

Graphene aerogel for highly efficient and multifunctional EMI shielding via dielectric-magnetic synergy strategy

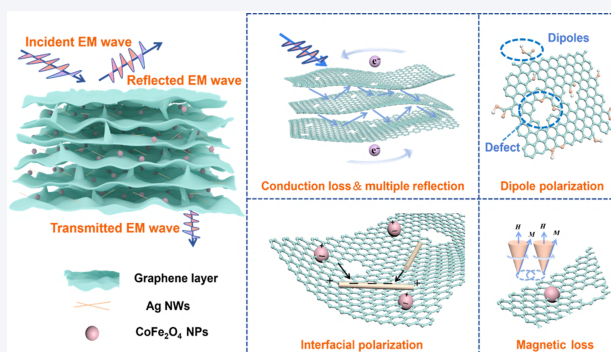
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ABSTRACT: The accelerated growth of modern electronics and devices has drawn considerable attention for the exploration and fabrication of innovative electromagnetic interference (EMI) shielding materials. Due to its layered porous architecture and distinctive characteristics, graphene aerogel is considered an appropriate candidate for advanced EMI shielding materials. Nonetheless, developing effective EMI shielding materials from graphene aerogel is challenging due to its moderate electrical conductivity. In this study, motivated by the concept of dielectric-magnetic synergy strategy, we present a graphene aerogel incorporating CoFe_2O_4 nanoparticles (NPs) and Ag nanowires (NWs) as enhancements. The CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel, benefiting from the synergistic effects of CoFe_2O_4 NPs, Ag NWs, and graphene aerogel, demonstrated exceptional EMI shielding capabilities. Specifically, the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel (5 mm) offered an optimal shielding effectiveness of 67.4 dB, which was 247% of the graphite aerogel. Meanwhile, it exhibited a remarkable low density of 0.048 g/cm^3 and a high specific shielding effectiveness value of up to $1291.67 \text{ dB}\cdot\text{cm}^3/\text{g}$. In addition, it also showed superior Joule heating performance and hydrophobicity.

KEYWORDS: graphene aerogel, electromagnetic interference (EMI) shielding, Ag nanowires, CoFe_2O_4 nanoparticles, shielding mechanism, multifunctionality



1 Introduction

In recent years, rapid advancements in modern electronic technology, wireless communication, and related fields have significantly benefited people's lives, but they have also generated an enormous amount of electromagnetic waves and radiation. In particular, the widespread usage of high-frequency electrical equipment in 5G communication, artificial intelligence, and other disciplines has exacerbated the electromagnetic interference (EMI) problem [1–6]. The excessive electromagnetic waves generated by electronic equipment will not only disrupt the equipment's normal operation but may also affect individuals if exposed to high-frequency electromagnetic waves for an extended period of time. Therefore, EMI shielding materials have received an immense amount of research over the last few decades [7–13]. EMI shielding

material refers to a material that can effectively block, absorb, or reflect electromagnetic waves and reduce electromagnetic interference [14–16]. In principle, this type of material can convert the electromagnetic waves in the environment into heat energy and store them in the form of micro-current, so as to reduce the electromagnetic waves in the environment.

To effectively meet the requirements of advanced electronics and devices, EMI shielding material generally needs to prioritize both high efficiency and lightweight characteristics [17–19]. Graphene aerogel is a three-dimensional porous network structure material generated by the self-assembly of graphene sheets, combining light weight, ultrahigh specific surface area, good conductivity, and good mechanical property [20–22]. The unique architecture and electromagnetic properties of graphene aerogel provide multiple reflection features and customizable shielding performance, making it ideal for a future generation of EMI shielding materials. However, due to the moderate electrical conductivity, it is difficult to achieve high shielding efficiency through pristine graphene aerogel. Recently, the synergistic effect of dielectric loss and magnetic loss has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy to achieve high shielding efficiency [23–28]. High conductive and magnetic components are reported to be employed as enhancements in

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graphene aerogel to achieve dielectric-magnetic synergy effect, such as carbon nanotube, $\text{Ti}_3\text{C}_2\text{T}_x$ MXene, magnetic alloy nanoparticles, ferrite nanoparticles, and so on. Nevertheless, the multifunctionality characteristic is also critical for the practical application of EMI shielding material, which can fulfill the complex application scenarios. Up to date, the study on graphene aerogel-based EMI shielding with high shielding capability and multifunctionality has been rarely reported.

In the present work, inspired by the dielectric-magnetic synergy strategy, we designed and constructed a highly efficient and multifunctional EMI shielding composite composed of graphene aerogel, Ag nanowires (NWs), and CoFe_2O_4 nanoparticles (NPs). Experimentally, Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs were synthesized by the solvothermal method and the hydrothermal method, respectively. The incorporation of Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs significantly enhanced the graphene aerogel's EMI shielding capability and endowed it with superior multifunctionality. Contributed by internal multiple reflection, interfacial polarization, Ohmic loss, and magnetic loss, the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel (5 mm) achieved a maximum shielding effectiveness (SE) of 67.4 dB in the X band. Moreover, the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel also delivered remarkable multifunctionality involving hydrophobicity and Joule heating.

2 Experimental

2.1 Synthesis of Ag NWs

Ag NWs were prepared by the solvothermal method using silver nitrate, ethylene glycol, and polyvinyl pyrrolidone (PVP). Specifically, 0.8 g PVP ($M_w = 1,300,000$) was dissolved in 20 mL of ethylene glycol, which was thoroughly stirred. Meanwhile, 0.6794 g silver nitrate and 0.7 mg sodium chloride were added to 20 mL of ethylene glycol, which was thoroughly stirred to dissolve them evenly. Finally, the foregoing two solutions were properly mixed and agitated before being transferred to a 50 mL stainless steel reactor, heated to 160 °C for 2 h, and allowed to cool naturally. Centrifugation and repeated washing with deionized water and acetone resulted in the gray precipitate, which was then dried to collect the Ag NWs.

2.2 Fabrication of CoFe_2O_4 NPs

The hydrothermal technique was utilized to fabricate CoFe_2O_4 NPs. Initially, ferric nitrate (8.08 g) and cobalt nitrate (2.91 g) were mixed together in 100 mL of deionized water and magnetically agitated for 30 min. To achieve a pH of 9, add 25% ammonium hydroxide dropwise to the combined solution and stir. The resulting solution was then ultrasonically dispersed for 3 h to ensure equal distribution. After ultrasonic dispersion, the combined solution was transported to the stainless steel reactor for reaction (180 °C, 12 h). Following the reaction, the product was centrifuged and washed multiple times with deionized water and ethanol. Subsequent to drying at 60 °C for 12 h, it was heated up to 400 °C for 6 h to produce CoFe_2O_4 NPs.

2.3 Fabrication of graphene composite aerogel

Graphene oxide was fabricated via Hummer's method. Typically, for the initial step, NaNO_3 (1 g) and flake graphite (1 g) were mixed in a glass container. 40 mL of concentrated H_2SO_4 was added, and the resulting mixture was placed in an ice bath. The mixture was

stirred while the temperature was kept below 20 °C. Subsequently, 5 g of KClO_4 was slowly added to the mixed solution and stirred thoroughly. Then, 3 g of KMnO_4 was introduced into the solution, which was maintained below 20 °C and stirred for 2 h. Upon completion of the low-temperature reaction, the ice-water bath was removed. The beaker was sealed with plastic wrap to prevent airborne water vapor from affecting the oxidation reaction, and the solution was stirred at room temperature (above 20 °C) for 24 h. After the moderate-temperature reaction, 40 mL of deionized water was added to the mixture, followed by stirring for 30 min. After the high-temperature reaction, an appropriate amount of H_2O_2 was added to the mixed solution. The system was stirred uniformly until the solution turned bright yellow to remove the excess oxidant. Finally, when the reaction was completed, the combined solution was transferred to a centrifuge tube and washed twice with 5% HCl solution before being washed several times using deionized water until the pH became 7. The supernatant was discarded, and graphene oxide was produced by freeze-drying.

Then 0.225 g of graphene oxide was dispersed in 10 mL deionized water, along with 0.0675 g of Ag NWs. The mixture was magnetically agitated for 2 h before being ultrasonically treated for another 2 h to ensure that it was evenly dispersed, yielding solution 1. Then, 0.0675 g of CoFe_2O_4 NPs were sonicated in 5 mL deionized water for 35 min to guarantee an even distribution, yielding solution 2. To create a CoFe_2O_4 /Ag nanowire/graphene oxide aqueous dispersion, the two solutions were combined and stirred with a glass rod for 5 min. The dispersion was then poured into a mold, rapidly cooled using liquid nitrogen, and freeze-dried for 48 h, obtaining a graphene oxide composite aerogel. Lastly, the dried graphene oxide composite aerogel was heated at 1000 °C to create CoFe_2O_4 /Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. For comparison, the pristine graphene aerogel and Ag NWs/graphene aerogel were also prepared.

2.4 Characterization

The microstructure of the obtained specimen was studied utilizing X-ray diffraction (XRD, DX-2700BH). The morphology of the samples was analyzed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, Zeiss Merlin Compact). The samples' microstructure and morphology were investigated utilizing transmission electron microscopy (TEM, JEM-3010). The specimens' electrical conductivity was evaluated using a four-probe resistance meter (RTS-8). The samples' ultimate electrical conductivities were estimated by averaging the results of several tests. The magnetic characteristics of the materials were evaluated with a vibrating sample magnetometer (VSM, Lake Shore 7404 Mode).

The waveguide approach was applied to determine samples' EMI shielding ability. The relevant electromagnetic characteristics were obtained employing a vector network analyzer (VNA, E5071C). To fit the sample holder cavity, the samples were sliced into rectangles measuring 22.86 mm × 10.16 mm and 5 mm in thickness. The test range was operated at the frequencies ranging from 8.2 to 12.4 GHz (X-band). And the SE of the samples was calculated based on the undermentioned formulas

$$T = |S_{21}|^2 \quad (1)$$

$$R = |S_{11}|^2 \quad (2)$$

$$SE_A = -10\lg(T/(1-R)) \quad (3)$$

$$SE_R = -10\lg(1-R) \quad (4)$$

$$SE_T = -10\lg T \quad (5)$$

where SE_A represents the absorption shielding effectiveness, SE_R signifies the reflection shielding effectiveness, and SE_T means the total shielding effectiveness. At the same time, T means transmission coefficients while R represent reflection coefficients.

The sample's Joule heating performance was assessed employing a DC power source (UTP 1310), and its temperature was detected with an infrared thermal imaging camera (Fotric 628C). We used an optical contact angle meter (SDC-200, Dingsheng) to measure the contact angles (CAs) of 5 μ L water droplets on the sample surface to evaluate hydrophilicity.

3 Results and discussion

Figure 1(a) illustrates that the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel was constructed by a freeze-drying and annealing process from the mixed aqueous suspension of graphene oxide, CoFe_2O_4

NPs, and Ag NWs. Experimentally, graphene oxide, Ag NWs, and CoFe_2O_4 NPs were fabricated respectively. Figure 1(b) displays the TEM image of the graphene oxide synthesized from flake graphite (Fig. S1 in the Electronic Supplementary Material (ESM)) using Hummer's approach [29, 30]. One could observe that the graphene oxide generated by oxidant stripping has a typical layered structure and a relatively modest thickness. To obtain the graphene layer, the graphene oxide went through a heat treatment of 1000 $^{\circ}\text{C}$. The Raman spectra of the obtained graphene layer is demonstrated in Fig. 1(c). The graphene sample possesses representative graphite's Raman peaks, including the D and G peaks. After calculation, the value of I_D/I_G is approximately 1.23, which implies the presence of defect [31].

Figures 1(d) and 1(e) depict the TEM images of Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs, respectively. The obtained Ag NWs possess a typical wire morphology with a diameter around 50 nm. The XRD pattern (Fig. S2 in the ESM) clearly reveals diffraction peaks at 38.1 $^{\circ}$, 44.3 $^{\circ}$, 64.5 $^{\circ}$, and 77.5 $^{\circ}$, corresponding to the (111), (200), (220), and (311) crystal planes (PDF #04-0783) [32, 33]. The diffraction peaks of the as-prepared CoFe_2O_4 NPs (Fig. S3 in the ESM) at 35.4 $^{\circ}$, 56.9 $^{\circ}$, and 62.6 $^{\circ}$ are ascribed to the crystal planes (311), (511), and (440) in the PDF card (PDF #22-1086), respectively [34, 35]. This indicates that the obtained CoFe_2O_4 sample has a cubic spinel structure. The XRD

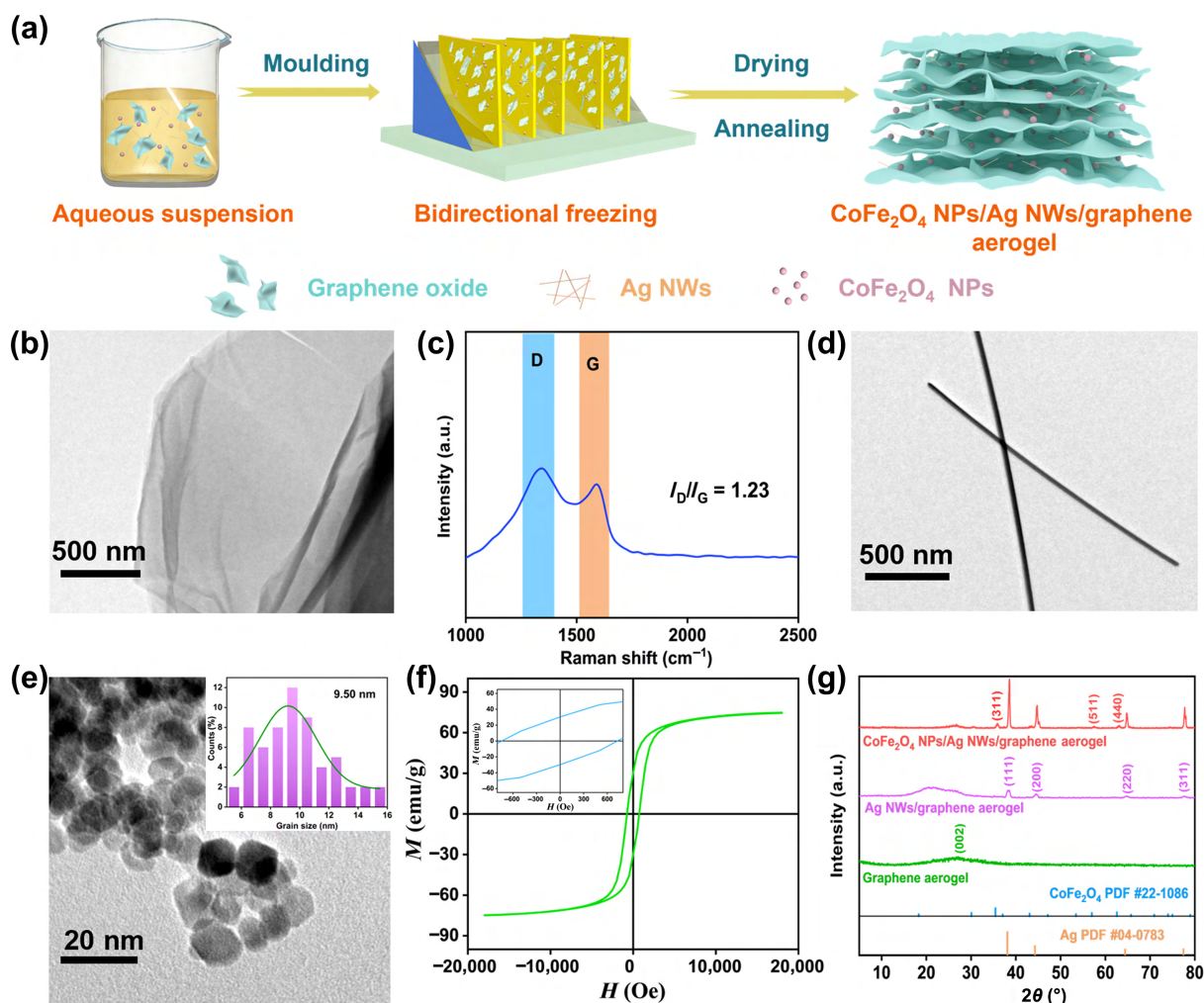


Figure 1 (a) Schematic of the synthesis procedure of the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. (b) TEM image of the graphene oxide nanosheet. (c) Raman spectrum of the graphene layer. TEM images of (d) the Ag NWs and (e) the CoFe_2O_4 NPs. (f) Hysteresis loop of the CoFe_2O_4 NPs. (g) XRD patterns of the graphene aerogel, Ag NWs/graphene aerogel, and CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel.

pattern shows clear diffraction peaks and no impurity peaks, demonstrating the effective preparation of CoFe_2O_4 NPs with high crystallinity. The TEM image (Fig. 1(e)) demonstrates the size of CoFe_2O_4 NPs is around 10 nm. At the same time, the magnetic property of CoFe_2O_4 NPs is also characterized, as presented in Fig. 1(f). Specifically, the sample demonstrates good ferromagnetism, featuring a saturation magnetization (M_s) of 74.8 emu/g, a remanent magnetization (M_r) of 30.4 emu/g, and a coercivity (H_c) of 750 Oe. It is believed that the magnetization behavior of CoFe_2O_4 NPs is associated with the variation in the exchange contact between tetrahedral and octahedral sub-lattices.

In this work, to reveal the influence of Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs on the graphene's performance, the pristine graphene aerogel and Ag NWs/graphene aerogel were also synthesized, respectively. As demonstrated in Fig. 1(g), the amorphous diffraction peak at 26.4° corresponds to the (002) crystal plane of reduced graphene oxide. At the same time, the characteristic peaks of Ag NWs appear at 77.5° , 44.3° , and 38.1° , corresponding to their (311), (200), and (111) crystal planes, respectively. Moreover, the characteristic peaks of CoFe_2O_4 NPs appear at 30.2° , 57.2° , and 62.9° , corresponding to their (311), (511), and (440) crystal planes, respectively. This indicates the fact that the heat treatment reduces the graphene

oxide aerogel but not the Ag NWs or CoFe_2O_4 NPs, according to the XRD pattern. In other words, Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs were successfully integrated into graphene aerogel. The microstructure of the as-prepared aerogel samples is displayed in Fig. 2. Figures 2(a) and 2(b) present the SEM images of graphene oxide aerogel and graphene aerogel. The graphene oxide aerogel sample has a typical layered porous structure. The formation of this architecture is highly dependent on the freeze-drying process. Because of the wedge-shaped polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) between the copper plate base and the graphene aqueous dispersion, when liquid nitrogen is added, there is a temperature difference between the PDMS's bottom and top, and ice crystals preferentially nucleate at the bottom of the PDMS. Meanwhile, the temperature difference causes two temperature gradients in the horizontal and vertical axes, and ice crystals form along the two squares. The graphene oxide in the dispersion will also be ordered along the ice crystals' development direction until the graphene oxide aqueous dispersion is fully frozen [36, 37]. This layered porous structure remains intact after the heat treatment. Figures 2(c)–2(f) present the SEM photos of Ag NWs/graphene aerogel and CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. One could observe that the Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs achieve a relatively uniform dispersion in the graphene aerogel

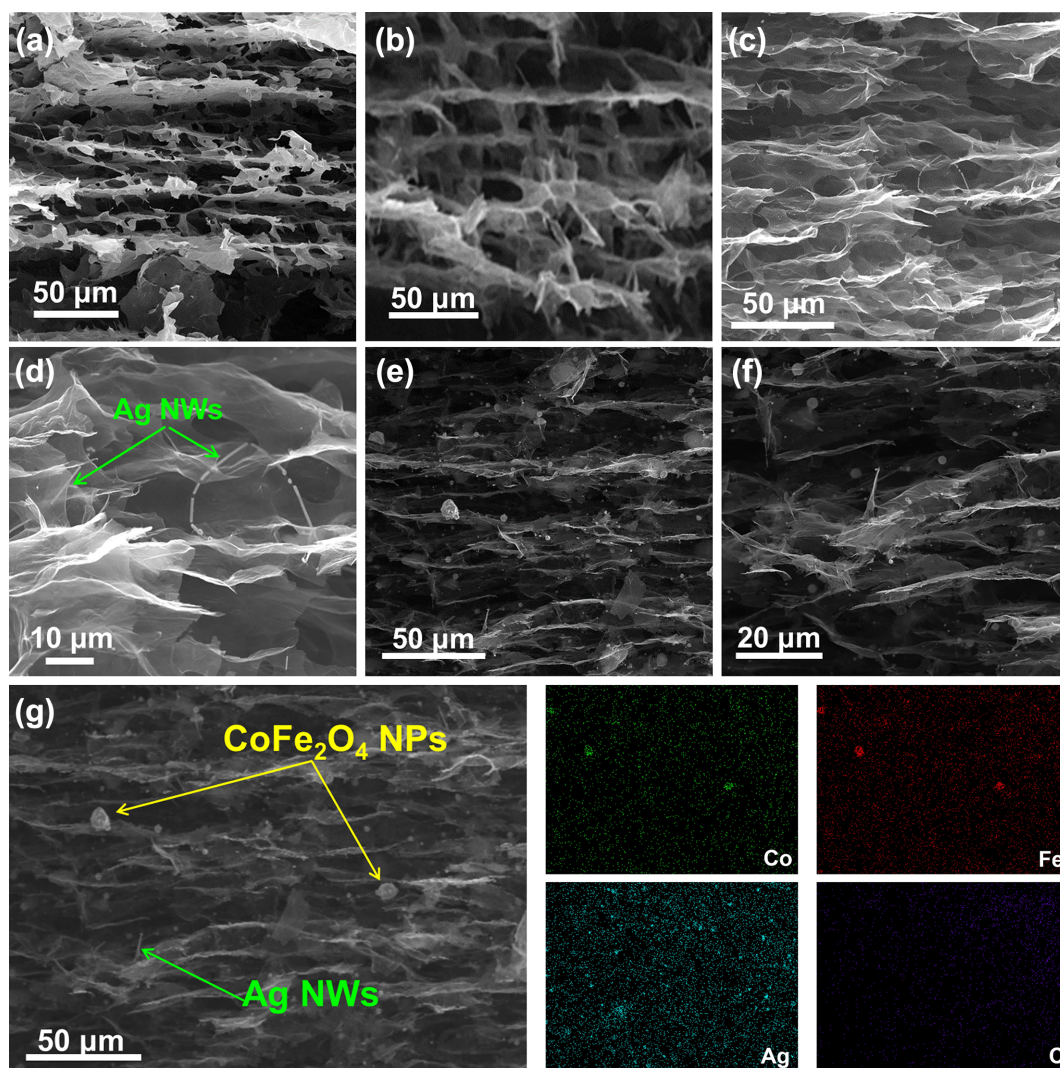


Figure 2 SEM images of (a) the graphene oxide aerogel and (b) graphene aerogel. (c) SEM image and (d) enlarged SEM image of the Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. (e) SEM image and (f) enlarged SEM image of the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. (g) EDS mapping of the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel.

matrix. The energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) mapping (Fig. 2(g)) further reveals the dispersion of the Co, Fe, Ag, and C elements.

The obtained samples' electrical conductivity is displayed in Fig. 3(a). It is obvious that the composite aerogel's electrical conductivity demonstrates significant variation with the incorporation of Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs. Ag NWs have a high carrier density and electron mobility, allowing them to generate new electron transmission channels in graphene aerogels, reduce electron scattering, and create a new conductive network [38]. As a result, the conductivity of the composite aerogel rises with the addition of Ag NWs. After the addition of CoFe_2O_4 NPs, the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel delivers a lower electrical conductivity than that of the Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. This can be explained by the intrinsic low conductivity of CoFe_2O_4 NPs. The samples' electromagnetic parameters in the X-band were collected by the waveguide technique [39–41]. The shielding effectiveness is calculated based on the corresponding electromagnetic parameters. Figures 3(b)–3(d) display the SE value of the obtained samples (5 mm), including SE_A , SE_R , and SE_T . One could observe that the Ag NWs/graphene aerogel exhibits better EMI shielding performance than graphene aerogel. The SE_A and SE_T of graphene aerogel are 24.5 and 27.3 dB, respectively. At the same time, its SE_R value is

around 4 dB. The good electromagnetic shielding performance is due to the layered porous architecture, which not only provides enough interface for multiple reflections of electromagnetic waves but also provides a path for electron transmission between layers and takes into account the transmission between the core layer and the layer [42–44]. On the other hand, the heat treatment successfully eliminates oxygen-containing functional groups and imperfections from the graphene structure, making it more ordered and prone to electron transmission and consumption. With the addition of Ag NWs and CoFe_2O_4 NPs, the composite aerogel's EMI shielding performance is enhanced gradually. Specifically, the Ag NWs/graphene aerogel delivers a SE_T of 52.7 dB, while the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel achieves a SE_A of 48.1 dB and a SE_T of 67.4 dB. Accordingly, the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel exhibits much better EMI shielding performance than that of graphene aerogel and Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. Incorporating CoFe_2O_4 NPs into the composite aerogel reduces conductivity but improves electromagnetic wave reflection through magnetic resonance and hysteresis loss. At the same time, CoFe_2O_4 NPs increase electromagnetic wave absorption by introducing eddy current loss and stronger interfacial polarization [45, 46]. Besides, the obtained aerogel samples feature low reflection shielding effectiveness, as demonstrated in Fig. 3(e). This helps to

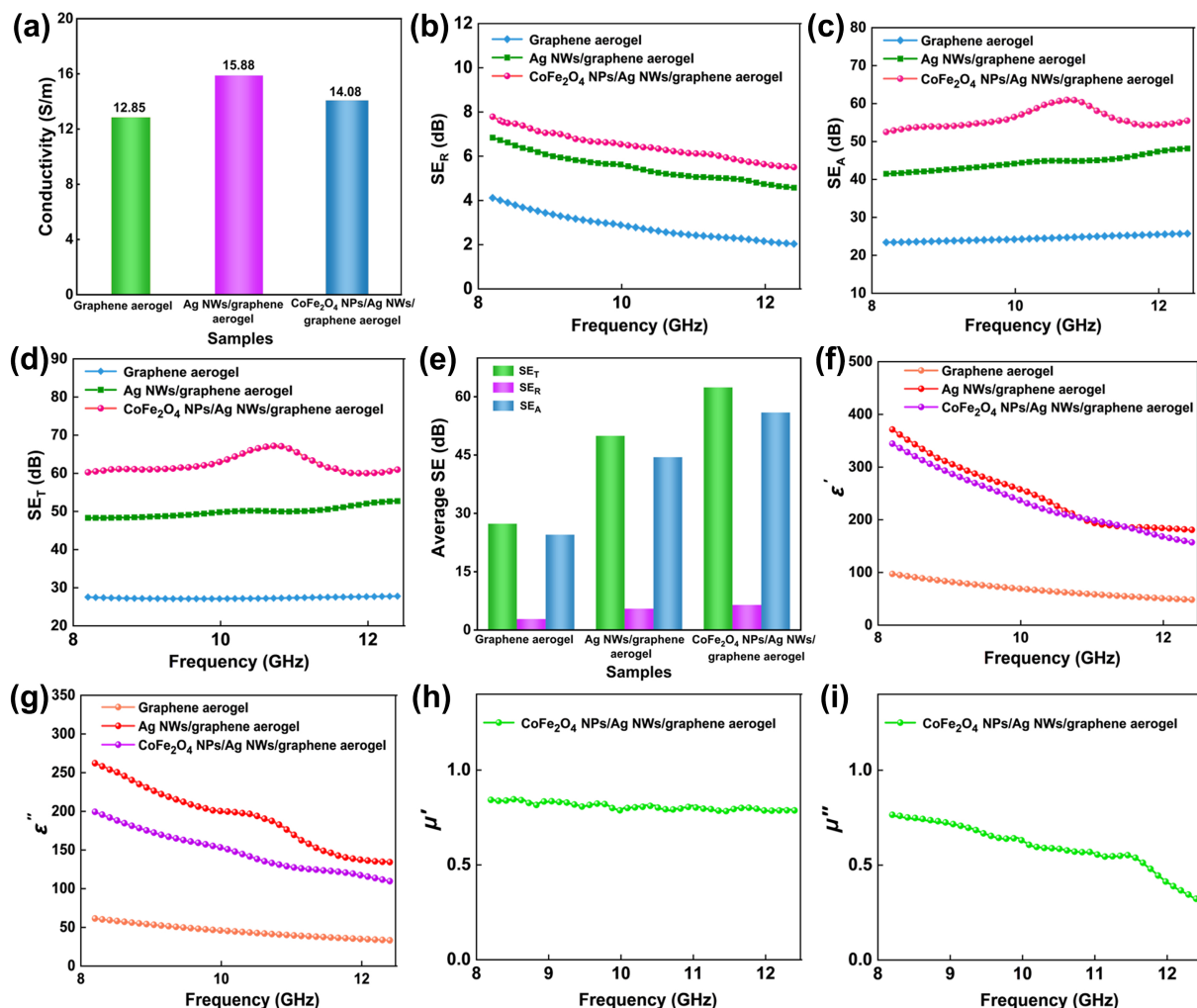


Figure 3 (a) Electrical conductivity, (b) SE_R , (c) SE_A , (d) SE_T , (e) average SE, (f) ϵ' , and (g) ϵ'' of the as-prepared aerogel samples. (h) μ' and (i) μ'' of the CoFe_2O_4 NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel.

prevent the secondary electromagnetic pollution.

The samples' complex permittivity and permeability are examined for better understanding of their electromagnetic interference shielding efficacy. **Figures 3(f) and 3(g)** show the real component (ϵ') and imaginary component (ϵ'') of the complex permittivity of the samples, respectively. As we all know, ϵ' suggests capacitive energy storage, while ϵ'' implies polarization loss in electric fields [47, 48]. It can be clearly seen that the Ag NWs/graphene aerogel and CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel have much higher ϵ' and ϵ'' than that of graphene aerogel. The addition of Ag NWs boosts the concentration of free electrons in aerogel, improving its responsiveness to alternating electric fields and enhancing ϵ' . Additionally, heterogeneous interfaces such as Ag/carbon, CoFe₂O₄/silver, and CoFe₂O₄/carbon promote interfacial polarization, with electrons accumulating at the contact to form dipoles. An alternating electric field causes dipoles to orient and polarize, leading to a rise in ϵ'' . The real component (μ') and imaginary component (μ'') of the complex permeability of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel are measured, as shown in **Figs. 3(h) and 3(i)**. μ' describes capacitive energy storage, and μ'' denotes polarization loss within magnetic fields [49, 50]. The addition of CoFe₂O₄ NPs improves graphene aerogel's magnetic response, providing the composite aerogel with both real and imaginary permeability. This suggests that the addition of CoFe₂O₄ NPs can improve the permeability of the composite aerogel and enrich its loss mechanism to electromagnetic waves. The composite aerogel can absorb electromagnetic waves more effectively owing to the magnetic-dielectric synergistic effect, which corresponds to an increase in shielding effectiveness shown in **Fig. 3(e)**.

The samples' attenuation constant (α) and skin depth (δ) are also studied to further evaluate their EMI shielding performance, as depicted in **Figs. 4(a) and 4(b)**. Compared to graphene aerogel and Ag NWs/graphene aerogel, the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel delivers a higher α and a lower δ . This further confirms the excellent EMI shielding property of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. At the same time, the density of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel is only 0.048 g/cm³. According to the calculation, the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel delivers a specific shielding effectiveness (SSE) of 1291.67 dB·cm³/g. The electromagnetic shielding efficacy of the composite aerogel developed in this work surpasses that of many other graphene aerogel materials reported previously (**Fig. 4(c)**) [51–59]. **Figure 4(d)** depicts the EMI shielding mechanism of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel based on the preceding discussion. First, due to the difference in dielectric constant between the composite aerogel and the air, a small portion of the electromagnetic wave will not enter the aerogel and will continue propagating due to resistance when it comes into contact with the aerogel's surface. The layered porous structure within the composite aerogel allows for internal multiple reflections of electromagnetic waves, while defects in the graphene aerogel itself attenuate electromagnetic waves via dipole polarization. On this basis, the addition of Ag NWs improves the conductive network by introducing a significant amount of heterogeneous interfaces, allowing the aerogel to dissipate electromagnetic waves more effectively. In addition, the introduced CoFe₂O₄ NPs not only form a heterogeneous interface with the composite aerogel, enhancing the interfacial polarization and dipole polarization of the composite, but also more effectively absorb electromagnetic waves due to the exchange resonance and eddy current effect under the action of the

electromagnetic field, further optimizing the composite aerogel's EMI shielding performance. In a word, Ag NWs may create an efficient conducting network and enhance the conductive loss of the composite aerogel, while CoFe₂O₄ NPs can introduce magnetic loss and improve the composite aerogel's electromagnetic wave absorption. The incorporation of Ag NWs and CoFe₂O₄ NPs facilitates the dielectric-magnetic synergy effect in the graphene composite aerogel, hence improving the attenuation pathway and finally enabling effective electromagnetic wave absorption.

As mentioned above, the multifunctionality is critical for the EMI shielding materials to meet the requirements of complicated application scenarios. Therefore, the multifunctionality of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel is also investigated in this work. We evaluate the hydrophobic property of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel via the measurement of water contact angle (**Figs. 5(a) and 5(b)**). After heat treatment, the composite aerogel shows remarkable hydrophobic property, while the contact angle is 120.3°. The hydrophobicity is attributed to the heat treatment, which removed the oxygen-containing functional groups from the surface of the graphene oxide. Excellent hydrophobicity of electromagnetic shielding materials can prevent them from accumulating water and corrosion in a humid environment, affecting their long-term reliability [60–62]. Moreover, the Joule heating property of the composite aerogel is also investigated. **Figure 5(c)** depicts the $T-U^2$ curve for the composite aerogel sample. The sample's $T-U^2$ curve is linear, indicating not only that it has stable resistance and conforms to Ohm's law, but also that it is controllable in terms of electric heating performance. As demonstrated in **Fig. 5(d)**, the sample's temperature quickly achieves saturation once the driving voltage is supplied and stay stable there. After removing the driving voltage, the sample's temperature can be quickly reduced from saturation to room temperature, indicating that the composite aerogel not only has controllable electric heating performance but also good heat dissipation performance, which is particularly advantageous to the dissipation of heat energy generated by consuming electromagnetic wave energy in the electromagnetic shielding process [63–65]. The capacity to quickly dissipate heat energy efficiently prevents the impact of local overheating on performance and is also helpful for prolonged usage of the material. **Figure 5(e)** presents infrared pictures that intuitively indicate the sample's saturation temperature at various voltages. The figure demonstrates that the sample's temperature increases rapidly as the driving voltage increases, suggesting that the sample's electric heating capability is adjustable. **Figure 5(f)** describes the fluctuation of the composite aerogel sample's saturation temperature when the driving voltage is adjusted. It can be seen that as the driving voltage increases (6–10 V), the sample's saturation temperature rapidly rises from 45 to 120 °C, implying that it has a good Joule heat effect and can effectively convert electrical energy to thermal energy. This allows the material to work in extremely low temperatures. Meanwhile, when the driving voltage is varied between 6 and 10 V, the sample's temperature can be quickly switched between 45 and 120 °C. The sample can achieve the ideal saturation temperature within 2 s of increasing the voltage in this process, suggesting that the composite aerogel responds extremely quickly to electrically driven heat conversion. To examine the long-term stability of the electrothermal performance of the composite aerogel, we performed a 1 h electrothermal performance test at 9 V, as shown in **Fig. 5(g)**. It is apparently that the sample can quickly achieve the

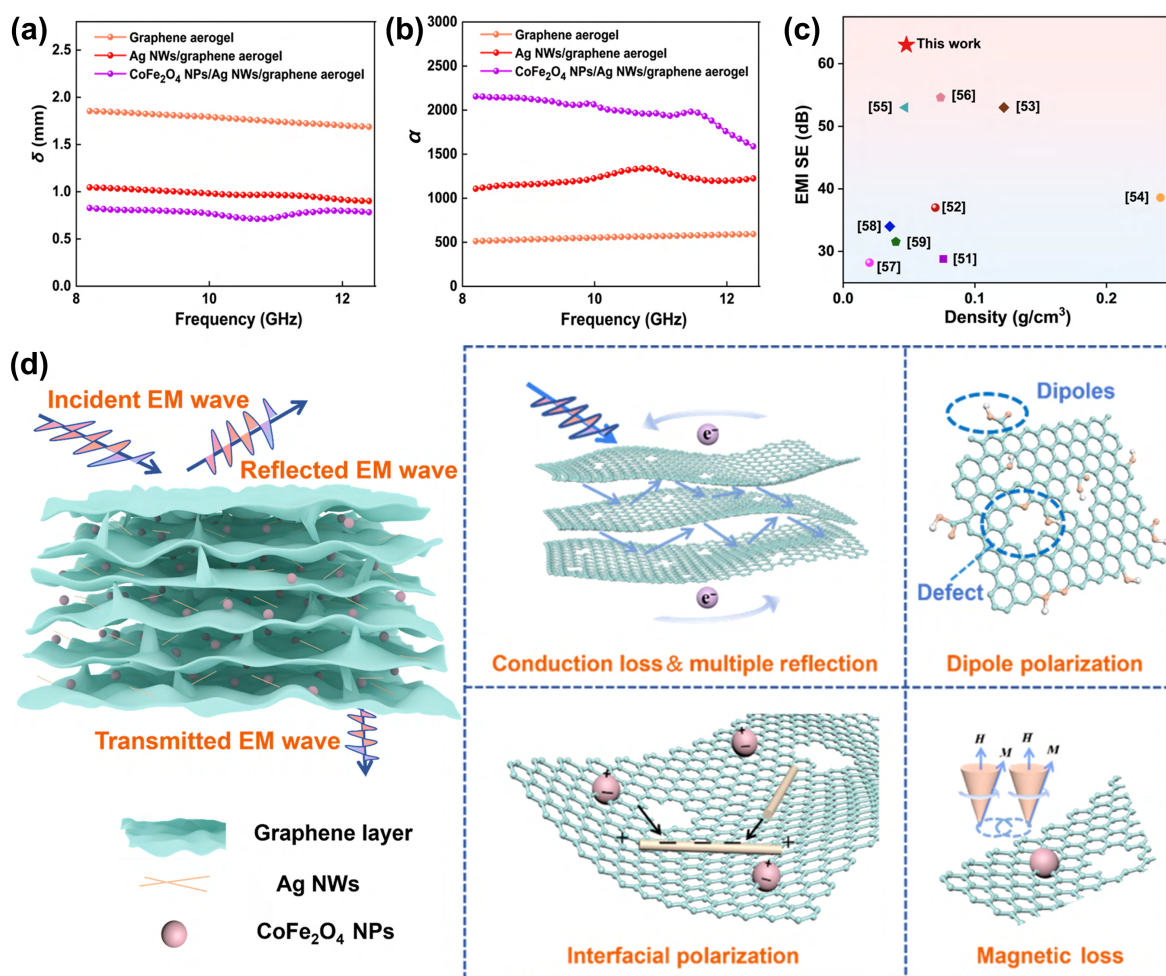


Figure 4 (a) Attenuation constant and (b) skin depth of the as-prepared aerogel samples. (c) EMI shielding performance comparison of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel with reported graphene aerogels. (d) Diagram of the shielding mechanism of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel.

saturation temperature of 95 °C with a driving voltage of 9 V. During the 1h electric heating procedure, the sample's temperature can be kept stable around saturation, and it can be quickly decreased to room temperature after the driving voltage is removed.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, we propose a CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel for efficient and multifunctional EMI shielding. The CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel delivers superior performance due to the realization of dielectric-magnetic synergy effect. The results reveal that Ag NWs improve the conductive network within the graphene aerogel while also increasing conductive loss. Meanwhile, the abundant heterogeneous interfaces created by the incorporation of Ag NWs and CoFe₂O₄ NPs enhance the composite aerogel's interfacial and dipole polarizations. More crucially, the presence of CoFe₂O₄ NPs induces magnetic loss in the composite aerogel. The CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel with a thickness of 5 mm has a maximum SE_T of more than 67.4 dB, which is 247% of graphite aerogel. Meanwhile, it exhibits a remarkable low density of 0.048 g/cm³ and a high SSE value of up to 1291.67 dB-cm³/g. Furthermore, it also demonstrates excellent Joule heating performance and hydrophobicity. This opens up the possibility of applying it in electromagnetic shielding in hostile situations. This research aims to provide guidelines for the

development and construction of new EMI shielding materials that feature high efficiency and multifunctionality.

Electronic Supplementary Material: Supplementary material (SEM images of flake graphite and XRD spectra of Ag NWs and CoFe₂O₄ NPs) is available in the online version of this article at <https://doi.org/10.26599/NR.2026.94908554>.

Data availability

All data needed to support the conclusions in the paper are presented in the manuscript and the Electronic Supplementary Material. Additional data related to this paper may be requested from the corresponding author upon request.

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Declaration of competing interest

All the contributing authors report no conflict of interests in this work.

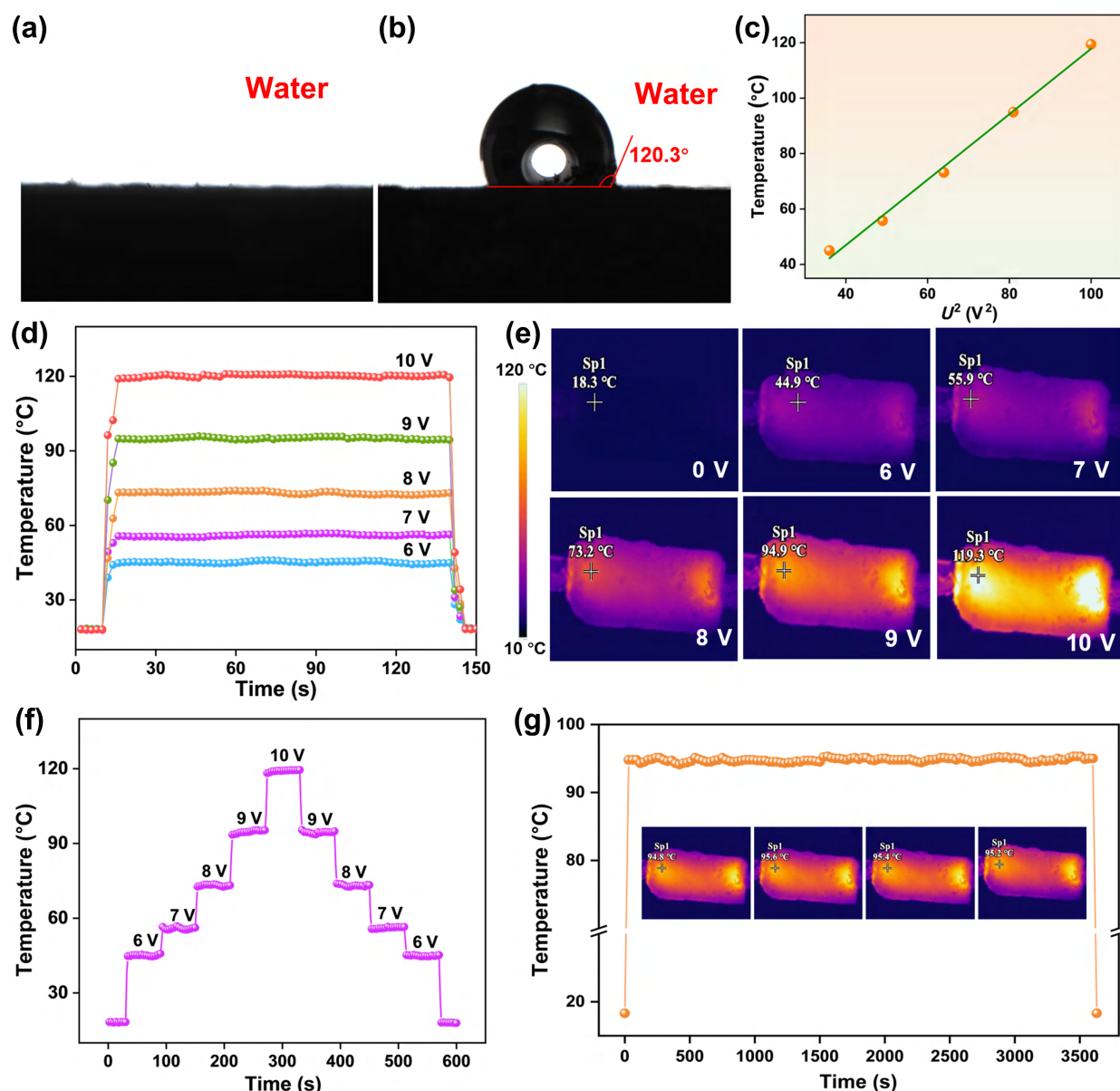


Figure 5 Water contact angle of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel: (a) before and (b) after the heat treatment. (c) Experimental data and linear fitting diagram of saturation temperature and U^2 , (d) temperature vs. time curves under different voltages, (e) infrared images of saturation temperature under different voltages, and (f) saturation temperature evolution profile during voltage regulation of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel. (g) Temperature profile of the CoFe₂O₄ NPs/Ag NWs/graphene aerogel at 9 V for 1 h.

Author contribution statement

X. C. D.: Data curation, experimental design, writing – original draft. H. G. L.: Conceptualization, funding acquisition, writing – review & editing. Y. W. S.: Characterization. N. T. and C. Y. Y.: Funding acquisition, supervision. All the authors have approved the final manuscript.

Use of AI statement

None.

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