, this raises various challenges that the nation currently faces in managing the country and its people. Real forms of multicultural problems include corruption, collusion, nepotism, disputes, political hostility, violence, separatism, environmental destruction, and the dehumanization of respect for the rights of others (M. Ainul Yaqin, 2019). Furthermore, one of Indonesia's biggest challenges and bitter experiences is the frequent occurrence of conflicts in various regions. First, the inter-ethnic conflict in 2001 between the Dayak and Madurese communities in Sampit, South Kalimantan. Second, there was a conflict between Islam and Christianity in Ambon in 1999. Third, there was a conflict between indigenous peoples and ethnic Chinese in 1998. Fourth, the confrontation between Ahmadiyah and Shia in the 2000s. Fifth, there are conflicts between government groups such as GAM, OPM, and RMS (Joko Purnomo et al., 2019).

Bullying data released by KNPI in 2021 showed that the most common cases of violence based on SARA (ethnicity, religion, and race) were bullying and student brawls. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, brawls between students still occur. According to the Bogor Police, student brawls increased throughout 2021 (Muhammad Anshari, 2021). As happened at SMAN 7 Bogor, a student died horribly after being stabbed with a sickle by another student for not accepting reprimands and ridicule on social media (National Editorial Team, 2022). The perpetrators of violence in education are peers, teachers, parents, coaches, and school leaders. One of the violent clashes between teachers and students occurred at Sampang High School. The teacher was beaten to death by his students in the temple for not accepting reprimands (National Geographic, 2022).

From the problems above, it is clear that there is a lack of mutual respect, appreciation, and tolerance between each other. It is also clear that the failure of character education will affect students as the nation's next generation who will determine the direction of Indonesia's development in the future. Article 28E Paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution states that everyone has the right to embrace religion freely, worship according to their religion, choose education and teaching,

choose a place to live, and leave the country's territory (Tijan and F.A. Sugimin, 2021). The government gives everyone the freedom to choose religion and education. Through education, the government involves different groups and offers different curricula by considering different aspects for the common good and choosing the main content to avoid intolerance.

Fathur Rokhman stated that an educational institution is no longer a place to transfer knowledge only, but it is also a place to form youth's attitude, behavior, character, and leadership (Rokhman, Hum, Syaifudin, & Yulianti, 2014) Multicultural values education to shape students' character is very important. The goal is for the community to believe and be devoted to God Almighty, have noble morals, and become healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. Multicultural education is every idea, movement, educational reform, and educational process whose main goal is to change the structure of educational institutions, whose main goal is to meet the needs of male and female students with special needs, namely to provide equal opportunities for students with disabilities and students from different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. It is like getting good grades in school (Ujang Syarip Hidayat, 2018).

Educational practices need to instill multicultural values, and religious learning is a subject that can play this role. Religious education in schools has so far been seen as a reference for the values of justice and truth, but in practice, it is seen only as a complement. It is better if they are educated. Siti Nurhasanah (Siti Nurhasanah, 2021) and Violina Dwi Ratnasari (Violina Dwi Ratnasari, 2021) stated in previous research that multicultural education has the concept of values of equality, justice, freedom, and intolerance that have been realized in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). A teacher in teaching should avoid fanaticism in the classroom. Not only in the classroom, but in education in general, multiculturalism has potential implications for socio-cultural awareness, avoids fanaticism, and is needed in the educational process (Ambele, 2018). The multicultural education movement, according to Freire, that the flow of education has begun to open up the principles of understanding and acceptance, not just tolerance but more towards a form of respect for diversity, based on the needs of the educator's teaching approach shows support starting from differences in race, class, religion, culture and gender in learning arrangements. Multicultural education is an educational model that is worthy of being a reference for educators who are aware of cultural studies so that it can be applied in the classroom because educators conceptualize multicultural education in theory and practice (Balaji, 2017). Considering this, multicultural education should be upheld throughout Indonesia (Munarji, 2020).

Based on the facts in the field, schools were found that implemented multicultural education with quite large religious differences, namely 274 Islamic students, 63 Protestant Christian students, 9 Catholic Christian students, and 11

Hindu students out of 357 students in the school (Dwi Rahayu, 2021). The school also has teaching staff and a special room or class for religious learning. Each religious learning is carried out simultaneously, following the lesson schedule (Fitriani Latifah, 2021). In addition, this school is also entrusted to teach religious learning specifically for non-Muslims for other schools in Banjarbaru City and Banjar Regency. Every Friday afternoon, students from various schools gather together, except for students who attend SDN 1 Guntung Manggis because they already have their own lesson schedule at their school (Ridho Amalia, 2022). This fact was created because of the support from the school in the form of integration and interconnection of religious learning and multicultural education so that student characters are formed that can be used as models for character education with multicultural characteristics for other multicultural educational institutions.

This study aims to describe the strategy of integrating the interconnection of religious and multicultural education in strengthening the character of elementary school students. Further research is very important to identify the success of character formation of students through religious and multicultural education so that it can be used as a basis for the character formation of students in elementary schools that have diversity and provide real contributions to the success of character formation of elementary school students.

METHODS

This research is exploratory in nature to obtain an overview of the integration and interconnection of religious and multicultural education in shaping the character of elementary school students so that data can be obtained on how the dimensions of multicultural pluralism and religious learning are well integrated into curriculum and can be spontaneously actualized in everyday life by students as an effort to form character (Jorgensen & Stacey, 1970, p. 254) The type of research used is a case study, an educational research method directed at solving a problem, taking the meaning obtained from a special case in education. Case studies are divided into two, namely retrospective (improving) and prospective (excesses) (Jasa Unggah Muliawan, 2014).

Case studies provide a comprehensive description and specific explanation of settings, documents, or events (Mutch, 2006, p. 54). Data collection techniques used in this study were Observation, Interviews, and Documentation (Sugiyono, 2019). Direct observation by the author related to integrating the interconnection of religious education and multicultural education in strengthening the character of elementary school students in schools that were used as research sites. Interviews were conducted to dig up in-depth information from informants. The informants were the Head and Head of the Education Office, Elementary School supervisors, principals, teachers, and students. Data collection through documentation: The

researcher completed the data and triangulated it with data from interviews and observations. The researcher used the Miles & Huberman model data analysis, including reduction, display, and drawing conclusions (Moleong, L.J, 2018).

RESULTS

The implementation of multicultural education in elementary schools through habits such as religious habits and eating together habits are carried out to shape the character of students. Every Friday morning, schools carry out religious habits in their respective places. Muslim students in the field by reading the Yasin letter, sholawat, and reading Asmaul Husna together. The habit of Christian students worshiping by reading the Bible, praying, and then taking exams in class. Meanwhile, Hindu students also worship in the classroom by reading Trisandia (daily prayers) and practicing prayer.

In addition to religious habits every Friday, the school also holds a meal together at the end of each semester in the field. All school residents bring their own supplies and then take turns praying before eating together. Prayers start from Muslims, Christians, and then Hindus, led by their respective student representatives, so that a sense of mutual understanding and respect for the meaning of differences with various tribes, cultures, and religions will emerge.

1. *Multicultural education in strengthening student character*

Strengthening student character in multicultural education is more focused on habits that apply cultural and character values. The cultural and character values emphasized by students of SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru are the values of tolerance and justice.

a. *Tolerance, Equality / Sameness*

Multicultural values at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis show that there are values of similarity for all students who have differences, especially in religion. To increase mutual respect, all students, whether Muslim, Christian, or Hindu, have their own religious habituation activities every Friday morning. This reflects the value of equality in ensuring that minority students do not feel discriminated against at school. Talking about multicultural education in the value of equality at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis, it can be said that all students of minority religions also have habituation activities at the same time but with the implementation of the activities carried out in their respective places. Through observation, interviews, and documentation, a strong form of tolerance is seen between students, especially tolerance of religion. When the school holds religious activities, they help each other even though they do not adhere to the same beliefs.

b. Justice Value

Justice is the balance between the demands of rights and obligations that are carried out so that all have the same potential. The value of justice is highly upheld at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru, as evidenced by the presence of religious teachers and special classes for studying religious education. Talking about the right to receive learning materials, all students at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru receive the same religious learning materials at the same time. In line with what Margono said, justice can be interpreted as the value of creating an ideal relationship between one human being and another, granting rights and enforcing obligations (Margono, 2019).

2. Integration of multicultural education with religious education to strengthen students' character

Before the learning processes, teachers at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis independently prepare lesson plans based on the syllabus as a reference. The lesson plans are made with all modifications attempted by each religious teacher. Activities are carried out to realize the planning that has been made or designed previously. In implementing learning related to multicultural education at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru, all teachers use a communicative approach, namely lectures, questions, answers, and assignments.

Learning begins with prayer according to each religion and belief, specifically for religious education. Teachers in each religious field guide students according to their religion, namely Islamic religious education, Christian religious education, Catholic religious education, and Hindu religious education. Evaluation is a component that must be carried out systematically and in a planned manner as a tool to measure the success that will be achieved in the learning process. To measure this success, the evaluation component applied at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru is an authentic assessment. Students of SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru are accustomed to witnessing differences in terms of culture and religious ritual activities. Even if every student gets the same rights in religious services and education with quality facilities and infrastructure, the character of tolerance in students is well-developed.

In addition, the religious education curriculum programmed in the RPP is implemented by all religious teachers at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru without distinguishing between one religion and another; therefore, balance and justice are created in the learning process. This is reflected in the results of affective assessments. Students have a positive attitude toward adherents of different religions respect and appreciate various differences without reducing the dimension of the quality of belief in each religion.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of multicultural education at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru through habituation, namely the habituation of religious rituals and the habituation of eating together, is carried out in order to shape the character of students. Every Friday morning, the habituation of religious rituals at school is in accordance with each religious group by taking different places. Muslim students gather in the field to carry out the reading of Surah Yasin, sholawat, and Asmaul Husna together. Christian students worship by reading the Bible, praying, and then taking exams in class, while Hindu students worship in class by reading Trisandia (daily prayers) and practicing prayer.

According to Asih Mardati et al., routine habits are taught to students to become innate habits, elicit positive responses, and shape the character and personality of students over time (Asih Mardati et al., 2021). This is in line with Abdul Majid's statement that habituation is a very effective method as an early education process to instill moral values in the souls of children. The values embedded in him were practiced in his life as he grew up (Lina Eka Retnaningsih and Nadya Nela Rosa, 2022). In addition to religious practices every Friday, the school also holds a meal together at the end of each semester in the field. All school residents show their solidarity by bringing their own supplies and then taking turns praying before eating together. The prayer is led by each student representative, starting with Muslim, Christian, and then Hindu students. This activity strengthens the sense of mutual understanding and respect for the meaning of differences with various ethnicities, cultures, and religions.

This is in accordance with Lina and Nadya's statement that one of the characteristics of children is that they imitate what other people around them do: parents, family members, teachers, and friends. The habituation method is effectively practiced to instill character education values. Based on the good behavior that he sees and the child gets used to it, within a certain time, these values are instilled in him and become part of him (Lina Eka Retnaningsih and Nadya Nela Rosa, 2022). The habituation of religious activities is carried out routinely every week from 07.30-08.00, which is Islam in the field, Christianity and Hinduism in the classroom. This strengthens the tolerance value of students because they are used to respecting each other's religious worship habits. The same applies to Ahsanul's statement that the purpose of implementing the habituation method in schools is to consistently and regularly introduce students to achieving goals (Moh. Ahsanulhaq, 2019). This is relevant to what Fajar Defitrika expressed, the strengthening of character education through life skills education orienting on self-development and boarding schools' cultural development. (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021).

1. *Multicultural education in strengthening students' character*

The formation of student character in multicultural education is more focused on habits that apply cultural and character values. The cultural and character values emphasized by students of SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru are the values of tolerance and justice.

a. Tolerance, Equality/ Sameness

The multicultural values at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis show that there are values of equality for all students who have differences, especially religion. To increase mutual respect, all students, both Muslims, Christians, and Hindus, have their own religious habituation activities every Friday morning. This reflects the value of equality in ensuring that minority students do not feel discriminated against at school. As Mannan pointed out, the position of humans in Islam is the same. The only difference is the quality of their piety (Abdul Manan, 2016). According to Ainul, in multicultural education, schools play a very important role in instilling the values of equality or equal rights and avoiding disparities between parties (M. Ainul Yaqin, 2019).

The value of equality in multicultural education at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis is implemented by all students of minority religions in habituation activities simultaneously, but the activities are carried out in their respective places. This aligns with Oni's statement that the value of equality/equality is related to the same status or level. In the field of education, it does not make someone superior or treat someone better than others (Oni Marliana Susianti, 2020). Equality is similar to Aria and Rudy's statement that all humans are the same, namely the existence of equal rights and equal obligations. In education, teachers are not allowed to differentiate between one student and another and assume that all students are the same (Arya Sena Nugraha and Rudi Salam, 2021).

Through observation, interviews, and documentation, a strong form of tolerance is seen between students, especially tolerance of religion. When schools hold religious activities, they help each other even though they do not share the same beliefs. As emphasized by Abdurrahman Wahid, tolerance should be an important goal in education because it is based on respect and empathy for the souls of others (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2011).

Tolerance of religion in Dwi's sense does not mean the freedom to practice one religion today and practice another religion tomorrow or to freely participate in worship and ritual ceremonies of all religions without binding restrictions. However, religious tolerance must be understood as a recognition of the existence of other religions that are different from the religion believed in oneself. Religious tolerance allows all forms of systems and methods of worship to be carried out according to the beliefs of their adherents (Dwi Ananta Devi, 2020). Activities to commemorate religious holidays, or even when school holidays are celebrated, all

school residents help each other, participate, and interact with students with different religious backgrounds. They do this without ever being a problem because students are used to various differences. Tolerance prohibits discrimination against different cultural or religious groups in society. Tolerance is characterized by following rules that allow the behavior of others to be respected (Abu Bakar, 2016).

Similarly, as conveyed by Ihsana, tolerance is a choice of attitude, namely a fair and objective attitude towards all people who think or all who have different beliefs from different ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. Tolerance can make the world a safer place in the diversity that exists (Ihsana El Khuluqo and Istaryatiningtias, 2022). Based on the explanation above, in religious tolerance, students and teachers help each other and accept differences, such as helping to prepare rooms for big day celebrations and accepting these activities at school.

b. Value of Justice

Justice is the occurrence of a balance between the demands of rights and the obligations carried out so that all have the same potential. The value of justice is highly upheld at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru, as evidenced by the presence of religious teachers and special classes for studying religious education. As Aristotle said in Suparnyo, justice means giving everyone the rights they deserve. He divides justice into two: distributive justice, a form of justice based on the amount of service provided, and corrective justice, which is independent of the amount of service provided (Suparnyo, 2020). This is in line with the opinion expressed by Patricius that the value of justice is obedience to norms based on the balance of the rights and obligations of each individual or group of people. The concept of equal values in the world of education is to be fair to all school residents. In interacting, teachers and students respect and value the rights of others without coercion. In the learning process, students must have the same rights and responsibilities to receive learning materials, attention, and positive motivation (Patrisius Kia Boli and Gunawan Sridiyatmiko, 2022).

Justice is obtained by all students at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru, as evidenced by the opportunity for each student to receive religious learning materials according to their respective beliefs. In addition, the support of facilities in the form of adequate space as a place of worship so that students do not need to take turns to carry out worship can be done simultaneously. The school also prepares teachers for each religion. No student feels that they do not get attention or guidance. This is in accordance with Wulandari's statement that justice is the quality of the ability to achieve equal rights and opportunities and equal results because schools are colorful environments, and schools must serve different groups fairly (Taat Wulandari, 2020)

From the explanation above, the value of justice in the realm of education is important because, in schools, there are diverse students. The existence of special

classes and teachers for religious education makes the value of justice high because all students can learn religious education equally.

2. Strategy for Integrating Multicultural Education with Religious Education to Strengthen Student Character

This study found that there are several stages in implementing the strategy for integrating multicultural education with religious education, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. Referring to PP Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, article 19 it is stated that each educational unit carries out learning process planning, implementation of the learning process, assessment of learning outcomes, and supervision of the learning process so that learning runs effectively and efficiently (Rudi Ahmad Suryadi and Aguslani Mushlih, 2012)

a. Planning

Planning is a process to achieve goals by creating stages. Religious education learning planning is integrated with multicultural values through the preparation of a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). As stated by Rudi in pedagogical competence, a person is considered professional if he can plan learning. In this case, the teacher is obliged to carry out learning and planning (Rudi Ahmad Suryadi and Aguslani Mushlih, 2012).

Before implementing learning, teachers at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis independently prepare RPP based on the syllabus as a reference. RPP is made with all the modifications each religious teacher attempts. In line with what Sugi said, the RPP is a guide for teachers in implementing learning both in and outside the classroom. Every teacher is obliged to prepare a complete and systematic RPP so that learning becomes fun and interactive and motivates students to be active (Sugi, 2019). In line with what Muhammad said, the RPP is a learning tool prepared by teachers as a guideline for implementing learning. The RPP also contains estimates of what and how teaching and learning activities take place, although, in fact, it may not be in accordance with the RPP. However, it is usually not far from the plan because it has been conceptualized at the beginning (Muhammad, 2020). Through the explanation above, planning is made in the form of stages to achieve the desired goals. The author found multicultural values such as respecting differences, stated in the RPP, precisely in the learning objectives, both in Islamic, Hindu, and Christian religious education.

b. Implementation

Activities are carried out to realize the planning that has been made or designed previously. In implementing learning related to multicultural education at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru, all teachers use a communicative approach, namely lectures, questions and answers, and assignments. Learning begins with a prayer according to each religion and belief, specifically for religious education, then

teachers in each religious field guide students according to their religion, namely Islamic religious education, Christian religious education, Catholic religious education, and Hindu religious education.

The communicative approach applied in the learning process at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru is in line with what was conveyed by Ali Mustadi that in order to develop the quality of the teaching process, a communicative approach needed to be built into the teaching process. A successful teacher is a teacher who chooses a style according to his goals. The most important things about this approach are interviews, information exchange, role-playing, descriptions, and lectures (Ali Mustadi et al., 2021). This is in line with Saifuddin's opinion that the communicative approach emphasizes the language of delivery, not only about using language skills that are innate to humans, but language also encourages the development of its own language system (Saifuddin Mahmud and Muhammad Idham, 2017).

The teacher's language skills include providing examples according to what they experience at school so that students understand better. The teacher emphasizes that all religions are good. They should not mock each other and must respect each other. Teachers must also be skilled at providing sparks to students so that they are more active in asking questions and discussing. In line with what Endang said, the communicative approach makes students active in communicating both verbally and in writing so that they are able to convey ideas that are in their minds both to readers and to listeners (Endang Wahyuningsi, 2019). This was also expressed by Arita Marini, who said that character education can be formed through the teaching and learning process, extracurricular activities, school culture, and community involvement (Marini et al., 2019).

c. Evaluation

Evaluation is a component that must be carried out systematically and in a planned manner as a tool to measure the success that will be achieved in the learning process. To measure this success, the evaluation component applied to SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru is an authentic assessment. Students of SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru are accustomed to witnessing differences both in terms of culture and religious ritual activities. Even every student gets the same rights in religious services and education with equal quality facilities and infrastructure so that the character of tolerance in students is well developed. In addition, the religious education curriculum programmed in the RPP is implemented by all religious teachers at SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru without distinguishing between one religion and another; therefore, balance and justice are created in the learning process. It is reflected in the results of affective assessments. Students have a positive attitude toward adherents of different religions respect and appreciate

various differences without reducing the dimension of the quality of belief in each religion.

According to Nurzannah, authentic assessment is an assessment of learning outcomes that requires students to be able to demonstrate achievements in the form of real-life skills or expressed in the form of performance or work results (Nurzannah Anita Carlina, 2021). As conveyed by Ummu, a research method that is able to cover various aspects, both cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, because the nature of education is to develop the competencies that exist in students, the appropriate method is authentic assessment (Ummu Aiman, 2016).

In authentic assessment, students can better understand learning because, in addition to working on practice questions, in Islamic Religious Education, students are also asked to make videos of memorizing surahs and the contents of surahs. This practice can measure the extent to which students' abilities are in understanding lessons. In line with what was conveyed by Herman et al. that authentic assessment can make students actively collaborate, cooperate, and participate in evaluating their progress (Herman Rusdiana et al., 2014)

Similar to what was conveyed by Wika, authentic assessment can measure student development in affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects. Assessment is able to provide fairly detailed information on student learning outcomes and is continuous (Wika Aji Sugiri and Sigit Priatmoko, 2020). Based on the explanation above, authentic assessment makes students more active, which in its assessment is not only in 1 stage. For assessing students' attitudes in learning their religion through observation, self-assessment, and peer assessment. Assessment of knowledge by working on questions or quizzes. An assessment of skills in making handicrafts or practicing making videos.

CONCLUSION

Multicultural education in interactions between students in elementary schools in Banjarbaru City emphasizes the instillation of tolerance and fairness values. The value of tolerance, an attitude of mutual respect and acceptance of other people's choices, when schools carry out religious activities, both students and teachers help and respect each other. While the value of justice, the balance between demands for rights and carrying out obligations, is proven by the presence of special educators and special rooms for non-Muslim students at school so that all students receive religious education material according to their beliefs. SDN 1 Guntung Manggis Banjarbaru implements the integration of multicultural values with religious education to strengthen student character through the following stages: 1) Planning, religious education is integrated with multicultural values through the preparation of lesson plans. 2) Implementation: Learning is carried out through a communicative approach, and it has been implemented so that the integration of

religious education with multicultural values can be seen well. 3) Evaluation: authentic assessment is used to measure the success of learning objectives, namely through student attitude assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, knowledge assessment, and skills assessment.

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