The Role of Religious Education in Shaping the Character of the Younger Generation

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate how religious education influences the development of a person's character in their early adult years. A person's identity, moral independence, and life values are formed during the crucial developmental stage of early adulthood, which has a big influence on their future. This study examines the role that Christian Religious Education plays in promoting character development that embodies Christian values like love, honesty, responsibility, and integrity using a qualitative research approach based on a literature review. According to the findings, Christian Religious Education is crucial for raising people's moral consciousness, establishing spiritual principles, and assisting them in overcoming social obstacles. Christian Religious Education helps people develop a Christ-centered identity, improves their capacity for responsible decision-making, and promotes engagement in worthwhile social activities by teaching them God's Word. This study does, however, also point out a number of issues that could compromise the efficacy of character education, including the impact of digital media and social settings. According to the study's findings, Christian religious education plays a vital role in forming morally pure and motivated young adults. To foster an atmosphere that encourages character development, families, educational institutions, and society must work together. It is anticipated that the results will offer useful insights for creating more pertinent and successful Christian Religious Education initiatives.

Keywords: Christian Values, Early Adult, Religious Education

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important ways to develop individuals with high moral standards and integrity is through education. In the context of Christianity, religious education has a crucial role in ensuring that students understand the lessons of Christianity. One stage of character development that really demands attention is the first fase, which is a period of life that is marked by transition from the teenager period to the full independence as an individual mature. The early years are crucial for developing one's identity, establishing one's way of life, and forming strong beliefs for later years. During this time, people frequently experience various types of stress, whether it be social, personal, or spiritual, which necessitates strong moral and spiritual principles. In this context, Christian education can serve as a reliable foundation for helping people deal with the aforementioned difficulties.

The goal of religious education is not only to provide a theoretical understanding of iman but also to develop character traits that uphold values such as integrity, kasih, kejujuran, and tanggung jawab. Through religious education, people are taught to understand the principles of Christianity so that they can be applied to their daily lives. In light of this, Christian education has a great potential to develop young people who are not only intellectually capable but also morally and spiritually upright.

Perubahan as a communication process By utilizing digital media, education has embraced kemedia komonikasih. Initially, tatap muka education is a traditional, easy-to-follow process that is carried out by Ahalo using TIK to give people the greatest amount of dampak. The campuran learning model is a pengabungan and pencampuran approach that is used to develop new learning strategies and assess students' performance. Aside from the output and results that are very beneficial to students as learners and to teachers as teachers, integrating blended learning into PAK instruction for students can lessen the negative effects of information technology itself. In order to learn, students will be more likely to use technology and peralatan. Students will be more engaged in using information media because the religious education they are pursuing is implemented in a process of development and information gathering that is very different from the negative effects of technological advancements. Compared to playing games, students will be more motivated and enjoy learning. Students will be more disciplined and will have more time to learn and grow. Guru is a key figure in raising the quality of students because they interact closely with students while they are learning in a classroom setting. As a result, the quality of the students' education is greatly improved. According to Josep Stalin, education is a discipline that results from a tangan that is resentful and directed towards the people of Arakan.

Teachers' tasks are very important in education. The quality of a teacher can be determined by two factors: the process's prognosis and its outcome. The guru's process is considered successful if it can engage a significant number of students in an active manner, whether it be mentally, physically, or socially, during the teaching process. As of right now, higher education in theology and Christian religion has already begun to engage in the expansion of education based on digital technology, with a particular emphasis on resource openness of understanding for individuals or groups, process improvement, urusan legalitas, full facility, compliance with the law, and other matters. The emergence of technology has caused the general public to become less sensitive to spiritual aspects. According to Richard J. Edlin, there is only one truth about everything, whether it be knowledge or faith in Allah. Asal mula, definisi, and tujuan from every curriculum phase that is implemented in schools must be based on religious principles.

This article will go into greater detail about the role that religious education plays in developing early life characteristics. This study includes an analysis of the concepts taught through education, the internalization of those concepts, and the impact of those concepts on the development of individual character during the early years. It is hoped that

this study will make a significant contribution to understanding the importance of religious education in human life, particularly during the early stages of development.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

Understanding Religious Education

Religious Education is a systematic and planned effort to educate and shape students to recognize, understand, and internalize Christian teachings and apply them in daily life. According to Hasugian (2019), Religious Education aims to help students grow in faith, morals, and Christian character. Religious Education not only focuses on the transfer of knowledge about the Bible and church doctrine, but also aims to shape attitudes, behaviors, and Christian character that reflect values such as love, patience, responsibility, and self-control (Tillich, 2019).

The Concept of Character from a Perspective

Character is a collection of moral and ethical values that shape a person's behavior. In the Christian perspective, character is formed through the teaching of God's word and the example of Jesus Christ. According to Lickona (2018), good character includes three main components:

a. Moral knowing: Understanding of true moral values.

b. Moral feeling: Motivation and concern for morality.

c. Moral behavior (perilaku moral): Real actions that reflect moral values. In the Bible, formation includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Christian Religious Education plays an important role in helping individuals, especially young adults, to instill and embody these values in their lives.

Early Adulthood Development Stage

Early adulthood is a phase of development that occurs in the age range of 18-25 years, where individuals begin to build their identity, independence, and values that will become the foundation of their lives. According to Erikson (2019), the early adulthood development stage is related to the search for personal identity and the formation of intimate social relationships. At this stage, individuals are often faced with various moral, spiritual, and emotional challenges. Christian Religious Education can serve as a guide that helps individuals understand their identity as creations of God and develop a strong Christian character in facing life's challenges (Smith, 2019).

The Role of Religious Education

Religion in Shaping Early Adult Character Religious education plays a strategic role in shaping individual character, especially during the early adulthood phase. That role includes:

a. Building Moral Awareness Christian Religious Education teaches moral values based on the word of God. Through Bible teaching, individuals learn to distinguish between right and wrong and understand the moral consequences of their actions. According to Bandura (1977) in social learning theory, individuals learn moral behavior through observation, value instillation, and examples from teachers or spiritual leaders.

b. Developing a Sense of Responsibility Christian Religious Education teaches the importance of responsibility towards oneself, others, and God. carrying out their role with integrity and dedication.

c. Cultivating Love and Social Care The main value in this helps young adults build an inclusive, tolerant, and empathetic character.

d. Strengthening Self-Control and Ethics In facing temptations and moral challenges in early adulthood, self-control becomes very important. Through Christian religious education, individuals are taught to control emotions, impulses, and actions that are not in line with Christian values. Self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit that helps individuals live according to the right ethics (Galatians 5:23).

e. Forming a Self-Identity Centered on Religious Education

Religious Education as a Means of Character Transformation Religious Education is not just limited to theoretical learning, but also a process of character transformation through:

a. Learning the Word of God: Understanding the Bible as a guide for life.

b. Habitual Worship and Prayer: Spiritual practices that cultivate obedience and loyalty to God.

c. Exemplary Role Models and Mentoring Development: The role of teachers, mentors, or spiritual leaders as real examples in character building

Service and Social Activities: Activities that foster values of love, humility, and concern for others. According to Tillich (2019), faith education will shape character through personal encounters with God, reflection on His word, and concrete actions that reflect the truth of God's word in daily life.

The Positive Impact of Religious Education on Character Formation Research conducted by Smith and Denton (2019) shows that individuals who are active in religious

education exhibit more positive behaviors, such as: being more responsible and honest in social life, being better able to cope with stress and moral challenges in early adulthood, having healthier relationships with others, and having clearer and more meaningful life goals. Religious Education helps individuals internalize strong moral and spiritual values, enabling them to become individuals of integrity and competitiveness amidst the changing times.

Value of Religious Character From a linguistic perspective, the word "value" comes from the Latin word vale're, which means useful, capable, powerful, applicable, thus value is interpreted as something that is considered good, beneficial, and true according to the beliefs of an individual or a group of people. Meanwhile, the term character from a linguistic (etymological) perspective is derived from the English word character, which also comes from the Greek word character. Generally, the term character is used to denote the differences between one thing and another, and eventually also used to refer to the common qualities in each person that distinguish them from other qualities. defining character as a personal trait (a characteristic manifested in behavior) that is consistent and serves as a foundation in attitude, influenced by standards of values and norms. interpreting religious character as a person's attitude and behavior related to spirituality, influenced by their will and effort to draw closer to God by faithfully carrying out religious commandments.

The internalization of this character from an early age. will strengthen the moral of students in the future, so they are not easily influenced by bad things. Based on various opinions that have been elaborated, religious character is an attitude that reflects the capacity to understand religious teachings manifested in the form of practice and brings effects that reflect obedience and submission to God. According to Hasan, the placement of value education and character attitudes in Indonesian society has long been proposed in the realm of education. However, in terms of realization, it has been sidelined by positive evaluations that are pragmatic in nature, so the assessment of attitudes oriented towards character values has been overlooked. According to Spranger's opinion, values are considered a material or foundation that can be used as a tool to select the good and bad aspects of a discussion in the social forum of society. Values are referred to as the alternative of someone's good or bad attitudes, whether done consciously or unconsciously. while According to Kupperman's opinion, values are an alternative reference that serves as the basis for a person or individual in doing something good based on a norm. In this case, value 8 Stanley M Horton, 'The Bible: A Guide to Abundant Living', Malang: Penerbit

Gandum Mas, 1994, p. 2853. 9 Intan Mayang Sahni Badry and Rini Rahman, 'The Efforts of Christian Religious Education Teachers in Instilling Religious Character Values', An-Nuha, 1.4 (2021), 573–83. 10 Badry and Rahman. e-ISSN: 3031-8378; p-ISSN: 3031-836X, pp. 134-144 press someone in determining their attitude. According to Kluckhon's opinion, value is something that has both implicit and explicit meanings, and aims to distinguish several characteristics of a group of people or individuals by observing their desires, which can influence the choice of methods used, initial goals, and the intended final goals. The meaning of values according to Kluckhon is directed towards cultural values, which are explained by Brameld in his work that contains the fundamentals of culture in education. Values are related to morals, ethics, and character. The explanation of values by K. Bertens in his book titled "Ethics" states that values are something interesting to explore for information. Values are things that are bound or related to the presence of morals, ethics, behavior, and character within a person. So, value education is the effort made by educators to enhance the moral, ethical, character, and behavior values of students as beings created by God who possess skills and can be useful in society, nation, and state.

Various Values

a. Ethical Values Ethical values are values used by humans as tools or media for the behavior of individuals or groups, where they are part of a system of applicable value rules and norms, resulting from the natural experiences of society.

b. Religious Values Religious values are the concept of values or moral value systems and are used as guidelines in the formation of a person's behavior both outwardly and inwardly, reflecting the religious community. The values and moral teachings imparted by religious doctrines from the revelation are entrusted to its followers, to guide humanity towards greater self-control. Understanding Religious Religious in Latin is religio, as explained by Harun Nasution. Religi comes from the word relegere, meaning to read and to gather. This is related to religion. Religiousness itself, in essence, has a discussion about the procedures for devotion to Jesus Christ, which is placed in a holy book so that Christians continually read and realize its contents. Religiousness in Christianity is a process of carrying out all kinds of religious teachings comprehensively.

There is an explanation in KBBI, religious refers to an attitude of belief in the existence of God, and the meaning of religious is an attitude of obedience or adherence to all religious teachings, or it is referred to as a pious attitude. Religious in Latin is religio, in English religion, while in Arabic it is al-diin, which is called religion. Religiosity is a

sense of belief in God, with devotion and adherence to following the teachings and obligations of that religion. Religious is an attitude or behavior where someone sincerely obeys or adheres to all the teachings of the religion they follow, as well as having tolerance towards followers of other religions, and maintaining a harmonious life with followers of other   religions.

Religious Character Values In the process of implementing the formation of religious character, several types of religious character values that align with PPK (Strengthening Character Education) are used, as follows:

a. Love for Peace Someone applies the value of character or the attitude of love for peace to themselves, with the aim of promoting peace in speech, actions, and behavior that makes those around them feel happy.

b. Tolerance The existence of differences in ethnicity, race, and culture in various regions of Indonesia. As Indonesian citizens who uphold humanitarian values, it is advisable to apply the character of tolerance towards others within ourselves. Tolerance is a person's character, by showing respect and appreciation for fellow humans, even if they belong to different ethnicities and religions, without inciting hostility or conflict.

c. Respecting Differences Religion and Belief Indonesia has a variety of races, religions, and ethnicities. Thus, as fellow believers, we should respect each other and not harbor hatred. Respecting differences is a character trait.

d. Firm in Conviction Defending one's opinion and steadfastness can make someone have a strong mentality. Firmness is an attitude possessed by someone because they feel right about what they believe and maintain their honor.

Character Education

Character education as the overall relational dynamics between the individual and various aspects. Dimensions, both from within and outside of oneself, so that the individual can increasingly experience their freedom, allowing them to take greater responsibility for their own personal growth and development. Character education that has an individual dimension is closely related to value education and moral education. Meanwhile, character education related to the socio-structural dimension focuses more on how to create a social system conducive to individual growth. Here, there is a graduality in the power relations, ranging from authoritarian to democratic. In this context, we can place moral education within the framework of character education. Moral education is the foundation for character education. As we have seen in various cases, we observe that no matter how strong the oppressive structure encountered by humans, that structure cannot have coercive

power over an individual's moral decision. Even tyrannical rulers and the tyranny of the majority cannot obstruct an individual's moral decision. Morality primarily speaks about whether I, as a human being, am a good or bad person. Morality looks at how one human being should treat another. Morality is the understanding of values and norms that serve as a guide for individuals and communities so that the freedom and uniqueness of each individual are not violated, allowing them to increasingly appreciate their own dignity. In general, morality speaks about how we treat people, or other things well so that it becomes a way of acting, especially for individuals and communities.

Understanding of God

God is an eternal and supernatural being who created the heavens, the earth and all that is in them, and created the creatures that inhabit the earth. To explain the concept of God, namely: a. The understanding of God according to experts In the view of Sheikh (Kandito, 2022:69-70), God is the Being that encompasses both matter and the realm of the soul simultaneously, so the essence of God cannot be perceived by humans and other beings created by Him. The human senses can only be used to perceive things that have a material form, which are very limited in number. Thus, the essence of God, which also encompasses the realm of the soul and the realm of essence, cannot be perceived by the senses. The understanding of God will not be able to reveal the true essence of God. Based on the above explanation regarding the concept of God according to Syeikh Siti Jenar, it can be concluded that God cannot be fundamentally defined, as the understanding or language used by humans will never be able to reveal the essence and true nature of God itself. According to Nasr (in Hunafa, 2020:43-64), God is the Most Holy Being, so in order to approach Him, one must be in a state of purity. Therefore, the Sufis strive to purify themselves for their encounter with the Most Holy Being.

3. METHODE

In this research, the author uses a qualitative research method with a literature study approach. The author collected data from a number of literatures to be reviewed and analyzed, specifically related to Christian ethics in the formation of student character. Data is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis activity takes place continuously during the information gathering until completion. In this activity, the author organizes the information, interprets it, systematically arranges it into main points, and draws conclusions that answer the key questions.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Early Adulthood It is generally acknowledged that development continues even though a person reaches physical maturity in adolescence; the process of growth and development is ongoing even when an individual reaches the phase of social maturity in early adulthood. Transformations continue to be experienced in biological and motor functions, perception and contemplation, concepts and emotional life, social relationships, and community living. Physical transformations that result in a reduced life expectancy are called the aging process. This phase is a part of the entirety of the aging process. The process of aging is greatly influenced by factors of communal life and the individual's personal factors, namely self-regulation. Age increases, humans change, adults change towards old age. Adulthood is a period in which an individual has biologically reached the final stage of development and psychologically begins the process of maturation. Adulthood can be divided into several stages, namely: 1) The early adulthood stage is between the ages of 20 and 40. 2) The middle adulthood stage is between the ages of 41 and 60. The late adulthood stage is from the age of 61 and above. Each stage of a person's life inevitably experiences changes, problems, and challenges that differ from the previous stage. UNESCO defines adult education as the entire process of education organized in terms of content, levels, methods, both formal and non-formal. This education enables individuals considered adults by society to develop skills, techniques, or professionalism and results in changes in attitudes and behaviors from the perspective of holistic personal development. Another definition is expressed by Bryson (Morgan, Barton, et al, 1976), that adult education is all educational activities carried out by adults in daily life, which only use a portion of their time and energy to gain additional intellectual knowledge. Based on Erikson's theory, during the middle adulthood phase, a person develops into a productive or stagnant individual. Those who succeed in the psychosocial process at this stage will truly be capable of meaningful caregiving. By fulfilling the duties of a good parent, which means being meaningful to others, to objects, to works, and to ideas, it is a requirement to successfully complete the psychosocial process of the later adult stage, namely the stage of ego integrity or self-integrity with the opposite pole being despair. Biblical examples of responsible character are presented to teenagers and young men in Christian Religious Education. As an illustration, consider Joseph, who demonstrated loyalty and responsibility in facing difficulties, or David, the responsible leader of Israel. Teenagers and young adults might be inspired and motivated to apply

responsibility in their daily lives with these stories. The teaching methodology of Christian Religious Education aims to develop a sense of responsible self in teenagers and young adults. Through group discussions, for example, children learn to take responsibility for the tasks assigned to them and to respect the perspectives of others. Their sense of responsibility towards others and society is further nurtured by social programs and services. Ultimately, the development of responsible character in adolescents and young adults depends on various factors, including parental involvement, educational institutions, and their surrounding environment, in addition to Christian teachings. Effective cooperation among all stakeholders can encourage the resilient growth of adolescents and young adults, equipping them to become responsible members of society and positively impacting their environment. Characteristics of adult learning, as mentioned below:

a. Causing the exchange of opinions, demands, and values.

b. Allows for two-way communication.

c. Creating a fun and challenging learning atmosphere.

d. Prioritizing the role of students.

e. Adults will learn if their opinions are respected.

f. Adult learning is unique.

g. There needs to be mutual trust between the Teacher and the student.

Developing oneself has the following characteristics:

a. Have a positive view of himself.

b. Able to share his life with others.

c. Able to recognize one's own abilities.

d. Having a rich understanding of others.

e. Curriculum for Adult Learning

Early Adult Education Character

Character is the process of forming moral values and attitudes of individuals through formal and informal education. This involves the development of personality, morality, and positive attitudes that are important for a successful and meaningful life. Character education is an important part of human life and essentially, humans are naturally beings who learn from natural events and existing life phenomena to develop their lives, and character education is not only for children, teenagers, and adults, but for all humans. However, this writing focuses on character education for early adults. (Bintang et al. 2022) Early adulthood is the age group from 18-30 years old. At this time, an early adult experiences transitions in physical, intellectual, and social roles. The characteristics of early

adulthood include a period full of emotional tension, caused by fears and worries in facing various problems and potential failures that may come their way. This period is also when a person wants to be accepted in social and economic groups, as well as in making commitments. This period of tension is also due to the fact that it is still a transitional phase, so one cannot yet be 100% free from dependence on parents, both economically and in terms of problem-solving. early adulthood begins to have Ambitions, Dreams, hopes, desires, and during this period, an adult will also start to determine a life partner and think about a job. However, on the other hand, early adulthood plays a key role in shaping society. Early adults often face many challenges, such as determining the direction of their education and career, facing social pressures, and building interpersonal relationships. Therefore, character education in early adulthood becomes key in shaping a responsible generation. Character education in early adulthood plays an important role in shaping a generation that is responsible and possesses good moral integrity.

a. Basic foundation; Character education in early adulthood helps build a strong moral foundation from an early age, thus providing a solid base for their personal development in the future.

b. Formation of values and attitudes: This is a critical period when individuals begin to form their values and attitudes. Character education in early adulthood helps ensure that they adopt positive values and good attitudes.

c. Facing social challenges: Early adults often encounter complex social challenges.

Character education helps them develop social skills, empathy, and social responsibility so they can face those challenges well. Character education in early adulthood plays a very important role in shaping individuals to become people of integrity and contribute positively to society. Here are some aspects that can be further developed related to foundational basics, value and attitude formation, and facing social challenges: First, provide behavioral models. Young adults tend to learn through observation and imitation. Therefore, it is important to provide positive behavior models in their educational and social environments. Teachers, parents, and community leaders can serve as inspiring examples to reinforce positive values. Second, developing a curriculum that integrates character education can help unify moral values with everyday lesson materials. This approach helps students see the connection between academic learning and character development. Third, character education programs should focus on developing empathy and social skills. This involves teaching effective communication skills, problem-solving, and teamwork. Thus, individuals can build healthy relationships and understand the

perspectives of others. Fourth, character education in early adulthood should emphasize self-empowerment and personal responsibility. This involves the development of good decision-making skills, an understanding of the consequences of their actions, and responsibility towards themselves and society. Fifth, utilizing technology in character education can be an effective way to reach the early adult audience. Applications, educational games, and online resources can be used to support character education in an engaging and relevant way for the younger generation. Sixth, collaboration between educational institutions, communities, and parents is very important. Involving parents in the character education process and building partnerships with the local community can create an environment that supports holistic character development. Seventh, implementing continuous evaluation methods to measure individual character development. This can include the use of formative assessments, interviews, or behavioral records to track positive changes in behavior and values. By developing these aspects, character education in early adulthood can become a strong foundation for building individuals with moral integrity, positive values, and social skills needed to overcome various challenges in their lives. Factors Affecting Character Education in Early Adulthood Factors influencing character education according to Zubaedi are habits; habits are behaviors that are performed continuously and repeatedly until they become habits. Another factor is the environment, which encompasses everything that surrounds human life. (Innike 2018). The environment of an adult is:

a. Family; According to David & Freddy Sweet [2004], character education is a deliberate effort to help people understand, care, and act based on ethical values. Meanwhile, character education within the family is an effort made by parents to educate their children to have character based on ethical values. (Zainuri 1970) The family is the first place where individuals learn values and norms. A family that provides a good example and pays attention to character education will help young adults understand the meaning of responsibility. On the other hand, if the family lacks in providing moral or good character examples, it will become a habit that also affects the development of a young adult. In this case, the role of parents in the family is very important in making efforts to help someone understand character education.

b. Formal Education: Educational institutions, such as schools and colleges, play an important role in shaping early adult character. Curriculum materials that include moral and ethical values can help shape a responsible generation.

c. Social Environment: The social environment and friends have a significant impact on character development. Because a person's behavior can also be determined by environmental factors, young adults involved in positive social groups are more likely to develop good character. However, on the contrary, if someone is in a social environment that lacks ethical values, it will become a factor in their character development.

d. Social Media: In the digital era, social media plays an increasingly significant role in shaping worldviews and individual values. Character education should also include an understanding of responsible use of social media. A person's behavior is also determined by environmental factors, with the foundation of conditioning theory suggesting that character is determined by the environment. A person will become a characterful individual if they grow up in a characterful environment, which certainly requires effort from all parties, namely, family, school, and all components of society. (Awaru et al. 2012)

Character education provided to the group of young adults certainly has benefits for each individual adult. The intended benefit is that responsible young adults tend to make good decisions in their personal and professional lives. In this case, it is a theory developed by Albert Bandura that emphasizes the importance of observation and modeling in behavior formation. Character education in early adulthood can serve as a model for others, and they can observe and imitate the positive values they learn. Example: A young adult who possesses high values of integrity and work ethic can serve as a role model for younger colleagues, encouraging them to adopt similar behaviors. (SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY ALBERT BANDURA 2010). Then they can contribute positively to society and influence others with the positive values they uphold. According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, individuals go through stages of moral development. Early adulthood character education can accelerate their moral development, enabling them to make decisions based on higher moral principles. For example, an early adult who has developed a high level of moral understanding may be more inclined to engage in volunteer activities or help others in difficult situations.

5. CONCLUSION

Religious Education plays an important role in the character development of a person in early adulthood. At this stage, individuals are in the process of forming their identity and moral independence, which requires a foundation in spiritual values. Religious

Education contributes by teaching ethical, moral, and spiritual values derived from concepts such as love, justice, responsibility, and integrity. With a comprehensive approach, this education not only builds knowledge of faith but also instills habits of life that reflect Christian character. In early adulthood, this education supports individuals in facing various life challenges, such as decision-making, relationship building, and the management of personal and social responsibilities. Overall, Religious Education serves as a tool for the formation of strong and moral character, which ultimately contributes to individual well-being and harmony in society.

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