

## Beyond the Classroom: The Emergence of Home Schooling as a Shift Away from Formal Schooling

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### Abstract

*The practice of teaching school-age children at home or in various locations other than schools is known as homeschooling. Home schooling is gaining momentum as a flexible and personalized alternative to formal education. It offers parents greater control over curriculum and learning pace, addressing individual student needs and educational gaps often unmet in traditional classroom settings. This article aims to present a concise overview of the key characteristics of homeschooling and to explore the underlying factors influencing parents' decisions to decide on for home-based education for their children. This study employed a thematic literature review methodology, analyzing existing peer-reviewed empirical research on home schooling to identify key themes, benefits, and challenges. The review critically examines home schooling as a viable alternative to formal education in contemporary contexts. In this review, majority of studies on homeschooling find that it has an encouraging influence on learners compared to those who attend institutional schools; nevertheless, some studies arrange for contrary findings. In terms of social, cognitive, and emotional growth, maximum studies indicate that homeschooling produces distinctly better results than traditional schooling. The conclusions derived from these studies provide a summary of specifically selected research on the development of homeschooling, along with final reflections and recommendations for future research in this area home schooling is emerging as a flexible and personalized alternative to formal education, offering parents greater control over curriculum and learning pace. It challenges traditional schooling by addressing individual needs, especially in contexts where formal systems may be limited or ineffective.*

**Keywords:** *academic performance, homeschoolers, home schooling, education system, alternative education*

### Introduction

Home schooling is an educational approach where children learn at home under the guidance of parents or tutors instead of attending traditional schools. It offers flexibility in curriculum and pace, often tailored to suit individual learning needs and family values. With growing concerns over school environment, academic pressure, and personalized learning, home schooling is becoming a popular alternative worldwide (Baig, 2018; Gaither, 2008). In recent years, home schooling has emerged as a significant alternative to traditional formal education, driven by concerns over school environment, curriculum flexibility, and individual learning needs (Ray, 2017). Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents have turned to home-based education to ensure personalized and safe learning experiences (Kunzman & Gaither, 2023). Home

schooling offers autonomy, customized pacing, and family-centered learning, challenging the conventional one-size-fits-all approach of formal schools. As its popularity grows globally, understanding its implications, effectiveness, and challenges becomes essential for educators and policymakers.

The practice of teaching school-age children at home or in various locations other than official schools is known as homeschooling. Many home education families use less formal, more tailored, and personalized methods of learning that are not necessarily found in schools. These techniques are typically led by a parent, tutor, or online teacher. The word "home education" is mainly used in Europe, whereas "homeschooling" is the one that is most frequently used in America to describe the practice of educating children at home (Ray, 2017). It is important to distinguish homeschooling from remote education, which is defined as an arrangement in which a student learns autonomously at home from their parents as opposed to being shaped by and adjusting to the demands of an online school (Mazama, 2016).

Families who wish to spend more quality time with their children, live in distant rural locations, are temporarily abroad, travel frequently and so find it physically difficult to transport their kids to school, or simply want to spend more time with their children can all choose to homeschool. Children who are unable to attend school regularly or who require special education services may also be homeschooled in part due to health issues or special needs. From a small number of papers and studies in the mid-1980s to an abundance of theses, dissertations, book chapters, and an increasing number of fundamental qualitative and quantitative studies, the body of scholarly research on homeschooling has expanded (Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2013).

Many students were forced to study from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused school closures all around the world. It can be claimed that this was mostly implemented as distance education rather than traditional homeschooling, in which parents educate their child independently from school, because the mainstream of curriculum was outsourced to homes and specified and verified by virtual schools. In Nepal, the children attend formal educational institutions. The Nepalese government has implemented homeschooling, which appears to be quite beneficial even in the post-pandemic situation. Parents have chosen to continue homeschooling their children despite the COVID-19 pandemic after realizing that their child is facing social or pedagogic difficulties at school. Homeschooling was instituted by the Nepali government, and it appears that it will be highly beneficial even in the post-pandemic situation. The purpose of Home School Management Facilitation Material 2078 is to encourage the use of the home as a classroom both during and after the COVID-19 epidemic (CEHRD, 2078).

During the lockdown, some families found that spending more time together was enjoyable, and other children learned that learning took place more effectively at home. Parents may have chosen to keep homeschooling their child after realizing that they were facing social or intellectual difficulties at school. Because of COVID-19, there has been ongoing worry that homeschooling is creating new educational disparities for children. Due to school closures, children's education is now more dependent on the social and domestic conditions of their families. The pandemic has demonstrated that Nepal's poorest families lack access to the resources needed to provide for their children's education. In this case, homeschooling will be the most advantageous substitute for traditional education.

#### **Objective of the study**

- To provide a concise overview of the defining characteristics and key attributes of homeschooling practices.

- To examine the pedagogical, socio-cultural, and policy dimensions of home learning through a comparative analysis of existing studies.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a thematic literature review methodology, analyzing existing research and reports on home schooling to identify key themes, benefits, and challenges. The review critically examines home schooling as a viable alternative to formal education in contemporary contexts. To initiate this review and fulfill its objective, an annotated bibliography with a homeschooling focus and Google Scholar and other internet databases are important sources for the searches. I looked for terms like "homeschooling," "home education," "social development," "reasons for homeschooling," and "academic performance" while searching the literature. Reviews of homeschool research from the date 2002 to 2023 AD are included in the reference list.

A large number of studies on homeschooling have not provided precise or stringent standards for the inclusion of studies or publications for evaluation. In light of this, I have observed a notable increase in homeschooling studies published in peer-reviewed publications throughout the last twenty years, and this development has up-to-date the methodology of this review. This paper focuses on a thematic review that understands how homeschooling affects student outcomes by using peer-reviewed empirical research. Peer review is still highly valued in academia, despite continuous scholarly disagreement concerning the relative merits of papers published in peer-reviewed research publications (Sampson, 2014). This thematic review employed an organized approach to identify, analyze, and generate relevant literature on home learning. Studies were selected based on inclusion criteria, and repetitive themes were extracted to provide conceptual clarity and monitor upcoming study guidelines.

### **Results and Discussion**

The findings from the reviewed literature revealed several habitual themes related to the practices, challenges, and outcomes of home learning. This section discusses these themes in detail, highlighting key insights and their implications for educational exploration and policy. In this section, results and discussion from homeschooling literature have presented in four different themes. This section offers a comprehensive exploration and synthesis of literature focused on the conceptual development of homeschooling, the underlying motives driving families to choose home education, empirical evidence regarding the social development of home-educated learners, and the academic performance outcomes associated with homeschooling.

#### **Conceptualizing the Development of Home Schooling**

The current home school movement had its start in the 1970s when educational reformer and theorist John Holt started claiming that conventional schools' emphasis on rote learning and a strict classroom setting was to blame. Holt urged parents to abandon formal education and substitute an approach now referred to as "unschooling" for their children's education. Early adherents of Holt stayed in touch via the 1977 publication growing Without Schooling. Raymond Moore argues that homeschooling should continue until a child is eight or nine years old in order to provide them with an excellent educational, psychological, and moral foundation. He claims that early schooling is detrimental to children (Moore's 1981). The conceptual understanding of homeschooling has expanded beyond its early associations with educational rebellion to encompass a wide spectrum of practices ranging from structured curriculum-based learning to unschooling approaches. Scholars have conceptualized home education as not merely an alternative to traditional schooling but as a distinct pedagogical paradigm that emphasizes autonomy, flexibility, and individualized instruction (Ray, 2017). These evolving conceptual

frameworks suggest that homeschooling is not a monolithic model but rather a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon.

Back when Holt and Moore started promoting homeschooling, it was permissible to teach children at home in all states, despite the occasionally strict regulations. In order to comply with regulations and submit their home education plans, early homeschoolers typically collaborated with their local school boards (Gaither, 2008). The 1980s saw a new wave of individuals enter the homeschooling movement, which altered the movement's tone. Motivations for homeschooling vary across cultures and families. In Western contexts, studies have identified a combination of pedagogical dissatisfaction, concerns about school environment, and religious or moral instruction as primary motivators (Baig, 2018; English, 2021). In contrast, in regions with underperforming or inaccessible public education systems, homeschooling may be driven more by necessity than ideology. The diversity in parental motivation underscores the need for a more nuanced conceptualization of homeschooling that reflects both choice and constraint.

As the circumstances changed, homeschoolers moved from the municipal to the state level and petitioned state legislatures to amend laws to allow for homeschooling in the United States. Homeschoolers disagreed among themselves about the appropriate level of regulation provided by the laws; whilst some found official testing and curriculum submission acceptable, others thought these demands were burdensome. While some states added only a few words or a sentence to their statutes, others created and enacted comprehensive home school statutes, some states experienced changes in education policy without the need for legislative action. States have many different policies regarding monitoring of homeschooling; some have none at all, while others have a number of regulations, like approved curricula or testing (Lois, 2012).

A critical aspect of the debate surrounding homeschooling involves its implications for children's social development. Critics have long argued that home-educated students may lack opportunities for peer interaction, potentially hindering socialization.

However, multiple studies challenge this assumption, indicating that homeschoolers often engage in a range of social activities through community groups, extracurricular programs, and faith-based networks (Ray, 2017). These findings suggest that social development in homeschooling contexts is not inherently deficient but is instead shaped by the intentional structuring of social experiences outside the formal school setting. In terms of academic performance, a substantial body of research indicates that homeschooled students often perform as well as or better than their traditionally schooled peers on standardized assessments (Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2017). Contributing factors include personalized learning, flexible pacing, and greater parental involvement. However, scholars also caution that these outcomes may be influenced by sampling biases, as many studies rely on self-selected participants from higher socio-economic backgrounds (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). Thus, while academic benefits are evident, the need remains for more representative and longitudinal studies to validate these claims across diverse populations.

Solid evidence advocates that in countries as different as the United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Scotland, and Russia, homeschooling has significantly improved both the absolute numbers and percentage of school-age children (Rothermel, 2015). The resurgence of home schooling after a hundred years has taken many educators and families by surprise. It has also captivated the imagination and involved thousands of families. Simultaneously, homeschooling has experienced exponential growth, primarily due to its growing recognition as a legitimate educational substitute. A growing number of families are starting homeschooling for pragmatic reasons, such as worries about bullying or

the subpar quality of nearby schools, rather than for educational or religious reasons. Overall, the literature highlights that homeschooling has developed into a multifaceted educational approach influenced by a wide range of ideological, practical, and contextual factors. As homeschooling continues to expand, particularly in the post-pandemic landscape, future research should aim to deepen conceptual understanding, examine equity issues, and explore its long-term educational and social impacts.

In the context of Nepal, homeschooling remains an emerging and less institutionalized practice, primarily driven by dissatisfaction with formal education and the desire for personalized learning (Poudel, 2020). Limited policy frameworks and social acceptance pose challenges, necessitating further research to contextualize its development within Nepal's diverse educational landscape. In 2077 BS, Nepal established the School Education Contingency Action Plan. The implementation of home schooling is intended to encourage families in Nepal to actively engage in their children's education, as stated in the Contingency Action Plan of School Education 2077 BS. Home School Management Facilitation Material, 2078 BS was created and executed in Nepal after it was realized that facilitation materials were needed for the concept's execution. Owing to COVID-19, learning has become more challenging, and it has been observed that the home must be converted into a classroom.

### **Motives Leading to Homeschooling**

Nemer (2002) developed an extended framework of reasons based on the ideologue-pedagogue classification. Nemer (2002) asserts that some parents' motivations are multifaceted and that they truly fall in between the two preceding groups. Nemer's (2002) research offers a more comprehensive analysis of homeschoolers' motivations, extending the definition of ideological and pedagogical reasons into four quadrants that represent high and low degrees of each drive.

Hannah (2011) carried out a long-term study with compelling goals like meeting a child's specific requirements, taking care of their medical needs, and addressing safety and security concerns. The development of this final recognized rationale was done by Mazama and Lundy (2012), who contextualized safety and security concerns within the African American parent population whose primary motivation for homeschooling is racial protection. Researchers Mazama and Lundy (2012) conducted their own investigation in response to the claim that African American parents' motivations can be equated with "White motives". They discovered that the particular cohort of their study strongly believes that school racism is something that should be protected from because it can seriously interfere with children's development.

Four primary factors were identified by Brabant, Bourdon, and Jutras (2003) as the reasons why some Canadian families choose to homeschool.

Among these four are the following: a) the desire to work together on a family-led educational project; b) a strong disapproval of the way the school system is set up; c) the wish to provide a more advanced curriculum; and d) a genuine concern for the socioemotional growth of the kids. Homeschooling parents think that the best way to keep their children out of schools, which they view as being excessively violent and powerful sources of unwarranted peer pressure, is to keep them at home. Some families feel that the best way to ensure their children receive a high-quality education is for them to be strongly and actively involved in their education.

In a similar vein, Green and Hoover-Dempsey (2007) identified that the need for parental involvement in the educational process is the driving force behind the three main reasons that parents homeschool. Because they can help their children achieve academically, parents feel that they should be actively involved in their children's education. They also feel that the most important aspect that makes homeschooling possible is the family dynamic. The moms who

homeschool their children are characterized as "a population that is clearly involved in their children's education but in a very nonstandard way" by Green and Hoover-Dempsey (2007). Using information from a federal poll as well, Montes (2006) discovered that, generally speaking, parents of both younger and older homeschooled children provide their children an education at home because they think they can give them a superior education (47%) and because they are religious (41%). However, Montes discovered that because the parents disagree with the curriculum of the local institutional school, younger homeschoolers are twice as likely to receive an education at home as their older counterparts. Compared to older homeschoolers, younger homeschoolers are three times more likely to be homeschooled in order to cultivate morality and character.

The reasons African-American parents opt for homeschooling have become the focus of some researchers' attention. Results from a quantitative examination of black families were comparable to what was previously mentioned. Additionally, almost 40% of the parents stated that they chose homeschooling because they wanted to provide their child with more education on African American and black history and culture, and 20% claimed that they did so because they wanted to "avoid racism in public schools" (Ray, 2015).

"The 'push-pull' factors that motivated black families in the Metro-Atlanta and Metro-DC regions to exit traditional schools in favor of homeschooling their children" were noted by Fields-Smith and Kisura (2013). It was discovered by the researchers that these black parents were able to instill in their children's black cultural values while exposing them to the world. According to the parents, homeschooling also enabled them to "slow down" their children's exposure to what might be considered "unsavory elements of school socialization". Research on minority homeschooling motivations is more extensive (Mazama, 2016). Due to the pandemic, a new order in the globe is taking place. In this situation, life has turned for better or more critical condition. The school has come closer to home so students are following the practice of homeschooling from 2020 onwards.

Parents' motivations for choosing homeschooling are diverse and often contextual. First, dissatisfaction with formal schooling is a widely reported motive. Many parents perceive public or private schools as lacking in academic rigor, safety, or inclusivity (Bauman, 2002). In Nepal, Poudel (2020) highlights growing parental concern over overcrowded classrooms, rote learning practices, and limited teacher engagement in government schools, which pushes families to seek alternatives. Second, religious and moral concerns play a significant role in homeschooling decisions, especially in Western contexts. Parents often wish to instill specific ethical values or spiritual teachings not accommodated by secular institutions (Ray, 2017).

While less documented in Nepal, cultural and spiritual orientations may still influence families in particular communities. Third, the emphasis on personalized learning emerges as a key theme. Homeschooling allows parents to tailor curriculum and pace to suit their child's individual learning style, interests, and needs (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). This motive is especially relevant for students with special needs or those who do not thrive in conventional classrooms. Overall, motives are not mutually exclusive; they often intersect. Research suggests that parental agency, autonomy, and perceived educational quality are central to the rise of homeschooling as an alternative (Baig, 2018). In Nepal, these global patterns are echoed, though influenced by local socio-economic and educational challenges (Poudel, 2020).

### **Social development of the home educated children**

The social development of home-educated children has been a topic of considerable scholarly interest and debate. Contrary to earlier concerns that homeschooling may isolate children

or hinder their interpersonal growth, recent research largely supports the notion that homeschooled children exhibit equal or even superior social skills compared to their traditionally schooled peers (Ray, 2017). This positive development is often attributed to the quality and diversity of social interactions these children engage in such as involvement in community activities, peer groups, sports, and volunteer work (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). In many homeschooling settings, socialization is intentional and diverse rather than incidental and age-restricted, as in traditional schools (Medlin, 2013). Home-educated children often interact with individuals across different age groups and social backgrounds, which may enhance their communication, empathy, and adaptability skills (Neuman & Guterman, 2016).

In terms of the role that self-concept plays in children's psychological development, a number of studies have shown that learners who are homeschooled have a substantially higher self-concept than students who attend public schools (Medlin, 2006). Social Skills of Homeschooled Children. The only noteworthy difference in childhood social interactions between homeschoolers and institutional students, according one homeschool researcher, was that the former had greater problem conduct scores. However, the effectiveness of social development in homeschooling depends on parental involvement, access to extracurricular opportunities, and community support.

In the context of Nepal, Poudel (2020) notes that while urban homeschoolers often benefit from rich social networks and alternative educational groups, children in rural settings may face challenges due to limited social exposure and fewer structured activities. Overall, while homeschooling presents unique socialization opportunities, its impact varies based on context, parental choices, and available resources. The literature thus emphasizes that social development among the home educated is not inherently compromised but rather shaped by the quality of social experiences provided.

Some of the learners' excellent social skills may be explained by the level of community and neighborhood involvement that homeschoolers and their parents have. Time and again, studies reveal that parents of homeschooled children are highly involved in their communities, participating in events like church activities, sports teams, cooperative learning, and community service. Additionally, children who are homeschooled tend to engage with a wider variety of people than those who attend most institutional schools (Medlin, 2013).

Children with homeschooled acquire the necessary "skills, behavior patterns, values, and motivations" to be productive members of society. Like the earlier reviewed research, recent findings seem to indicate that homeschooled children obtain more than adequate socialization opportunities. Actually, a number of indicators such as the caliber of early friendships, the scarcity of behavioral issues in adolescence, openness to new experiences in college, and civic engagement in adulthood—indicate that homeschooled children may benefit from a different kind of socialization than students in traditional schools. Home school researchers have observed that the majority of parents who homeschool their children have different goals and aspirations for them than do parents who choice institutional schools (Morrison, 2015). If this is the case, one may wonder why modes of socialization that are established and normed with pupils in institutional schools are given so much attention, as well as standard metrics of social development.

Contrary to common concerns, research indicates that home-schooled children often demonstrate strong social development, benefiting from diverse, age-integrated interactions beyond traditional classrooms. Studies show they engage actively in community, religious, and extracurricular activities, fostering confidence and communication skills (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). In Nepal, emerging practices suggest that home-schooled children develop social

competence through family networks and community-based learning (Poudel, 2020). However, the lack of formal peer interaction may present challenges in developing group dynamics and conflict resolution skills. Thus, the social experiences of home-schooled children are shaped more by the environment provided than the schooling method itself.

### **Academic Performance of Homeschooled Children**

Concerns have been raised by certain observers regarding the studies' sample representativeness and whether or not just the top-performing homeschooled pupils are included in them, for instance. (Wartes, 1990). Put another way, test results for all students who are homeschooling lawfully show that they either equal or surpass those of students attending public schools. Some of those who assess the limits (Lubienski, Puckett, & Brewer, 2013) either focus too much on what the research cannot reveal or neglect to incorporate all of the data and research on homeschooling that has been provided in this article and elsewhere (Ray, 2017).

Although homeschooling has been linked to positive student and society outcomes, educators do not support it. The effect of education on academic performance: Evidence from students in both formal and home schools. There is currently no research indicating that students receiving home education receive lower average accomplishment test scores than those attending public schools. Furthermore, the three primary hypotheses regarding the academic success of home-educated pupils are supported by the body of research as well as data supplied by the state: (1); the national average for public schools is regularly far below the scores of homeschoolers. In the majority of research, their scores fall between the 65th and 80th percentiles. (2): The majority of the researches' demographic and other factors account for very little of the variation in the accomplishment scores of homeschoolers. (3); statistically significant disparities in success are regularly explained by the formal educational attainment of the parents, although.

The results of the literature review study showed that pupils who attend home schools get noticeably better results than their peers who attend traditional schools. On the achievement test, homeschoolers' mean score is greater than that of pupils attending traditional schools. According to a number of studies, children who are homeschooled have greater opportunity to improve their reading, creative and independent thinking, self-learning, and self-reliance skills. There is limited research indicating that homeschooling pupils perform less well on tests. This result is corroborated by the survey (Ray, 2017) on conventional schooling and homeschooling of kindergarten students, the study regarding knowledge of letter and name writing were found to be significantly higher in the traditional school students (Baig, 2018).

Numerous academics have clarified on multiple occasions that the majority of research conducted thus far on the effectiveness (or failure) of homeschooling in maturity, social, emotional, and psychological development, and academic accomplishments have specific limits (Murphy, 2012). There doesn't seem to be a typical American family profile among homeschooling families and their students. One explanation for this is that, given the limitations of most studies, it is frequently impossible to determine whether sample sizes accurately reflect the population of home-educated pupils. A second significant drawback of the studies is the substance of the standardized achievement assessments that were used. Rudner (1999) correctly pointed out that while home schools do not always adhere to the same scope, sequence, or emphasis as traditional public and private schools, they do teach the fundamental subjects of reading, arithmetic, science, and social studies. Many home schools prioritize moral and religious principles.

That is to say, because their parents may not be following the institutional of school curriculum that would help their children pass on the tests, home school pupils may be at a disadvantage when taking these exams. Another explanation is that, in comparison to the goals of



state institutional education systems, the affective metrics employed with homeschooled children are not as valid as they should be in relation to the educational goals that homeschooling parents have. Therefore, it's probable that homeschooled students have an advantage when it comes to being measured using tools designed to capture the knowledge, beliefs, abilities, and behaviors that students in state schools are expected to acquire, internalize, and display (Martin-Chang, Gould, & Meuse, 2011). They will eventually provide additional information about how home schooling affects children's social, emotional, and psychological growth in addition to their academic performance.

There are certain exceptions to the analysis of the review's data, which point to homeschooling children's superior performance over public school students. According to the research conducted by Moreau (2012), parents who remove their children from traditional schools due to religious beliefs, better academic opportunities, or disbelief in the system are not likely to find success in the homeschooling system. (Rudner, 1999) argue that there are drawbacks to homeschooling. While home schools do teach the essential subjects of science, math, reading, and social studies, they fall short in terms of scope, sequencing, and emphasis.

Kindergarten students in both traditional and home schools reported that they knew much more about writing letters and names than the home school students. According to Ray (2017), the performance of traditional schooling students was found to be marginally higher than that of home educated students. This difference in performance may have resulted from the use of different teaching and learning resources by the homeschooling and traditional schooling students, as well as different forms of interaction during the teaching-learning process. Numerous academics have observed that the majority of parents who homeschool their children have different goals and aspirations for them than do parents who pick institutional public and private schools (Morrison, 2015).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Homeschooling is the deliberate choice made by parents to educate their children at home rather than in a formal school setting. In the absence of a set curriculum or pedagogy, parents and students adapt to a flexible syllabus according to their own interests. This differs from online or e-learning programs offered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite evidence linking homeschooling to positive learner and societal outcomes, it remains under recognized by educators and policymakers. Scholarly discourse reveals ongoing debate regarding the interpretation and implications of empirical findings. Compared to institutional education, homeschooling presents several favorable dimensions; however, rigorous inquiry is necessary. Future research should explore academic performance, practical life skills, and adult outcomes such as lifelong learning, welfare dependency, and self-efficacy through robust matched-pair or quasi-experimental designs. Comparative studies must account for the nature and authenticity of the homeschooling experience to ensure validity. These inquiries will critically inform educational policy and deepen understanding of homeschooling's long-term impacts.

Although parents provide the majority of the educational guidance for homeschoolers, families can also employ tutors and specialists to instruct their children. This can be enrolling their child in dance classes or helping them pick up a foreign language. In other words, under this structure, learning takes place outside of the home with parental assistance. The number of homeschoolers in Nepal is hard to quantify because there isn't a single governing organization in place. On the other hand, the focus of the teaching approach is on informal learning. Individual parent decisions will determine this. The curriculum that parents follow and the online courses their children enroll in will determine whether or not they are required to pay a set cost.

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