



Educational Communication Strategy To Improve Competitiveness In The Era Of Technological Change And Globalization

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the educational communication strategies employed by a single educational institution to enhance its competitiveness in the era of globalization and technological transformation. Utilizing a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis at one school in the Gending sub-district. The study's participants included the school principal, teachers, and parents. The findings reveal that the integration of digital technology, the strengthening of institutional branding, and multi-stakeholder collaboration play pivotal roles in fostering strong relationships with various stakeholders and enhancing the institution's positive image. The study underscores the importance of adopting more holistic and adaptive communication strategies to enable educational institutions to remain competitive on a global scale. Additionally, the findings offer valuable insights for education managers in developing communication strategies that are both effective and sustainable in the face of globalization's challenges.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat strategi komunikasi pendidikan yang dilakukan oleh sebuah institusi pendidikan untuk meningkatkan daya saingnya di era globalisasi dan transformasi teknologi. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan analisis dokumen di satu sekolah di kecamatan Gending. Partisipan penelitian ini meliputi kepala sekolah, guru, dan orang tua murid. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknologi digital, penguatan branding institusi, dan kolaborasi multi-pemangku kepentingan memainkan peran penting dalam membina hubungan yang kuat dengan berbagai pemangku kepentingan dan meningkatkan citra positif institusi. Studi ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya mengadopsi strategi komunikasi yang lebih holistik dan adaptif untuk memungkinkan institusi pendidikan tetap kompetitif dalam skala global. Selain itu, temuan-temuan yang ada juga memberikan wawasan yang

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berharga bagi para manajer pendidikan dalam mengembangkan strategi komunikasi yang efektif dan berkelanjutan dalam menghadapi tantangan globalisasi.

INTRODUCTION

The educational environment has changed significantly due to technological changes and globalization (Blažič, 2022; Rizvi et al., 2022). Educational institutions are no longer competing only at the local level, but also have to face the challenges of an increasingly integrated global education system (Chen, 2024; De Wit & Altbach, 2021). One fact that illustrates this reality is the increasing use of digital technology in the world of education. Based on a UNESCO report in 2022, more than 70% of schools in various parts of the world have begun to integrate technology into their learning process. Although the use of new technologies is increasing, many educational institutions still do not have an effective communication strategy to increase their competitiveness.

Educational communication is not only about conveying information but more as an important bridge connecting educational institutions with various stakeholders. This includes relationships with students, parents, government, and the wider community. Through effective communication, various parties can collaborate, understand educational goals, and support various programs run by educational institutions (Alghamdi & Holland, 2020; Bandyopadhyaya et al., 2021). In the current era of globalization, having an effective communication strategy not only helps build a positive image of an institution, but also provides advantages in attracting student interest, strengthening cooperation, and encouraging innovation in the world of education (Hung & Yen, 2022; Riccomini et al., 2024). According to the theory of diffusion of innovation introduced by Everett Rogers, the success of an institution in adopting technology does not only depend on the existence of the innovation itself but is also influenced by the communication strategy implemented to support the adoption process.

In the Gending sub-district, it was found that there were educational institutions experiencing a gap between their vision to become globally competitive institutions and their ability to communicate these values to stakeholders. SMP Unggulan Maslahatul Ummah in Gending sub-district has developed a technology-based education program as an effort to improve the quality of education. However, this program still faces obstacles due to the lack of an effective communication strategy, so that it is not widely known by the wider community. In addition, a phenomenon that is also seen is the lack of collaboration between educational institutions and related parties such as the government, the business world, and the local community. The results of observations of SMP Unggulan Maslahatul Ummah in Gending sub-district show that less strategic communication is one of the main causes. As a result, opportunities for cooperation that actually have great potential cannot be utilized optimally.

According to Chugh, educational institutions that adopt a technology-based communication approach have a higher level of stakeholder satisfaction (Chug et al., 2023; Idrus et al., 2022). In education, the success of schools or educational institutions in this

era of globalization is greatly influenced by their ability to convey their distinctive values through appropriate and effective digital communication (Camilleri, 2020). Meanwhile, collaboration between various stakeholders supported by effective communication has been shown to encourage innovation and increase competitiveness in the world of education (Paiva, Ribeiro, & Coutinho, 2020).

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature on educational communication strategies in developing countries, particularly in the Indonesian context. Unlike previous studies that focused more on technology or specific stakeholders, this study will integrate a holistic approach that includes technology, institutional branding, and stakeholder collaboration.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of a framework for educational communication strategies based on multi-party collaboration and technology adaptation. This research will also provide a new perspective on how educational institutions can manage communication to create competitive value in an increasingly global education market.

This study aims to identify, analyze, and formulate educational communication strategies that can improve the competitiveness of institutions amidst technological developments and globalization. This objective is expected to be a practical guide for educational institutions in developing relevant and effective communication approaches. The expected positive impact is the creation of increased educational competitiveness in Indonesia, both at the national and international levels.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method (Alam, 2021; Priya, 2021). This approach was chosen because it is able to dig deeper into the phenomena that occur in the field by understanding the perspectives of various stakeholders, such as teachers and students, in the context of implementing digital technology and a multicultural approach in learning. This qualitative approach is more flexible than a quantitative approach because it can capture the dynamics and complexity of participants' experiences and perceptions that cannot be measured in numbers (Lim, 2024). This method was chosen compared to experimental or survey methods because case studies have the advantage of understanding the context and various aspects of individuals through interviews and direct observation. With this approach, researchers can dig deeper into the factors that influence the implementation of technology and a multicultural approach in education.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interview methods, direct observation, and documentation studies (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). The study was conducted in several schools that implement a multicultural approach in their curriculum and use digital technology in the learning process, especially at the junior high school level. The research location was chosen based on considerations of schools that have actively integrated digital technology and multicultural concepts in their learning strategies. The reason for choosing this location was to understand the direct

dynamics and real practices carried out by teachers and students in a relevant environment. The number of informants used in this study was 8 people, consisting of 3 teachers and 3 students, with the selection being carried out by purposive sampling so that the informants selected had direct relevance to the focus of the research. The interview technique was carried out in a semi-structured manner to allow for in-depth exploration of the perceptions, experiences, and practices carried out by the informants. (Gareau & Phillips, 2022)

NO	Role	Inisial
01	Headmaster	MT
02	Teacher	NH, MA, SR,
03	Student	MZA, KG, SH,
04	Technology Coach	ASY

Table 1. Interview Informants

In this study, the collected data were analyzed using data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman, which include the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or data verification (Maharana, Mondal, & Nemade, 2022). Data reduction is carried out by sorting and filtering data from interviews, observations, and documentation to eliminate irrelevant information and highlight information that is directly related to the focus of the study. Furthermore, the reduced data is presented in the form of tables, graphs, and narratives to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Finally, conclusions are drawn by identifying patterns and themes that emerge from the data that has been presented, with a triangulation process to ensure the validity of the analysis results. This technique allows research to understand the complexity of the phenomena studied in detail and in depth, as well as to reveal the relationships between relevant variables in the context of the application of technology and multicultural approaches.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Digital Communication in Education

In the rapid development of technology, the use of digital platforms in the world of education is one solution to improve the quality and efficiency of the teaching and learning process. The use of technology such as Google Classroom has greatly helped educators in delivering learning materials and interacting with students. To understand the extent to which this technology contributes to the educational process, interviews were conducted with related parties. The results of this interview provide a clear picture of the ease and flexibility offered by digital technology in supporting communication and delivery of educational materials effectively. As an interview with one of the teachers stated,

“Digital platforms like Google Classroom have made it easier for me to provide learning materials and receive assignments from students without time constraints.” (Interview with Teacher, December 09, 2024)

The interview results above state that the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom has a significant role in facilitating the learning process. In this case, one party stated that the platform allows the delivery of learning materials and the collection of assignments from students to be more effective without being hampered by time constraints. With flexible and fast access through Google Classroom, communication between teachers and students becomes smoother, and the education process can run in a more structured manner. This proves that the use of digital technology in education can support an efficient learning environment and reduce obstacles that often arise in traditional learning methods. A student expressed his opinion, "I feel more comfortable asking questions through messaging applications than in class, because it is more personal and not embarrassing." This illustrates that digital platforms not only expand communication but also increase students' comfort in actively participating.

Based on the interview results, it was revealed that the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom provides significant convenience in the learning process. By utilizing this platform, teachers can easily deliver learning materials to students and receive assignments from them without being limited by time constraints. The flexibility offered by Google Classroom allows for more effective interaction between teachers and students, supporting a more dynamic and structured learning environment. This technology helps overcome traditional communication constraints and provides fast and practical access in the teaching and assignment process, thus supporting better efficiency and quality of education.



Gambar 1. Google Classroom atau LMS

In the ever-evolving digital era, the use of technology as a means of communication in education is one of the important aspects that supports an effective and interactive learning process. Platforms such as WhatsApp groups and Learning Management Systems (LMS) have been used to facilitate communication between students and teachers, with the aim of creating a more collaborative and dynamic learning environment. To dig deeper into the impact of this technology on student-teacher relationships, interviews were conducted with related parties. As the principal of SMP Unggulan Maslahatul Ummah said:

“We see increased collaboration between students and teachers through discussions in WhatsApp groups or LMS forums. This creates a more dynamic learning environment.” (Interview with Principal 09 December 2024)

Interview results show that communication through WhatsApp groups and Learning Management System (LMS) forums has played an important role in improving collaboration between students and teachers. Discussions conducted through these platforms create interactive spaces that support the exchange of ideas, problem solving, and more effective communication in the learning environment. With this active and ongoing communication, the learning environment becomes more dynamic, thus encouraging the involvement of students and teachers in a more collaborative and participatory educational process. The use of this technology proves that digital platform-based communication can strengthen the relationship between teachers and students and improve the quality of the teaching and learning process.

Based on the interview results above, collaboration between students and teachers has increased through the use of WhatsApp groups and Learning Management System (LMS) forums as a means of communication. Discussions held on both platforms provide space for students and teachers to interact, exchange information, and discuss learning materials or various problems in education. This activity creates a more dynamic and interactive learning atmosphere, where students feel more involved and teachers can more easily understand the needs and development of students. In other words, the use of communication technology such as WhatsApp and LMS has helped build a more flexible, collaborative learning environment and supports an active spirit in the education process.

Digital Literacy Development for Teachers and Students

In facing the transformation of education in the digital era, digital literacy is one of the skills that plays an important role for educators. For many teachers who still rely on traditional teaching methods, the process of adapting to technology is often an obstacle, especially when support in the form of training is inadequate. To understand the extent to which digital literacy affects teachers' ability to utilize technology in learning, interviews were conducted with related parties. The results of these interviews illustrate the challenges faced by educators in integrating technology into their teaching practices without adequate support and training. As the interviewed teacher stated:

“Digital literacy is very important, especially for those of us who are still accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Without training, it is difficult for us to make the most of technology.” (Interview with teacher, December 10, 2024)

The results of the interview stated that digital literacy has a very important role, especially for educators who are still accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Reliance on old methods often makes the process of adapting to technology more challenging. One of the problems is that without adequate training, the use of technology in the teaching and learning process is less than optimal. This indicates that support is needed through training and strengthening digital skills so that educators can be more confident and able to use technology more effectively in supporting innovative and

modern education processes.

Based on the interview results, it was revealed that digital literacy has a crucial role, especially for educators who still rely on traditional teaching methods in their practice. Reliance on conventional methods creates challenges when having to adapt to the use of technology in learning. One of the obstacles highlighted was the lack of adequate training so the use of technology is less than optimal. Without adequate digital skills, teachers find it difficult to make maximum use of technology in the teaching and learning process. This statement emphasizes the importance of support and training programs to improve teachers' digital literacy so that they are able to integrate technology effectively and support more innovative education quality.

In the implementation of technology-based learning, not all students have the same ability to adapt to the various digital platforms used. Although technology can enrich the learning experience, the lack of technical assistance is often an obstacle for students. This is especially felt when students are faced with new applications that they have never used before. Without adequate guidance, students can feel confused and confused, which can ultimately hinder their learning process. As Students also expressed:

"Sometimes I am confused about using certain applications requested by the teacher, because I have never been taught directly how to use them." (Interview with students, December 10, 2024)

The interview results showed that students often had difficulty using certain applications requested by teachers, especially due to the lack of direct guidance in their use. This confusion arose due to the lack of previous provision or training explaining how the application works. This situation indicates that students need more structured assistance in order to be able to understand and utilize learning technology properly. Without adequate guidance, the potential of these applications in supporting the teaching and learning process cannot be utilized optimally.

Based on the interview results above, it describes the challenges faced by students in participating in technology-based learning, especially when asked to use certain applications that they do not fully understand. When teachers instruct the use of applications without providing clear guidance or prior training, students often feel confused and have difficulty operating the application. This shows that there is a gap in the process of introducing the technology used in learning. For example, students may be expected to upload assignments or take virtual classes through a particular platform, but without adequate instructions, they have difficulty completing the task properly. This condition shows the importance of systematic assistance or tutorials to ensure that all students are able to use learning technology effectively.

In the digital era, the integration of technology into the world of education has become an inevitable necessity. However, the main challenge lies not only in the technical ability to use technology, but also in how educators view the role of technology in the learning process. Technology is often seen as a threat that can replace the role of humans, whereas with the right mindset, technology can be a strategic partner to increase effectiveness and innovation in teaching. An educational technology trainer commented,

“We have trained many teachers in using technology, but what is more important is changing their mindset to see technology as a partner, not a threat.” (interview with Technology Trainer December 10, 2024)

The interview results above highlight significant efforts in improving teacher competency through technology training, but emphasize that changing mindsets is a key element in the success of digital transformation in education. Technical training is considered important, but changing the way teachers view technology as a tool, not a threat, has a greater impact in the long term. By building awareness that technology can be a partner that supports creativity and teaching effectiveness, teachers are expected to be more open to utilizing various digital platforms optimally. These findings indicate that educational transformation through technology requires not only technical mastery, but also an adjustment in the mentality of educators.

Based on the interview results above, it describes the focus on two main aspects in the process of integrating technology into education: technical training and changing teacher mindsets. Technical training involves teaching practical skills in using certain digital devices or platforms, such as learning software or communication applications. However, the interviewees emphasized that this training would not be fully effective without a change in perspective on technology. Many teachers initially felt anxious that technology could replace their role in the learning process. Therefore, an approach is needed that encourages teachers to see technology as a tool that supports, expands creativity, and strengthens student engagement in learning. This approach does not only focus on technical mastery, but also builds trust that technology is a partner that can help them achieve greater educational goals.

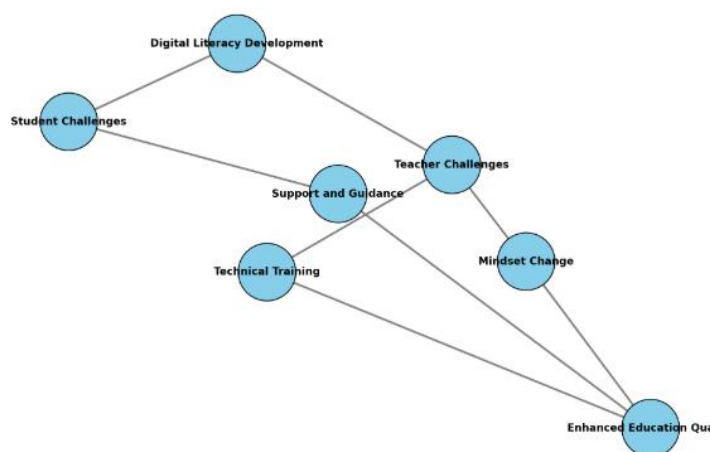


Figure 2. Development of Digital Literacy in Education.

This figure illustrates the relationship between the various elements in developing digital literacy for education, including the challenges faced by teachers and students, the importance of technical training and mindset change, and the need for support and guidance to achieve better quality education.

Integration of Multicultural Approaches in Educational Communication

The application of cross-cultural materials in education is increasingly becoming

an important concern in facing the demands of the era of globalization which is full of cultural diversity. This integration aims to provide students with an understanding of various cultural perspectives from various parts of the world, so that they can develop inclusive and tolerant attitudes. This shows the school's commitment to preparing students to understand global dynamics and equipping them with relevant critical thinking skills and social awareness. As a language teacher stated,

"We started integrating cross-cultural materials into the curriculum to help students understand global perspectives." (Interview with Language Teacher November 11, 2024)

The interview results above confirm that SMP Maslahatul Ummah has taken significant steps in integrating cross-cultural materials into the curriculum. This step aims to help students understand global perspectives and prepare them to face the challenges of an increasingly connected world. By incorporating cultural elements from various parts of the world, students are encouraged to think critically and be open to differences. This approach reflects the school's commitment to not only providing academic education, but also building global awareness and intercultural empathy in students.

Based on the interview above, the integration of cross-cultural material into the school curriculum shows a real effort in broadening students' insights into global diversity and dynamics. This step is taken by presenting topics that reflect the culture, traditions, and perspectives of various countries in the world. For example, students are invited to study the contributions of Asian, African, European, and American cultures in various aspects of life, such as art, technology, and history. In addition, group discussions and cross-cultural projects are also part of this approach, allowing students to explore universal values such as tolerance and collaboration. With this method, schools not only provide academic material, but also equip students with critical thinking skills and inclusive attitudes that are relevant in the era of globalization.

SMP unggul Maslahatul Ummah is aware of the importance of students' understanding of cultural diversity as part of the skills needed in the era of globalization. By integrating cross-cultural material into the curriculum, the school aims to shape students' insights so that they are able to see cultural differences as opportunities to understand diverse perspectives and build cross-cultural collaboration. This also reflects an effort to equip students with open-mindedness, tolerance, and empathy as provisions for facing the dynamics of a multicultural environment. With this approach, the school hopes that students will have a broader understanding of global diversity and be able to adapt to various different cultural contexts in everyday life.

Learning experiences that involve cultural diversity play a vital role in shaping students' understanding and perspectives. Group discussions with students from different cultural backgrounds can be a rewarding experience, as they allow individuals to share their unique perspectives and experiences. This experience opens up opportunities to understand ways of thinking and perspectives that are different from those we typically have. This interview sentence illustrates the importance of cross-cultural communication in creating a dynamic and inclusive learning environment, and how it can broaden

horizons and create a deeper understanding of the diversity of perspectives in the world. As the student said:

“Group discussions with students from different cultural backgrounds were very interesting, because I learned new perspectives that I had never thought of before.” (interview with students, December 12, 2024)

The interview results above show that group discussions involving students from various cultural backgrounds provide valuable learning experiences. Through this interaction, individuals have the opportunity to explore different perspectives and understand views that they had not previously considered. This process allows for the formation of an inclusive and respectful environment, where students can share their respective experiences and knowledge. These cross-cultural discussions also enrich students' insights with various perspectives, helping them see diversity as a strength in building understanding and harmonious cooperation.

Based on the interview results above, it describes a positive experience in conducting group discussions involving students from various cultural backgrounds. Through this activity, students have the opportunity to interact, share views, and listen to each other's unique perspectives. One student stated that through the discussion, he gained new insights and understanding that he had never thought of before. This activity shows the importance of diversity in the learning environment, where students can learn from each other and open their minds to different perspectives. It also reflects the values of inclusion and collaboration that are important parts of building a diverse and harmonious educational environment.

Multicultural approaches play an important role in preparing students to face the complexity and dynamics of challenges in the era of globalization. By understanding cultural diversity and different perspectives, students can develop the communication skills, empathy, and adaptability needed in an increasingly diverse environment. This interview sentence shows the school's efforts to encourage teachers to implement a multicultural approach as part of their educational strategy. Through this approach, it is hoped that students will have a broader understanding and be able to think inclusively in dealing with various cultural differences and dynamic global situations. This approach is an important step in creating a learning environment that supports character development and student readiness in facing an increasingly complex future. As a principal expressed,

“We encourage teachers to adopt a multicultural approach, as this helps our students prepare for the challenges of the global world.” (interview with principal 13 December 2024)

The results of the interview above state that the principal encourages teachers to apply a multicultural approach in their teaching methods. This approach is considered important because it can help students prepare themselves to face various challenges in the context of globalization which is full of cultural diversity and perspectives. By integrating multicultural values into the learning process, students are expected to have a better understanding of cultural differences, build an attitude of tolerance, and be able to adapt to diverse environments. This effort also aims to create an inclusive learning

environment and support the development of critical thinking skills and students' openness in facing the dynamics of an increasingly complex world.

Based on the interview results, it shows that the school has a focus on implementing a multicultural approach in the educational environment as the main strategy. This approach aims to help teachers introduce the values of cultural diversity to students so that they can understand and appreciate the differences in perspective, tradition, and cultural background that exist in their environment. By adopting this approach, students are expected to be able to build the skills needed to face various challenges in the context of increasingly complex and diverse globalization. In addition, the implementation of a multicultural approach also functions to form an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, where every student feels valued regardless of cultural differences.

The multicultural approach plays a crucial role in equipping students with the skills and understanding needed to face the dynamics of an increasingly complex global environment. By encouraging teachers to implement this approach, schools strive to create an inclusive learning environment that values cultural diversity. This approach also helps students understand the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and being able to adapt to different cultural backgrounds. Through this understanding, students will be better prepared to face various challenges and opportunities in a global context that requires openness, cooperation, and diverse perspectives.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that digital technologies such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and LMS can increase learning flexibility, in line with findings that highlight that digital technology creates a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment (Cheung, Kwok, Phusavat, & Yang, 2021). However, these results also show that the effectiveness of technology use is highly dependent on digital literacy and user readiness. This is in contrast to research that emphasizes that the main obstacle lies in educators' limited belief in the benefits of technology, rather than just digital literacy (Antonietti, Cattaneo, & Amenduni, 2022). In addition, this study highlights the importance of the role of teachers in providing assistance to maximize technology, which supports that digital transformation in education requires a change in educators' mindsets to see technology as a strategic partner, not a threat (McCarthy, Maor, McConney, & Cavanaugh, 2023). In the context of a multicultural approach, the results of this study are also in line with those showing that cross-cultural interactions strengthen students' critical thinking skills. However, this study extends these findings by highlighting the need for systemic support, such as cultural inclusion policies in schools, to ensure the success of this approach. Thus, the results of this study enrich the existing literature by emphasizing the need for synergy between technical training, mentoring, and institutional policies to address the challenges of integrating technology and multicultural approaches in education. (Kochan, Searby, George, & Edge, 2015; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024)

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of an integrated educational communication strategy in improving the competitiveness of educational institutions in the era of globalization and technological transformation. The use of digital technology, strengthening institutional branding, and multi-party collaboration have been proven to not only create close relationships with stakeholders but also build a strong institutional image. This study provides new insights that educational communication is not just a tool for conveying information, but a strategic element that supports innovation, efficiency, and adaptability in modern education. The key lesson that can be learned is that a holistic communication approach, which combines the internal needs of institutions with external dynamics, is an essential step in facing global challenges and ever-evolving technology.

This study makes a significant contribution by updating the perspective of educational communication in the context of developing countries, especially Indonesia, and proposing a collaboration-based approach that has rarely been discussed before. This enriches the academic literature by offering a new perspective that is relevant in understanding the challenges and opportunities of educational communication in the modern era. However, this study has limitations, such as focusing on a specific location and a small number of respondents, so the results do not fully reflect broader conditions. In addition, this study has not explored demographic factors, such as age and gender, which may influence perceptions of educational communication strategies. Further research that is more inclusive, using quantitative survey methods or a combination of various methods, is needed to produce more comprehensive findings. This is important to provide a stronger foundation for making adaptive, sustainable, and targeted educational policies.

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