

# ENHANCING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH INTRAPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract:** *Intrapreneurship, as a mechanism enabling employees to realize entrepreneurial visions within organizational frameworks, is increasingly acknowledged as a pivotal strategy for fostering entrepreneurial orientation and driving innovation and growth in contemporary business landscapes. However, a notable gap persists in the theoretical underpinnings concerning the manifestation of intrapreneurial behavior among employees. This study seeks to address this lacuna by examining the theoretical foundations of intrapreneurship's evolution and its correlation with labor productivity. Employing a literature review, specifically adopting an integrative approach, this research synthesizes existing literature to elucidate the theoretical perspectives on intrapreneurship development and its implications for labor productivity. The research materials encompass empirical studies that have employed relevant theoretical frameworks and extant theoretical inquiries pertaining to intrapreneurship. Synthesizing these materials reveals three overarching themes in theoretical foundations: the evolution of intrapreneurship, the nexus between creativity, innovation, and productivity, and theories surrounding organizational behavior and productivity. Moreover, a synthesis of these theories for practical application in intrapreneurship research was provided. The implications of this study extend to enriching the understanding of intrapreneurship development and its impact on labor productivity. Furthermore, the synthesized theoretical insights offer valuable guidance for future empirical research endeavors, facilitating a deeper exploration of employees' intrapreneurial behavior within organizational contexts.*

**Key words:** *intrapreneurship, labor productivity, creativity, innovation, theoretical perspective.*

**JEL classification:** *J24, L26, M54*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of intrapreneurship can be traced to the 1980s, when it was first introduced by Gifford Pinchot III, culminating in his book in 1985 *Intrapreneuring* (Pinchot, 1985). Since then, the practice of intrapreneurship is increasingly can be observed in the business practice. This is coincided with the shift towards more agile, adaptive, and collaborative organizational models that prioritize innovation, employee empowerment, and societal impact in an ever-changing business landscape. Simultaneously, the intrapreneurship research as a critical research topic in economic and management science has experienced its evolution from its emergency and definition to the identification of antecedents and outcomes to measurement and scale development. Until today, the intrapreneurship research has increasingly integrated with innovation management and corporate strategy to increasing labor productivity, and organizational competitiveness (Wenjun et al., 2024). Besides, intrapreneurship research has also benefited from cross-disciplinary perspectives (Chahine, 2021), drawing insights from fields such as organizational behavior, entrepreneurship, strategic management, and innovation studies.

Theory is the key to explaining difficult problems, deriving hypotheses, enlightening practice, and predicting related phenomena (Wacker, 2008). The history of intrapreneurship research reflects its evolution from a nascent concept to a well-established field of study, with scholars continuously advancing theory and practice to enhance our understanding of how intrapreneurship contributes to organizational success and societal impact. However, tracing back to the research of intrapreneurship research, there is still lacking of theoretical inquiries regarding the essence and development of intrapreneurship as a way of increasing labor productivity from the modern perspective. This theoretical perspective to

the intrapreneurship is important as theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding, analyzing, and predicting phenomena related to intrapreneurship.

At least four reasons justify the necessity to the theoretical inquiry of intrapreneurship research. Firstly, theoretical perspectives help in clearly defining intrapreneurship, distinguishing it from related concepts such as entrepreneurship, innovation, and corporate entrepreneurship. This clarity is essential for academic discourse, allowing researchers to build upon a common understanding and avoid ambiguity in their studies. Secondly, theoretical frameworks elucidate the mechanisms and processes that drive intrapreneurship within organizations. They explore how various factors such as organizational culture, structure, and leadership influence intrapreneurial activities. This understanding is crucial for developing strategies to foster intrapreneurship. Thirdly, theoretical perspectives serve as a roadmap for research, guiding the formulation of hypotheses, selection of research design, and choice of methods for data collection and analysis. They ensure that research efforts are systematic, coherent, and built upon existing knowledge. What's more, as abovementioned the increasing integrative and cross-disciplinary nature of intrapreneurship research in today's academic discourse present us the need to have an integrative review of the theoretical perspectives of enhancing labor productivity through intrapreneurship development.

In order to fill the research gap, this article aims to examining the theoretical foundations of intrapreneurship's evolution and its correlation with labor productivity. Specifically, this research synthesizes existing literature to elucidate the theoretical perspectives on intrapreneurship development and its implications for labor productivity, including the evolution of intrapreneurship, the nexus between creativity, innovation, and productivity, and theories surrounding organizational behavior and productivity. A primary attention is put on the practical application in intrapreneurship research. This article is structured as follows. Firstly, this article explores the origins of intrapreneurship as both a business practice and research subject. Secondly, this article investigates three perspectives to look at intrapreneurship as a way to enhance labor productivity. Lastly, this paper ends with a discussion on the theoretical perspective on intrapreneurship and conclude the main points of this article.

## 2. INTRAPRENEURSHIP AS A GROWING DEMAND

Etymologically, the term "intrapreneurship" derives from a conflation of "intra," signifying 'within', and "entrepreneurship," which refers to the creation of new enterprises. According to this foundational understanding, intrapreneurship is generally characterized as entrepreneurial activities conducted within the confines of an established organization. To further refine the concept, scholars categorize intrapreneurship into two distinct behavioral types: strategic renewal behavior and venture-creating behavior. Strategic renewal behavior entails proactive efforts by employees to identify and exploit opportunities and advantages within their organizational environment (Ireland et al., 2003). Conversely, venture-creating behavior involves the initiation and development of activities aimed at the allocation and utilization of resources necessary for launching new business ventures (Narayanan et al., 2009).

Under modern new economic conditions, creating new knowledge and production mode is an inevitable requirement for enterprises to remain competitive (Rastogi, 2000). According to the American labor economist Reich (2002), the new economy is founded on two primary principles. The first principle of these modern economic conditions is the widening of economic choices for buyers, making it easier for them to switch and secure better deals. The second principle is that this expanded range of choices and ease of switching is diminishing the security of all sellers, rendering them more vulnerable to competitors. Behind these two principles, the major driving force of the new economy, is the new technology and knowledge as the new technologies of communication, transportation, and information have dramatically widened consumer choice and made it easier for all consumers. As a results, modern economy has witnessed its transformation from stable large-scale production where profit came from economy of scale to continuous innovation where profit mainly came from quickness to innovate and attract customers. This has been foreseeably anticipated by Josef Schumpeter, even before the era of large-scale production (Schumpeter and Swedberg, 2021). His ideas are especially cumulated in his book the economy of development, where he places the entrepreneur at the heart of capitalism, anticipating subsequent fascination with entrepreneurship in popular business and management writing and lays the groundwork for his subsequent concept of 'creative destruction' characteristic of radical and rapid economic change.

The emergency of entrepreneurship is coming into being under this broad context with the understanding of the traditional limitations of the narrow understanding of entrepreneurship and the shift from entrepreneurship to corporate entrepreneurship and to intrapreneurship. Employing the resource-based theory, the possession of strategic resources provides an organization with a golden opportunity to develop competitive advantages over its rivals (Barney, 1996). This can be well reflected in the exploitative resources possessing by the individual entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs within an entrepreneurial organization. Even though entrepreneurs can enjoy more flexibility and autonomy to pursue their innovative ideas, they are facing the limitations such as resources, networks, and infrastructures. However, for an intrapreneurial who similarly would like to identify entrepreneurial opportunities, they enjoy the existing resources, networks of infrastructures, but their innovative ideas might be burdened by formalized processes, hierarchies, and risk aversion tendency of an organization. Thus, the core principle of intrapreneurship is to identify and solve the barriers to the motivation to labor's entrepreneurial ideas and behaviors. Correspondently, with the evolving nature of work in the new economy, re-evaluation of labor productivity metrics from the intrapreneurship side in the context of technological advancements and digital transformation is of great importance.

### **3. THREE PERSPECTIVES TO LOOK AT INTRAPRENEURSHIP**

#### **3.1 THE EVOLUTION OF INTRAPRENEURSHIP**

A theory is an explained set of conceptual relationships, containing properties such as definitions, domain, relationships, and predictions (Wacker, 2008). The definition facets of intrapreneurship delve into inquiries regarding who and what. For example, Antoncic and Hisrich (2003) contribute to the theoretical development of intrapreneurship by elucidating its concept, particularly highlighting its nature as emergent behavioral intentions and actions that diverge from traditional business practices, thereby situating it within the management literature. Gündoğdu (2012) investigates the interrelationships among entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and innovation, proposing the concept of 'innopreneur' as an optimal synthesis of these elements. He emphasizes the significance of innopreneurship for fostering innovation within organizations in a rapidly evolving business environment.

The domain of intrapreneurship's aspects encompasses inquiries into the when and where.

As an illustration, Hisrich (1990) examines the psychological aspects and characteristics inherent in both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. Pinchot (1985) analyzes the characteristics and processes of intrapreneurs and how organizations can foster an intrapreneurial culture. In subsequent work, Pinchot (1987) posits that in-house entrepreneurs enhance the speed and cost-effectiveness of transferring technology from research and development to the market. Elert and Stenkula (2022) delineate a taxonomy that describes the interaction between societal and organizational rules and their impact on intrapreneurial outcomes. Their classification includes fully productive intrapreneurship that benefits both the firm and society, primarily productive intrapreneurship that favors societal over organizational interests, mainly non-productive intrapreneurship that favors organizational over societal interests, and fully non-productive intrapreneurship that is detrimental to both.

The relationship aspects of intrapreneurship delve into questions of how and why. For instance, Carrier (1994) explores intrapreneurship within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), focusing on the differential factors that influence its emergence and development in comparison to large firms. He notes distinct differences in structural context, relational context, reward mechanisms, strategic processes, and the implications of intrapreneurial dissatisfaction. Carrier (1996) further conducts an exploratory study on various intrapreneurship types, the factors influencing its emergence, motivational aspects for intrapreneurs and owner-managers, and involved strategic processes. Wennekers and De Jong (2008) provide a comprehensive examination of intrapreneurship's activities and behavioral aspects, discussing its similarities and differences with independent entrepreneurship and addressing measurement issues and the initial construction of a nomological network for validation purposes.

The predictive facets of intrapreneurship delve into questions of should, could, and would. In particular, Covin and Slevin (1986) develop an organizational-level entrepreneurship scale and further investigate the positive correlation between firm performance and an entrepreneurial orientation in hostile environments (Covin and Slevin, 1989). They ultimately outline a conceptual model of entrepreneurship as an organizational phenomenon, identifying its antecedents, consequences, and moderating variables (Covin and Slevin, 1991). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) elaborate on the entrepreneurial orientation construct and propose a framework for examining its relationship with firm performance.

Their subsequent studies investigate the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on corporate entrepreneurship and new venture performance, considering factors like venture age (Lumpkin et al., 2006).

### **3.2 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, AND PRODUCTIVITY**

The interplay between creativity, innovation, and productivity was theorized by Schumpeter's theory on economic development, Von Mises's Australian economic traditions and his theory on profit, loss, human action, Reich's proposition on labor well-being and productivity in the new economy, Paul Romer's endogenous growth theory's emphasis on the driving role of human capital, innovation, and knowledge in economic growth, knowledge spillover theory of Entrepreneurship, Teresa Amabile's componential theory of creativity, and her contribution on how individual creativity contributes to organizational innovation and productivity.

Schumpeter's theory on economic development underscores the critical role of innovation and entrepreneurship in driving growth and prosperity (Schumpeter and Swedberg, 2021). Intrapreneurship, by encouraging innovation within organizations, aligns closely with this theory and can contribute significantly to enhancing labor productivity and fostering economic development.

Ludwig von Mises's theories, particularly those related to human action, profit, and loss, hold substantial relevance to the intrapreneurship research. Firstly, Von Mises's theory of human action, often referred to as "praxeology", posits that economics is a branch of a broader study of human behavior. He argued that human action is purposeful behavior directed at achieving specific ends (Von Mises, 2016). In the context of corporate entrepreneurship, this suggests that intrapreneurs are motivated by personal and professional goals, including career advancement, personal satisfaction, and the potential for financial reward. Secondly, in a corporate setting, von Mises's concepts of profit and loss can be applied to measure the success and efficiency of intrapreneurial projects. Projects that generate value for the company can be seen as profitable, justifying further investment and resource allocation. What's more, Von Mises argued that profit and loss signals help guide the allocation of resources in a free market (Von Mises, 1951). Similarly, in a corporate environment, effective resource allocation is critical for supporting innovation.

Reich (2002) in his propositions and analyses delves into the evolving nature of labor, well-being, and productivity in what he terms the "new economy." In his proposition of the new economy, there are two basic principles. The first principle is that choices are widening and it's becoming ever easier for buyers to switch and get a better deal. The second principle is that such breadth of choice and ease of switching is rendering all sellers less secure and more vulnerable to competitors - thus spurring innovation. In one word, the economy is shifting out of stable large-scale production toward continuous innovation. Among the process, new technologies of communication, transportation, and information are the major driving forces. Under this background, Reich emphasizes the importance of skill development, adaptability and job design in the future of work which is relevant to the need of intrapreneurship.

Romer's endogenous growth theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which innovation, human capital, and knowledge contribute to economic growth, and by extension, how these elements can be harnessed within corporations to drive intrapreneurial success and organizational advancement (Romer, 1990). Firstly, according to Romer, innovation not only drives economic growth at the macro level but can also propel growth and competitive advantage at the organizational level. Companies fostering an intrapreneurial culture encourage their employees to develop new ideas and innovations that can lead to significant business enhancements and new market opportunities. Secondly, the theory's focus on human capital as a catalyst for growth underscores the importance of investing in employee skills and knowledge within a corporation. By enhancing their workforce's capabilities, companies can better innovate and adapt to changing market conditions.

The Knowledge Spillover Theory of Entrepreneurship highlights the significance of knowledge as a catalyst for entrepreneurial activity, emphasizing the transformation of unused or under-utilized knowledge into economic value through new business ventures (Acs et al., 2009). This theory has shaped much of the current understanding of the dynamic relationship between innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. The Knowledge Spillover Theory of Entrepreneurship provides valuable insights into how companies can systematically harness and cultivate the entrepreneurial potential of their employees. By creating environments that encourage the identification and development of new ideas generated from within, companies can

drive innovation and growth through corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.

Componential Theory of Creativity offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that influence creativity at the individual and group levels within corporate settings. Her framework helps explain how creativity can be systematically fostered within an organization, a critical component for successful corporate entrepreneurship (Amabile, 2019). Amabile's emphasis on the work environment as a catalyst or inhibitor of creativity directly addresses how corporations can create a culture conducive to intrapreneurship. In corporate settings, fostering intrinsic motivation is key for nurturing intrapreneurial behavior. According to Amabile, when individuals are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to engage deeply with their work and pursue innovative and risky projects. Amabile highlights the importance of social environments in enhancing creativity. For intrapreneurial teams, creating a dynamic where ideas are freely shared, and diverse viewpoints are valued can lead to more innovative solutions.

### **3.3 THEORIES CONCERNING ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Theories concerning organizational behavior and productivity was insighted by principal-agent theory in the institutional economic tradition, trait-activation theory by Tett and Guterman (2000), social information processing theory by Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991), Social identity theory by Ashforth and Mael (1989).

The principal-agent theory, also known as agency theory, is a framework used to address issues that occur in relationships where one party (the principal) delegates work to another party (the agent), who performs that work (Akdere and Azevedo, 2005; Zhang Weiyang, 2013). The Principal-Agent Theory can be applied to understand intrapreneurial behavior within organizations by examining the dynamics between company executives (principals) and employees (agents) who are tasked with developing and executing innovative projects. This theory helps in analyzing how motivations, incentives, and information asymmetry influence intrapreneurial activities. Some ways this theory can be applied to elucidates intrapreneurial behavior including: alignment of interests, reducing information asymmetry, mitigating maoral hazard, Adverse Selection in Intrapreneur Selection.

By leveraging the principles of Trait-Activation Theory (TAT), organizations can more effectively cultivate an intrapreneurial culture. This theory

provides a robust framework for aligning individual capabilities with organizational goals, thus enhancing the potential for innovation and entrepreneurship within established companies (Tett and Guterman, 2000). Firstly, TAT helps identify which personality traits are conducive to intrapreneurial success. Traits such as creativity, risk-taking, proactivity, and resilience can be crucial for intrapreneurs. Secondly, by applying TAT, organizations can design work environments that specifically activate desirable entrepreneurial traits. For instance, providing autonomy in project management might activate an individual's self-direction trait, essential for intrapreneurial success. Thirdly, TAT informs how roles can be tailored to match the personality traits of employees, enhancing job satisfaction and performance. In the context of intrapreneurship, roles that require high levels of innovation and responsibility can be designed or assigned to individuals whose entrepreneurial traits are activated by such demands.

Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT), developed by Gerald Salancik and Jeffrey Pfeffer in the late 1970s and further explored in their subsequent works, is a theoretical framework that focuses on how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to social information within their environment (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). This theory was primarily formulated to understand how employees' attitudes and behaviors are influenced by social cues in the workplace. By integrating Social Information Processing Theory into intrapreneurship research, scholars and practitioners can better understand and facilitate the complex social dynamics that influence intrapreneurial success within organizations. This understanding can lead to more effective strategies for cultivating a supportive intrapreneurial ecosystem that drives innovation and competitive advantage.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, is a psychological theory that seeks to explain human behavior across various contexts (Ajzen, 1991). This theory is an extension of Ajzen's earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which he co-developed with Martin Fishbein. TPB adds the component of perceived behavioral control to address limitations in the TRA, particularly regarding behaviors over which people have incomplete volitional control. By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior, researchers and practitioners in the field of intrapreneurship can gain valuable insights into how best to encourage and manage intrapreneurial behavior within organizations. This theory helps in understanding not just what motivates intrapreneurial behavior, but also how to structure

environments that nurture and sustain such initiatives.

Social identity theory, as elucidated by Ashforth and Mael (1989), provides critical insights into organizational phenomena through its refined concept of identification. Social identity theory suggests that the categorization of self and others into distinct social groups is essential in shaping an individual's identity. This identity plays a crucial role in addressing self-perception within an organizational setting. Social identity theory helps to explore the interplay between an individual's identity as an intrapreneur and the broader entrepreneurial orientation of the organization (Wenjun et al., 2023). Using Social Identity Theory to understand intrapreneurial behavior provides a nuanced view that extends beyond individual characteristics to consider broader social and organizational contexts. It underscores how identities formed through group affiliations and organizational culture can drive the behaviors necessary for intrapreneurship.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Summarization on three trajectories of theory regarding intrapreneurship**

Trajectories	Functions
The evolution of intrapreneurship	Definitions: Who and what Domain: When and where Relationships: How and why Predictions: Should, could, would
The interplay between creativity, innovation, and productivity	Providing a foundational rationale for investigating intrapreneurship as a phenomenon within the labour market Assisting researchers in comprehending the process of intrapreneurship within organizational contexts
Theories concerning organizational behavior and productivity	Offering insightful perspectives on the behavioural manifestations of intrapreneurship

**Source: Authoring**

The three trajectories of theory regarding intrapreneurship as a way to labor proctivity and their functions are summarized (Table 1). The theoretical exploration of intrapreneurship elucidates certain fundamental characteristics of this economic phenomenon. A theory, as defined by Wacker (2008), is a systematically explained set of conceptual relationships, which includes

definitions, domains, relationships, and predictions. Through summarizing key facets of intrapreneurship, this exploration furnishes future researchers with a comprehensive perspective on this field of study. Specifically, the investigation into the definitional aspects seeks to categorize intrapreneurship as a business or economic phenomenon, focusing on behavioral dimensions, differentiation from related concepts, and its association with organizational-level entrepreneurship. Regarding the domain of intrapreneurship, ongoing theoretical scrutiny aims to establish its niche within a specific area of inquiry. Notable attention is given to its placement within management literature, variations in its manifestation across small and medium enterprises (SMEs) versus larger corporations, and distinctions between organizational and individual levels. In terms of relationships, the current theoretical focus is on elucidating how intrapreneurship is stimulated and its interaction with other constructs. Key areas of focus include the drivers of intrapreneurial activity, the interplay between societal and organizational norms, and their resultant impacts on intrapreneurial outcomes, as well as the relevance of these outcomes to organizational performance. Finally, for the predictive dimension of intrapreneurship, researchers are endeavoring to determine methods for forecasting intrapreneurial behavior and how such behavior can predict organizational performance. This line of inquiry aims to develop predictive models that facilitate a deeper understanding of the dynamics and impacts of intrapreneurial actions within the corporate context.

We contend that theories concerning the nexus of creativity, innovation, and productivity fulfill at least two critical roles in the research of intrapreneurship. Firstly, they provide a foundational rationale for investigating intrapreneurship as a phenomenon within the labor market. For instance, the analysis of Schumpeter's theory on economic development, which underscores the pivotal role of innovation and entrepreneurship in fostering growth and prosperity, serves as a robust justification for examining intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship as potential conduits for enhancing innovation to stimulate economic growth. Similarly, Ludwig von Mises' theories concerning human action, profit, and loss substantively justify research into the behavioral dimensions of intrapreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship. Additionally, Robert Reich's propositions regarding new work dynamics in the modern economy offer a basis for scholars to explore novel working methodologies, such as

intrapreneurial approaches, aimed at augmenting competitive advantage in the labor market. Secondly, these theories assist researchers in comprehending the process of intrapreneurship within organizational contexts. This includes theories like the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship and Teresa Amabile's componential theory of creativity, which provide valuable frameworks for understanding how intrapreneurial activities can be systematically fostered and managed within companies. These theoretical perspectives are instrumental in delineating the mechanisms through which organizations can leverage internal creative capacities and innovative potentials to achieve substantial growth and development.

Theories pertaining to organizational behavior and productivity offer insightful perspectives on the behavioral manifestations of intrapreneurship. Our article integrates five pivotal theories from the domains of organizational behavior and corporate governance to elucidate these phenomena. Notably, principal-agent theory elucidates the challenges faced by potential intrapreneurs who exhibit behaviors aligned with strategic thinking and venture creation. Additionally, three other theories—trait-activation theory, social information processing theory, and the theory of planned behavior—provide diverse frameworks for understanding intrapreneurial behavior from distinct viewpoints. Specifically, trait-activation theory offers insights into the activation of certain intrapreneurial traits, enhancing our comprehension of intrapreneurial behaviors. Social information processing theory sheds light on the impact of social dynamics within organizations on intrapreneurial success. The theory of planned behavior contributes to our understanding of how to manage and foster intrapreneurial behavior by identifying motivational drivers and structuring supportive organizational environments. Lastly, social identity theory helps to explore the interplay between an individual's identity as an intrapreneur and the broader entrepreneurial orientation of the organization.

## CONCLUSION

Theory is instrumental in addressing complex challenges, formulating hypotheses, illuminating practices, and predicting associated phenomena. In the domain of intrapreneurship research, there remains a notable deficiency in theoretical investigations into the nature and evolution of intrapreneurship as a mechanism to enhance labor productivity from a contemporary perspective. Our article delineates three theoretical trajectories that potentially enhance the understanding of intrapreneurial behavior and hold academic

significance. The first trajectory involves the theoretical exploration of intrapreneurship itself, encompassing aspects such as definitions, scope, relationships, and prognostications. The second trajectory examines the theories concerning the interaction between creativity, innovation, and productivity. This not only provides a rationale for the study of intrapreneurship as a labor phenomenon but also aids researchers in comprehending the intrapreneurship process within organizational contexts. The third trajectory focuses on theories related to organizational behavior and productivity, offering insights into the behavioral manifestations of intrapreneurship.

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