Management and Development for Research and Studies

Volume: 15/N°: 01 Juin (2026), p 441-460

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Organizational Conflict Management Styles in Higher Education Institutions : A Case Study of Djilali Bounaama University - Khemis Miliana

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Received: 30/01/2026 Accepted: 23/05/2026 Published: 01/06/2026

Abstract:

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational conflict management styles at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) model. The research employed a descriptive-analytical methodology, utilizing a two-part questionnaire : the first part collected personal and professional demographic data, while the second part was based on the ROCI-II model for organizational conflict management. The findings revealed that the Dominating style is the most prevalent conflict management approach at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana.

Keywords: Organizational Conflit; Organizational Conflict Management; Rahim Model; Djilali Bounaama University - Khemis Miliana

Jel Classification Codes : C12, D74.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary approach to organizational conflict is no longer one of avoidance. Instead of "conflict avoidance," recent studies have focused on "conflict management," specifically the methods for dealing with conflicts and how to utilize various personal factors in their management. Managers are now expected to acknowledge and manage conflicts constructively, using conflict situations as opportunities for individual and organizational development. Conflicts, therefore, become a means for change, ensuring the organization's survival and improvement .

To maintain acceptable and desirable levels of organizational conflict among employees, an appropriate conflict management style must be applied. This current research aims to shed light on the reality of applying the ROCI-II model for organizational conflict management at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana.

The following questions can be raised: **What is the reality of organizational conflict management at Djillali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana?**

1.1. Research Hypotheses

This study is based on the following hypotheses:

H1: There are statistically significant differences (at a significance level of $\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the responses of the sample individuals regarding the preferences for applying the ROCI-II model for organizational conflict management among employees at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana, attributable to the variables of gender, academic qualification, and years of experience.

H2: The Compromising style is the dominant conflict management approach at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana.

1.2. Importance of the Study

Highlighting the ROCI-II Model : The study emphasizes the nature and significance of the ROCI-II model for managing organizational conflict, given its positive impact on maintaining conflict at acceptable levels within the organization.

Focus on Higher Education : It underscores the importance of the study's community—Algerian university institutions—in the higher education sector, and their vital role in building and developing the economy and society as a whole.

Adopting a Modern Perspective : The research's importance is evident in its adoption of a new vision regarding conflict, moving away from the traditional view that focused on its negative aspects. The modern view considers conflict a natural phenomenon with positive sides, requiring management to serve as a successful driver for innovation, renewal, and positive change within organizations.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Identifying Management Styles : To identify the conflict management styles followed by deans and department heads in university institutions to confront organizational conflict, mitigate its effects, and attempt to benefit from its outcomes.

Understanding Conflict: To understand the concept of organizational conflict, its causes, and its effect on individuals and the organization, as well as to understand the reality of applying the Rahim model for conflict management.

Providing Recommendations: To offer recommendations that administrative leaders in university institutions can consider when choosing the appropriate style for conflict management in a given situation, thereby enhancing the positive effects and reducing the negative ones, which increases the effectiveness of its application in administrative organizations. concern for self and for the other party.

1.4. Previous Studies

Study by Ayman Abdel Qader Abdel Rahim (2010): Titled "The Role of Decentralization in the Effectiveness of Organizational Conflict Management in the Ministries of the Palestinian National Authority." The study aimed to identify the reality of decentralization and its role in the

effectiveness of organizational conflict management in six ministries of the Palestinian National Authority

Study by Telt (2000): Titled "A Comparative Study of Conflict Management Styles among Middle School Principals and Comprehensive High School Principals." The study aimed to identify the conflict management styles practiced by principals of middle and comprehensive schools. The sample consisted of 38 principals from middle and comprehensive schools. The study adopted the descriptive-analytical approach. The main results showed that middle school principals practice the strategy of Compromising and Avoiding in their conflict management more than comprehensive school principals, and they showed a greater practice of competitive strategies at the intermediate level

2. Theoretical Framework

Conflict is considered one of the main behavioral problems that individuals face during their daily work, whether at the individual level or within the organization as a whole, and in various institutions administrative, social, political, economic, and cultural.

2.1. Concept of Organizational Conflict

Researchers and scholars have differed in defining the concept of organizational conflict, just as they have differed in any other administrative concept, due to the differences in the intellectual schools they belong to.

- **Linguistically**:. The English word "Conflict" comes from the Latin root confligere, meaning to strike together, which implies a clash of interests and opinions. (Al-Asayra, 2008, p.241)
- **Terminologically**:

According toThompson: Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in social life, resulting from the interaction of individuals, groups, organizations, and nations with each other. The cause may be a difference in their goals or work, or a difference in interests, beliefs, or attitudes, or a lack of compatibility between people. (Thompson, 1998, p. 25)

According to Rahim: Conflict is often a search for how individuals and groups can manage the driving forces (Thomson, 1998, p. 25), and

understand the inherent contradictions in human relations, as the outcomes of conflict can be positive or negative. (Rahim M. , 2023, p. 41)

2.2. Concept of Organizational Conflict Management

Modern administrative thought views conflict as an inevitable phenomenon that cannot be avoided. The absence of conflict or its presence at a low level in an organization causes stagnation and leads to its collapse over time. Conversely, the presence of conflict at a high degree is harmful because it greatly affects cooperation. Therefore, a moderate amount of conflict in organizations is desirable.

Robbins Defines conflict management as "the process of using solutions and stimuli to achieve the desired level of conflict" (Robbins, 2001, p. 243)

Roberts : Defines it as "the purposeful intervention to stimulate useful conflict, or intervention to prevent destructive conflict and resolve it". (Al-Kubaisi , 1998, p. 89)

Researchers have been interested in the process of organizational conflict management to achieve better effectiveness for the organization through the development of multiple methods for diagnosing conflict and its containment in organizations. Rahim developed a four-stage process for effective organizational conflict management : (Rahim A. , 2011, p. 256)

a. Diagnosis: The process of conflict diagnosis is considered the basic foundation for managing conflict efficiently and effectively. This is done to identify the problem of conflict, determine its size, severity, and causes. It is carried out using the organizational conflict scale, in addition to conducting in-depth interviews with individuals and collecting and classifying data for analysis.

b. Intervention : The process of intervening in conflict occurs through two basic method :

Human Processes: Such as leadership, decision-making, communication, and working on changing the organizational culture from negative attitudes to positive ones, and supporting the beliefs and values of employees,

enabling them to learn how to manage conflict and use the appropriate styles for its management.

Technical Structure : This involves arranging activities and functions, modernizing tools and means, and modifying the technical structure of the organization.

c. Conflict: This is the stage of confronting conflict through knowing its size. If it is less than the required level, it is stimulated, and if it is more than the required level, it is reduced.

d. Learning and Effectiveness: This is the final stage, where the organization learns from the conflict situation to improve its future performance.

2.3. Causes of Organizational Conflict

The current study focused on four causes of organizational conflict due to their frequency among the largest number of researchers**:**

a. Limited Resources: When resources are available, organizational units within the organization compete to obtain them to achieve their goals. However, when resources are limited, conflict occurs over the sharing of these resources by the organizational units (Idris & Al-Mursi , 2002, p. 117)

b. Goal Incompatibility: The conflict of goals is one of the most behavioral causes leading to conflict. The matter becomes more severe when the general interest of the organization conflicts with the personal interests of the employees in it.

c. Lack of Clarity in Powers : Conflict appears between the superior and the subordinate when one of them feels that the other has exceeded the powers granted to him. Conflict also appears when employees strive to obtain some powers as a basis for achieving flexibility and speed in completing tasks. We find that superiors cling to these powers for fear of losing them or due to a lack of trust in their subordinates. (Al-Qahtani & Youssef, 2001, p. 153)

d. Lack of Clarity of Responsibilities: A party may enter into conflict with other parties because they are assigned a task and new responsibilities in addition to their responsibilities, which increases the burden on their

shoulders. The traditionalists call for not giving the individual responsibilities greater than his powers, because that leads to frustration and inability to carry out duties. (Al-Kubaisi A. , 1998, p. 89)

2.4. Types of Organizational Conflict

According to Ustuner and Kıs, there are four types of organizational conflict: (Ustuner & Kıs, 2014, p. 23)

a. Intrapersonal Conflict: Conflict that occurs within the individual himself due to his inability to successfully deal with his role (e.g., incompatibility of tasks and goals with his experiences and interests).

b. Interpersonal Conflict: This type of conflict occurs between two or more members of the organization at the same level or different levels. These conflicts arise when there are differences in goals, values, behaviors, and attitudes.

c. Intragroup Conflict: This conflict occurs between members of a group or between two or more sub-groups within the single group, such as disagreements in goals, tasks, or procedures. **d. Intergroup Conflict**: This conflict occurs between groups, teams, or units within the organization, such as competition over scarce resources or rewards.

2.5. Importance of Organizational Conflict

Despite the multiplicity and difference of scientific references in determining the importance of conflict, we can distinguish the following points regarding the importance of conflict:

- **Conflict as a Tool for Survival and Adaptation** : The presence of conflict in the organization and its discovery obliges the administration to confront and treat it, which pushes it towards change, through which the organization can adapt, with the aim of its survival and growth. (Dean & Alfred, 2014, p. 552)
- **Conflict as a Tool for Developing Modern Managerial Capabilities:** Confronting and managing conflict is a fundamental task of the modern manager, who is expected to confront conflicts and their repercussions. (John & Ebere , 2020, p. 301)

- **Conflict as a Tool for Creativity**: Robinson mentioned that there is a relationship between conflict, performance, and creativity. When there is no conflict at all, performance suffers from stagnation. However, under limited and controlled conflict conditions, it can generate motivation for initiative and creativity among individuals. (Al-Ubaidi, 2008, p. 78)

2.6. Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II)

There is no single strategy or style that can be used in all circumstances, due to the difference in conflict situations, their causes, and the nature of the work, as well as the nature of the conflicting parties and their motives. Rahim clarified the two dimensions for conflict management styles (Rahim M., 2023, p. 30):

- **Concern for Self Dimension** : Refers to the individual's orientation towards satisfying his own interests and concerns.
- Concern for Others Dimension : Refers to the individual's orientation towards satisfying the interests and concerns of others.

Five conflict management strategies emerge from these two dimensions :

- **Integrating** This strategy indicates a high concern for self and others. It involves collaborative work between the conflicting parties, openness, exchange of information, disclosure of differences, and confrontation of conflict, as well as open communication and clarification of misunderstandings about the subject of the conflict.
- **Obliging** This strategy indicates a low concern for self and a high concern for others. This style is associated with an attempt to reduce differences and emphasize common ground to satisfy the other party's concerns. There is an element of self-sacrifice in this style, and it can be used when one of the parties is willing to give up something in exchange for obtaining something else from the other party.
- **Dominating:** This strategy indicates a high concern for self and a low concern for others. The manager uses power to achieve his personal goals and gains, while neglecting the needs of other individuals, and attempting to subjugate them. This strategy limits creativity in work.

- **Avoiding:** This strategy indicates a low concern for self and others. This style is associated with withdrawal and evasion of responsibility, and may take the form of postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a situation that threatens danger. The avoiding person fails to satisfy his personal needs, let alone the needs of the other party. This style is useful when the issue is simple.
- **Compromising:** This strategy indicates an intermediate concern for self and others. It is associated with the principle of "give-and-take," where both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable decision. This may mean dividing the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick, middle-ground position.

3. Field Study

3.1. Methodology

The study relied on the descriptive-analytical approach, as it reflects the practices and characteristics of each style of organizational conflict management according to the ROCI-II model, in addition to identifying the effect of personal and professional variables on the results.

3.2. Study Sample

The study population consists of all employees at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana, totaling 1,509 employees (professors and administrators).

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The main tool used was the questionnaire, which included the ROCI-II scale.

3.4. Measurement Method and Levels

The study used the five-point Likert scale for multiple choices, which is the most appropriate for such studies. The weights were calculated as follows: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

3.5. Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which reached a value of 0.932. This indicates that the reliability coefficients for all study variables are high, confirming the possibility of relying on its results for analysis and interpretation.

3.6. Presentation and Analysis of Study Results

3.6.1 Analysis of Results Related to the First Part :

This section presents the data related to the personal and professional characteristics of the study sample; see Table (01) below

Table (1): the demographic and professional characteristics of the study sample.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	67.81
	Female	56	32.19
Age	Less than 30 years	4	2.31
	31 to 50 years	126	72.41
	51 years and more	44	25.28
Academic Qualification	Secondary or less	32	18.40
	License (Bachelor's)	**15**	**5.62**
	Master's	**38**	**24.84**
	Doctorate (PhD)	**89**	**51.14**
Years of Experience	**Less than 10 years**	**87**	**42.27**
	11 to 20 years	**73**	**41.95**
	21 years and more	**14**	**15.78**

Source : Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

Analysis

From Table No. (01), the following analysis can be deduced:

- **Gender**: The percentage of males (67.81%) is much higher than females, which is attributed to several reasons, including the nature of administrative work and the full-time system, which pushes women towards working in other sectors.
- **Age**: 72.41% of the sample are aged between 31 and 50 years. This is linked to the years of experience, as 41.95% have 11 to 20 years of experience.
- **Academic Qualification**: The largest number of sample members (51.14%) hold a Doctorate degree, and 24.84% hold a Master's degree. This is due to the nature of the dominant activity in the study community, which is education in a university institution. -Years of Experience: 42.27% have less than 10 years of professional experience. This is due to the employment policy applied in the university institution, which attracts a larger number of certificate holders, and also keeps pace with the increasing number of students over the past years.

3.6.2. Analysis of Results Related to the Second Part

The mean and standard deviation for the responses to each style were determined, according to Table No. (02) below.

No.	Item Description	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Response Level
Integrating Style				
01	Uses diverse methods to bridge viewpoints between disputants.	1.9	0.662	Disagree
02	Collects the maximum amount of information when there is a disagreement to keep communication lines open.	2.47	0.993	Disagree
03	Provides a suitable climate to find a solution where no party loses at the expense of the other.	2.85	0.935	Neutral

04	Studies the causes leading to conflict in cooperation with the parties involved.	4.05	0.768	Agree
05	Explores problems with others to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	2.08	0.894	Disagree
06	Prefers using logic and objectivity in treating conflicts.	3.37	1.04	Neutral
07	Defends the idea that "we are in the same boat" in conflict situations.	2.35	0.915	Disagree
Obliging Style				
08	Sometimes retreats from decisions made to satisfy the conflicting parties.	2.98	0.995	Neutral
09	Does everything necessary to prevent tension from occurring.	3.61	0.951	Agree
10	Considers the desires of others during discussions.	3.13	0.979	Neutral
11	Emphasizes points of agreement rather than differences between disputants.	3.76	0.926	Agree
12	Convinces conflict parties of tolerance and compromise in relationship matters.	3.77	1.003	Agree
13	Cares about solving problems as soon as they occur in a manner acceptable to others.	4.35	0.978	Agree
Dominating Style				
14	Tends to impose solutions capable of resolving conflicts through power and control.	3.67	0.981	Agree
15	Uses légal punisent until conflict parties retreat from their rigid positions.	3.30	0.897	Neutral
16	Clings to his opinions and positions or the solutions he offers to resolve the conflict.	3.94	1.02	Agree
17	Relies on his authority in dealing with conflict parties.	4.15	0.770	Agree
18	Applies systems and laws to compel conflicting parties to accept the proposed solutions.	3.93	0.809	Agree
Avoiding Style				

19	Ignores conflicts in the hope that the situation will improve spontaneously.	2.04	0.661	Disagree
20	Uses diverse behavioral procedures and methods to avoid involvement in conflicts and their management.	1.97	0.783	Disagree
21	Postpones answering questions related to background matters regardless of their importance.	2.05	0.975	Disagree
22	Avoids conflict when competitors can resolve the conflict better.	2.04	0.762	Disagree
23	Ignores complaints from conflict parties to avoid involvement in their management.	1.98	0.789	Disagree
24	The leader avoids discussion with those who disagree with his opinions.	2.2	0.531	Disagree
Compromising Style				
25	Works on clarifying gains and losses among the conflicting parties.	2.09	0.782	Disagree
26	Works on achieving benefits for conflict parties to obtain everyone's satisfaction.	3.59	1.01	Agree
27	Seeks to bridge divergent viewpoints through bargaining among them.	2.45	0.844	Neutral
28	Deals with conflict as a "give and take" situation.	1.77	0.649	Disagree

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

Discussion of Results

Integrating Style : The analysis of items 01 to 07 shows that the average response for the Integrating Style was 2.86, which is considered a moderate level. Item 04 ("Studies the causes leading to conflict in cooperation with the parties involved") ranked first within this style with a mean of 4.05, while item 01 ranked last with a mean of 1.9.

Obliging Style : The analysis of items 08 to 13 shows that the average response for the Obliging Style was 3.60, which is above average. Item 13 ("Cares about solving problems as soon as they occur in a manner acceptable to others") ranked first with a mean of 4.35, while item 08 ranked last with a mean of 2.98.

Dominating Style : The analysis of items 14 to 18 shows that the average response for the Dominating Style was 3.79, which is above average. Item 17 ("Relies on his authority in dealing with conflict parties") ranked first with a mean of 4.15, while item 15 ranked last with a mean of 3.30.

Avoiding Style : The analysis of items 19 to 24 shows that the average response for the Avoiding Style was 2.04, which is below average. Item 21 ranked first within this style with a mean of 2.05, while item 20 ranked last with a mean of 1.97.

Compromising Style : The analysis of items 25 to 28 shows that the average response for the Compromising Style was 2.47, which is below average. Item 26 ("Works on achieving benefits for conflict parties to obtain everyone's satisfaction") ranked first with a mean of 3.59, while item 28 ranked last with a mean of 1.77.

3.6.3. Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There are statistically significant differences (at a significance level of $\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the responses of the sample individuals regarding the preferences for applying the ROCI-II model for organizational conflict management among employees at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana, attributable to the variables of gender, academic qualification, and years of experience.

a. Gender:

Males preferred the Dominating style, followed by Integrating, Avoiding, and Compromising, then Obliging.

Females emphasized the preference for the Integrating style, followed by Obliging, Compromising, Dominating, and Avoiding.

The difference in preference between males and females is due to the difference in the personality of females from males, which makes the woman less open and more inclined to avoid problems and confrontation.

Conclusion : The hypothesis that states there are significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding the preferences for applying the ROCI-II model attributable to gender is accepted.

Table (3) : Preferred Conflict Management Styles According to Gender

Style	Male (Mean)	Female (Mean)
Dominating Style	3.94	2.34
Obliging Style	2.26	3.11
Integrating Style	3.61	3.45
Compromising Style	2.35	3.07
Avoiding Style	2.72	2.60

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

b. Academic Qualification :

The majority of the sample members (72.98%) with high academic qualifications (Master's and PhD) preferred the Dominating style, followed by Integrating, Compromising, Obliging, and Avoiding.Those with lower qualifications (Secondary or less, and Bachelor's) preferred the Integrating and Compromising styles.

Conclusion : The hypothesis that states there are significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding the preferences for applying the ROCI-II model attributable to academic qualification is rejected, due to the presence of an overwhelming majority (127 out of 174

individuals) who prefer a single style in organizational conflict management.

Table (4): Preferred Conflict Management Styles According to Academic Qualification

Style	Secondary or Less	License (Bachelor's)	Master's	Doctorate (PhD)
Dominating Style	2.69	2.54	3.79	4.12
Obliging Style	3.55	3.26	2.53	2.47
Integrating Style	4.41	3.45	3.11	3.40
Compromising Style	4.04	3.35	2.58	2.54
Avoiding Style	2.88	2.73	2.07	2.15

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

C. Years of Experience:

- Employees with less than 10 years of service preferred the Compromising and Avoiding styles. This is attributed to their limited experience and lack of knowledge of the work secrets, and they prefer to avoid involvement in conflicts.
- Employees with 11 to 20 years of service preferred the Dominating and Integrating styles. This is attributed to the experience they gained during their work period.
- Employees with 21 years of service and more preferred the Integrating style, followed by Compromising.

Conclusion : The hypothesis that states there are significant differences in the responses of the sample individuals regarding the preferences for applying the ROCI-II model attributable to years of experience is accepted.

Table (5): Preferred Conflict Management Styles According to Years of Experience

Style	Less than 10 Years	11 to 20 Years	21 Years and More
Dominating Style	2.32	3.93	2.53
Obliging Style	2.57	2.33	3.45
Integrating Style	2.95	3.83	4.12
Compromising Style	4.56	3.54	3.65
Avoiding Style	3.32	2.19	3.45

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs**.**

Hypothesis 2: The Compromising style is the dominant conflict management approach at Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana.

- The results of the analysis (Table 6) clearly show that the Dominating style came in first place with a mean of 3.79, while the Compromising style came in fourth place with a mean of 2.47.
- The dominance of the Dominating style reflects the prevailing situation in the university institution and the way the administration deals with organizational conflicts, which is based on applying laws and regulations to compel the conflicting parties to accept the proposed solutions.

Conclusion : The finding that the Dominating style is the most prevalent rejects the second hypothesis, which stated that the Compromising style is the dominant approach.

Table 6: Ranking of Dominant Conflict Management Styles

Rank	Conflict Management Style	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Deviation (SD)
01	**Dominating Style**	3.79	0.895
02	**Obliging Style**	3.60	0.804

03	**Integrating Style**	2.86	0.886
04	**Compromising Style**	2.47	0.821
05	**Avoiding Style**	2.04	0.750

Source : Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS outputs.

4. CONCLUSION

Through our study of the Rahim model for organizational conflict management in the university institution of Djilali Bounaama University in Khemis Miliana, we can say that this model is an effective tool in helping the university administration to manage and confront conflict. The most important findings of our study are:

- Males in the sample are more inclined to prefer the Dominating style, followed by Integrating, Avoiding, and Compromising, then Obliging. Females, on the other hand, emphasized the preference for the Integrating style.
- The majority of the sample members with high academic qualifications (Master's and PhD) prefer the Dominating style, followed by Integrating, Compromising, and Obliging, then Avoiding. Those with lower qualifications prefer the Integrating and Compromising styles.
- The years of experience have an effect on the choice of the appropriate style for organizational conflict management.
- The Dominating style is the most prevalent approach to organizational conflict management in the university.

Recommendations

- Establish Conflict Management Teams : It is preferable to form a specialized team for organizational conflict management in university institutions, consisting of a group of individuals who possess the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with various conflict situations.

- Training Programs : Develop training programs for administrative leaders in Algerian universities to develop the necessary skills for using all styles, and to equip them with the skills necessary for conflict diagnosis and understanding its dimensions, as this is an essential condition for choosing the appropriate style.
- Clarify Duties and Responsibilities: Precise definition of the duties of professors and administrative staff in universities, and avoiding overlap in tasks and responsibilities, so that this does not become a cause for the emergence of conflicts.
- Further Research: Conduct more studies, such as a study on the effect of work stress on the styles followed in organizational conflict management in Algerian universities, especially since employees (both professors and administrators) deal with a large number of students who are characterized by a high level of education and differences in their cultures and regions from which they come.

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