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# Character Education Values in Indonesian Proverbs

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# **ABSTRACT**

Indonesian proverbs contain positive cultural values which are part of the character education of the Indonesian people. Therefore, this study aims to explain the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs. This research method is descriptive qualitative. Data were collected from Indonesian proverb books. Data analysis was carried out by identifying and classifying the proverbs based on the educational values they contain. This study finds that Indonesian proverbs have a minimum of 13 character education values: religious, honesty, discipline, justice, hard king, humility, independence, love of knowledge, loyalty, courage, frugal living, and social care. These values are very important for the younger generation. Therefore, the use and preservation of Indonesian proverbs in learning or the world of Indonesian education are very important to continue.

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Character Education, Indonesian Proverb, Values.

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## 1. Introduction

Education is one way to build superior and competitive human character. The concept of education is defined as "the process of changing attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people to mature human beings through teaching and training efforts; process, method, the act of educating" (KBBI, 2005). Therefore, education is an effort to change the behavior of individuals or others through training and teaching, both formally and informally, in order to grow into intelligent and civilized human beings. Therefore, education is a learning practice that a person must carry out throughout his life. One of the traditional educational media that is still relevant today is proverbs (Mansyur, 2020).

Indonesian proverb is one type of oral literature that contains positive cultural values that reflect the speaker's world view. Mieder (2004) explains "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation." .. Along with that, proverbs are linguistic expressions that contain messages of the wisdom of life that are passed down from the older generation to the younger generation and are owned jointly by the community (Mansyur, 2016; 2018). On the other hand, proverbs have literal meaning and use figurative expressions that have metaphorical meaning (Knowles and Moon, 2006).

Linguists and cultural experts are aware of the close relationship between language and cultural values which are the local wisdom of the community. Through language, these cultural values manifest. Therefore, this study is interested in revealing positive cultural values in Indonesian proverbs in which there is national character education. Indonesia

Examples of Indonesian proverbs can be seen in the following data:

- a) Berguru kepalang ajar, bagai bunga kembang tak jadi. 'Learning is absurd like flowers don't happen.' (Seeking knowledge should be wholeheartedly and unmitigated to achieve good results.)
- b) Karena nila setitik, rusak susu sebelanga. 'Because the blue color (nila) is a little, one pot of milk is damaged (Because of a small mistake, taking away all the good that has been done.)

Linguistically, the above proverb is a short sentence containing a metaphorical meaning according to the speaker's cultural context. In addition, the above expression contains positive cultural values related to character education so that a person is diligent and diligent in learning and avoids making mistakes. Therefore, the study is interested in revealing positive cultural values, especially the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs.

Various experts in the world have carried out the study of proverbs. Loeb (1953) describes the classification of Kuanyama Ambo proverbs in Southwest Africa as follows: (1) legal proverb, (2) ethical proverb, (3) philosophical proverb, (4) religious proverb. Furthermore, Arewa and Dundes (1964) stated that the Yoruba proverb functions to train and teach children to build good relationships with their parents, siblings, extended family members.

Bergsma (1970) explains that proverbs function as a means of social control for various situations, namely: as a means of controlling activities without the use of violence, as a means to embarrass the interlocutor, as a means to get out of difficult situations without losing face, as a means of praise, and as a means of predicting the future. In addition, Gokhan (1992) explains that proverbs in the Turkish community serve to advise, gossip, criticize, illustrate, entertain, and self-reflect.

Hamzah and Hasan (2011) explain that the Malay proverb is a reflection of the relationship between language and thought, as well as the height of thinking and creativity of the Malay nation in creating proverbs that are sourced from the natural surroundings. Furthermore, Nopiah et al. (2017) examine the reflection of "Durian-Cucumber" dualism in Malay proverbs with an inquisitive semantic approach. This approach departs from a continuous curiosity to get answers to the question of the meaning of an expression. Their analysis concluded that the proverb based on the dualism of the object "durian-cucumber" shows an element of contradiction to the meaning conveyed. The difference in the physical structure of the two fruits causes the Malay community to reflect on the power struggle (strong-weak) for the "durian-cucumber" element in the proverb.

Arimi (2015) explains that Indonesian proverbs are phrases or sentences with precise meanings and figurative and literal meanings, convey wisdom, have collective cognition, have past values, and are inheritable. Furthermore, Hendrokumoro (2016) explains that Javanese proverbs contain moral values that crystallize Javanese people's thoughts.

Mansyur (2020a) examines the Wolio proverb, which contains human body elements with a cognitive linguistic approach. From the results of his study, he explained that "the mapping of the human body in Wolio proverbs contained images of positive, negative, and neutral meanings. The meaning of the human body had a specific meaning that indicated the cultural experience of an ethnic and showed the generality that indicated the spread of proverbs from one culture to another. This study shows the relativity of the meaning of proverbs, and the universal meaning of proverbs.

Mansyur (2020b) also examines the function of the Wolio proverb as an educational medium. This study indicates that proverbs are traditional educational media but are still relevant to be used today to build character education for the nation's young generation. Moreover, as an educational medium, proverbs have many unique features, namely, their language is interesting, contains metaphorical meanings, and comes from previous generations.

Different from previous studies, this study intends to reveal the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs that have not been well expressed. The results of this study are certainly expected to have a positive contribution to the world of Indonesian education, especially regarding data on character values in Indonesian proverbs. In addition, the results of this study can be the basis for the development of a study of Indonesian proverbs based on the values of character education.

Regarding character education, Mansyur (2020) explains that "character education values are values of character or positive personality that must be internalized in individuals or students to become civilized, creative, and intelligent human beings in building their nation. In other words, character education values are the ideal values that humans need to shape themselves into superior humans."

Ramli (2003) explains that character education has an essence and meaning similar to moral education. The goal is to shape children's personalities to become good human beings, citizens, and citizens. The purpose of character education is basically to encourage the birth of good children. The growth and development of good morals will encourage students to grow with their capacity and commitment to do the best things, do everything right, and have a purpose in life.

Raharjo (2010) emphasizes the importance of the moral dimension in character education. According to him, character education is an educational process that holistically connects the moral dimension with the social realm in the

lives of students as a foundation for the formation of a quality generation that can live independently and has the principle of a truth that can be accounted for.

18 values of character education that must be instilled in our young generation, namely: (1) religion, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creativity, (7) independent, (8) democratic, (9) curiosity, (10) national Spirit, (11) love for the motherland, (12) appreciating achievements, (13) friendly/communicative, (14) peaceful love, (15) loves to read, (16) environmental care, (17) social care, (18) responsibility (Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pusat Kurikulum, 2010).

Zuchdi in Rohali (2011) formulates 16 basic values that need to be developed in character education, namely: (1) obedient to worship, (2) honesty, (3) responsible, (4) disciplined, (5) having a work ethic, (6) independent, (7) synergistic, (8) critical, (9) creative and innovative, (10) visionary, (11) compassionate and caring, (12) sincere, (13) fair, (14) simple, (15) nationalism, (16) internationalism.

It is very important to emphasize that an in-depth study of Indonesian proverbs is needed from the description above. This study focuses on discussing the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs. This research is expected to preserve and provide a more colorful perspective for the repertoire of proverb studies and make a positive contribution to the development of character in Indonesia. The main question in this research is: What are the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs? From the explanation related to the values contained in the Indonesian proverb, an understanding of the model of understanding the values of character education was obtained. Therefore, this study reaffirms the importance of preserving proverbs as an educational medium for the younger generation in the 4.0 era.

# 2. Methodology

This study uses descriptive qualitative methods because the data are qualitative (Ahimsa-Putra, 2009; 2017; Mansyur, 2018). Therefore, the use of this method aims to describe qualitative data carefully, accurately, and according to the context (Sutopo, 1996; Mansyur 2018). This research was conducted from November to January in Baubau City, Southeast Sulawesi.

.The data collection model in this study is library research (Moleong, 1989; Cresswell, 2010; Mansyur, 2013; 2018). The library research model is a data collection technique that uses written sources. The source of proverb data was collected from a collection of Indonesian proverbs written by Wahyu (2007). The technique used is a reading and note-taking technique. Primary library data comes from Indonesian proverb books, while secondary library data is supporting data in strengthening the scientific arguments of this study.

The data analysis model of this research departs from the analysis of language and then culture by examining the content of cultural values in the expressions of Indonesian proverbs according to the context. The data that has been collected was analyzed in several stages, namely: (1) data identification, (2) data classification and description based on the character education values contained in the proverb, and (2) making general conclusions regarding this study.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Education is the best means to build superior human beings who are intelligent, characterized, creative, innovative, and competitive. Therefore, education does not only cover aspects of knowledge but must also include the values of character education (Putri, 2011; Mansyur, 2021). In addition, education is a process of internalizing positive cultural values into a person and society to make people and society civilized. The Indonesian proverb found the values of character education as follows.

## a. Religious Value

Religious values are very important values that individuals must possess as social beings. In the Indonesian Dictionary (2005), the word "religious" means religious in nature, relating to religious beliefs. From this understanding, it can be concluded that religious values mean values related to belief in a particular religion. Because it is related or comes from religious beliefs, people who do not adhere to a religion (atheist) have no religious values. In Indonesian proverbs, it is found that there are expressions that contain religious values which are very important for the formation of students' character. This value can be seen in the expression below.

c) *Ilmu tanpa agama buta*. 'Science without religion is blind.'

(Knowledge that is not accompanied by faith will be dangerous, cannot distinguish good and bad.)

The above expression teaches that our ancestors saw the importance of religion. Because of its importance, a knowledge that is not equipped with good religious knowledge is considered blind because it can be misused for bad purposes. Therefore, religious values are very important values taught to students to shape their character education. The above proverbs should be instilled in students' personalities so that they grow into religious intellectuals. Religious intellectuals are intellectuals who use their knowledge for the good of the surrounding community as a form of worship to their God.

## b. Honesty Value

The value of honesty is a character value that must be instilled in a student. In the Indonesian Dictionary (2005), honesty means sincerity, not lying or cheating in games, or a sincere heart. From this definition, it can be emphasized that the value of honesty is the value associated with the sincerity of someone who does not lie or cheat in doing something. The importance of the value of honesty in Indonesian proverbs is stated implicitly through the following expression.

d) Lain di bibir lain di hati.
'Another spoken on the lips, another in the heart.'
(What he said is not the same as what he did.)

The expression above conveys the meaning of the description of someone's dishonest behavior. An expression is a form of criticism for actions that are considered not good and can damage trust and brotherhood. Therefore, dishonest behavior should be avoided. The values of honesty should be instilled in students so that they grow into individuals who can always be trusted if given responsibility. The value of honesty can make individuals become successful human beings and are liked by many people.

# c. Courtesy Value

The value of politeness is a significant character value possessed by a student. In the Indonesian Dictionary (2005), politeness refers to a person's good behavior or speech. Therefore, the value of politeness can be interpreted as a value related to the behavior or speech of someone who is considered good by the norms agreed by the community. Individuals who practice the value of politeness will not hurt or insult others. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

e) Budi bahasa baik itu tak akan dilupakan selama-lamanya.

'Good manners will not be forgotten forever.'

(A person's kindness or polite behavior will always be remembered by the community.)

The expression above contains a message that the values of politeness are the values of kindness that the public will always remember. Therefore, individuals who practice it or behave politely will have many friends who are always happy with them. These values of decency must be instilled in students so that they grow into personalities who are liked by many people and do not have enemies.

## d. Discipline Value

Discipline values are values related to one's self-control to obey and obey various rules. In our socio-cultural life, the value of discipline is very broad in meaning, discipline in getting up in the morning, in praying, working, or discipline in eating and drinking. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

f) Bagai itik pulang petang.

"Like a duck coming home in the evening."

(Doing a job but not on time.)

The expression above conveys a critical message about someone who is not disciplined for not doing his job on time. This expression implicitly teaches that individuals are always disciplined in doing something so that they can grow into successful people in achieving their dreams. Without discipline, the work that a person does will certainly not succeed. Therefore, it is appropriate for the value of discipline to be taught to children and the younger generation along

with other character values. This value must be embedded in our young generation so that they grow into successful individuals, both in building their careers and in building their nation.

#### e. Value of Justice

The value of justice is a very important character value owned by individuals or leaders to create a harmonious socio-cultural life. Without the value of justice in socio-cultural life, the environment will be chaotic, fights, fights, murders, and wars will occur. Therefore, this value of justice is a character value that needs to be instilled in our children and young generation. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

g) Tali jangan putus, pengait tinggal di atas.

'Do not break the rope, the hook stays on top.

(In deciding cases, it should be fair)

The expression above conveys the message that justice is always upheld in solving a problem. Without justice, problems can never be adequately solved. Therefore, justice should be the basis for leaders in deciding cases create social justice and social harmony. This value should always be preserved for the younger generation, either through informal or formal education.

## f. Hard Work Value

The value of hard work is a value related to enthusiasm for work, as is the value of perseverance and craftsmanship. This value in the Indonesian proverb refers more to the enthusiasm and commitment of a person in completing his work. People who have the spirit of hard work will focus on the work he does. The value of this character in the Indonesian proverb can be seen in the expression below.

h) Sehari selembar benang, lama-lama sehelai kain.

'A day a piece of thread, long a piece of cloth.'

(A job done with confidence and patience will pay off.)

The expression above conveys the message that one should be confident and patient that his work will be successful in work. The spirit of hard work is the spirit of work that is based on strong belief and patience. With this character, individuals are expected to be successful in their work wherever they work. This value must be instilled in our children and young generation to become a generation that is more successful than the previous generation, both in working and building their nation.

The value of hard work is closely related to perseverance and craftsmanship. The value of perseverance and craftsmanship is needed in various fields of work. This value is related to the individual's attitude to complete the work he does or is given to him and always works hard even without being ordered by his superiors. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

i) Ala bisa karena biasa.

'Will be able to because of habit.'

(Something difficult at first when you get used to doing it will become easy.)

The expression above conveys the message that if a person is diligent and diligent in doing something, he can do any work. We can do something because we try to learn to know how to do it. At first, we can't stand and walk but we learn and get used to walking and standing. We can't swim but with swimming practice, we finally can, likewise, we can drive a car because we want to learn, from not being able to be able to. Therefore, successful individuals are individuals who are diligent and diligent in work, study hard, and always strive to improve their quality.

# g. Value of Humility

The value of humility is one of the very important character values possessed by individuals to create social harmony. This value is related to the behavior of individuals who are not arrogant or arrogant towards others. People who have a humble attitude will always be wise in speaking or in behavior. The value of humility in the Indonesian proverb can be seen in the expression below.

i) Bagaikan buah padi, makin berisi makin rendah.

'Like a rice fruit, the more it contains the lower it is.'

(Knowledgeable people should be more humble.)

The expression above teaches about the value of the character to always be humble even though someone has high knowledge. The value of this character if practiced can make a person liked by many people. People who have high knowledge but are humble will always get praise in the social life of the Indonesian people. Therefore, this character value should be instilled in children or the younger generation so that they become individuals whom many people socially like.

# h. Value of Independence

The value of independence is a character value related to the attitude or behavior of individuals who dare to overcome difficulties or life challenges that come their way. This value emphasizes that a person is not too dependent on others in overcoming the life problems he faces. In the Indonesian proverb, the value of this character can be seen in the expression below:

k) Kalau pandai meniti buih, selamat badan ke seberang.
'If you are good at climbing the foam, good luck to the other side.'
(If you dare to face difficulties, you will succeed in achieving your goals.)

The expression above conveys a message that successful people dare to overcome the problems they face without being too dependent on their siblings or parents. Individuals who have the value of independence will grow into individuals who are accustomed and strong in dealing with all problems. If we look at the news in print media or national television, we must have seen many young people who are stressed and commit suicide because they are not strong enough to overcome the problems they face. Therefore, the value of independence is a character value that is also very important for our young generation so that they are not easily stressed and commit suicide.

## i. Value of Love of Science

In the Indonesian proverb there is the value of love of knowledge. The value of love of science is a value that invites individuals to realize, master, and practice how important it is to learn science. This character value is very important to be taught to children and the younger generation to always learn to improve their knowledge. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the following expression.

l) – Tuntutlah Ilmu dari ayunan sampai ke liang lahat.

'Seek knowledge from the swing to the grave.'

(During life do not stop learning.)

The expression above conveys the message that we should always learn while we are still alive on this earth. This shows that science is something important that we must have when living in the world. Without the knowledge that we have, we fill our lives without anything meaningful. In another expression, it is said as follows.

m) Ilmu lebih berharga daripada harta.

'Knowledge is more valuable than wealth.'

(Knowledge will never run out, while wealth will run out.)

The expression above contains a message that the position of knowledge is very high or valuable compared to wealth. With the knowledge that we have, we can search for and increase the number of our assets, but assets that are managed without knowledge will run out. Therefore, the teaching to always love science should always be instilled in our children and young generation.

In the Indonesian proverbs, there is also the value of liking to learn. This value is related to the value of love of knowledge. In seeking knowledge, individuals should realize that learning science is difficult but if it is practiced it will become easy as stated in the expression below.

n) Belakang parang sekalipun, jika diasah tajam juga.

Even the back of the big knife, if sharpened it will be sharp too.

(Even very stupid people, if they study hard, they will be smart.)

The expression above conveys the message that in studying science, we must be diligent. The key to learning is repetition. Therefore, even people who are not smart if they are diligent in repeating the knowledge given will become smart. This expression should be instilled in our generation so as not to give up easily in learning, and be diligent in studying.

# j. Loyalty Value

The value of loyalty is a value that teaches individuals to always be loyal to their brothers, their friends, and their nation. The value of loyalty is an important value to be taught because this value is the basis of friendship and harmonious cooperation between individuals with one another in building the civilization of this nation. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

Terlentang sama makan abu, tertelungkup sama makan tanah.
 'Lie down and eat ashes, face down and eat dirt.'
 (Faithful friendship accompanies in joy and sorrow.)

The expression above conveys the message that friendship requires loyalty both in happy and in difficult circumstances. This shows that loyalty is not an easy matter but requires a strong commitment from the individual. Faithful friends are those who always accompany their friends in overcoming various life problems well. With a strong friendship, it is hoped that each individual can go through the various life problems they face easily because of the help of others. In another expression, it is also said.

p) Terapung sama hanyut, terendam sama basah. 'Floating and drifting, submerged and wet.' (Live and die, share the same fate.)

The expression above again emphasizes that loyalty must be held firmly even though life is at stake. Death is not an obstacle in realizing loyalty. A loyal person should be ready to live as long as he can with his friend as long as it's in good.

## k. Courage Value

The value of courage is a value related to the attitudes and behavior of individuals who are ready to face all the problems of life that come to them. A brave person will never be afraid to take action if it feels right to him. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

q) Kalau takut kena getah, jangan makan Nangka.

'If you are afraid of getting sap, don't eat jackfruit.'

(If you are afraid of taking risks, don't do anything.)

The expression above contains a message that courage is our attitude and action in facing risks. A brave person will never be afraid to face the risks that come because he realizes that everything must have a risk. In other words, it is stated as follows.

r) Besar kapal, besar gelombang.'Big ship, big wave.'(The higher the position, the higher the risk.)

The expression above explains that courage in carrying out the position is very necessary. The higher the position or the social position of a person, the higher the problems he faces. Therefore, a knowledgeable person needs courage so that he can apply his knowledge in social life. The nature of fear will only limit and hinder human performance, but on the contrary, the nature of courage will give birth to many social and cultural changes in society.

## I. Value of Saving Life

The value of frugal living is a value related to human actions to manage the resources they have well so that they can be useful for their lives. The value of saving a life can be, saving the economy, saving time. However, in the Indonesian proverb, frugal life refers more to managing financial problems owned by individuals. In Indonesian proverbs, the value of these characters can be seen in the following expressions.

s) Hemat pangkal kaya, rajin pangkal pandai. 'Saving is the base of being rich, diligent is the base of being smart.'

(People who live frugally will become rich, people who study will become smart.)

The phrase above conveys an explicit message that living frugally is a way to become rich. Therefore, someone who wants to be rich or has sufficient wealth can save by reducing unnecessary expenses. This shows that frugal people are people who are very careful in managing their daily finances. In another expression, it is said that,

t) Besar pasak daripada tiang.'Large pegs from poles.'(Large withdrawal from income.)

The above expression implicitly conveys the message that someone who has more expenses than his income is not good. Actions that are not frugal can lead to poverty, suffering in life, and various other life problems. Therefore, anyone who wants to live happily should be able to live frugally in managing his life's finances.

## m. The Value of Social Concern

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The value of social care is a very important character value in building social harmony. This value is related to how each individual helps the other. The life of the world continues to spin, various life problems come and go. Those who are ready will easily solve the problem, but those who are not ready will find it difficult to face and solve the problem. Therefore, the value of social care is needed to help his brother who is being overwritten by calamity. In the Indonesian proverb, this value can be seen in the expression below.

u) Hidup sandar menyandar, umpama air dengan tebing.
 'Life leans back, like water with a cliff.'
 (Life must help each other.)

The above expression emphasizes that in life, humans should help each other create a harmonious social life. This character value is very much needed to maintain brotherhood and unity. If this value begins to disappear, it will cause the emergence of various other social problems, for example, the high theft. Therefore, this value should be instilled well in our children and the younger generation.

The value of social care is a form of affection. Compassion can be interpreted as a value that teaches someone to have compassion for others as fellow human beings. However, the nature of compassion can also be expanded to mean fellow humans and other divine beings, on earth, such as animals, etc. In the Indonesian proverb, the teaching of compassion can be seen in the expression below.

V) Hancur badan di kandung tanah, budi baik terkenang jua.
 'Destroyed the body in the soil, kindness is also remembered.'
 (Good morals will be remembered even after people have died.)

The expression above conveys the meaning that others will always remember the act of affection. affection is a form of social care that many people like. People who have it will have many friends and companions. This value should be owned by a student so that he grows into a generous person or individual who always does social piety

The description above reveals the 13 values of character education in Indonesian proverbs. The results of this study are certainly an affirmation of previous studies that reveal positive cultural values in proverbs (Hamzah and Hasa, 2011; Arimi, 2015; Hendrokumoro, 2016; Sarman, 2017; Mansyur, 2018, 2020a; 2020b). These character values are ideal values that must be instilled in students. The planting of these character values should be carried out in a planned and sustainable manner with the following stages: 1) educators must make clear plans regarding the values of character education that will be included in the lesson plan, 2) educators apply these values in learning, both explain explicitly and implicitly in student learning activities, and educators must be role models of these character education values, and 3) educators must monitor and evaluate the extent to which their students apply these values (Rabiah, 2013, Shadiq, 2014; Mansyur, 2021).

## 4. Conclusion

The values of character education are very important values possessed by humans to grow into individuals who are beneficial to themselves, others, their environment, and their nation. The results of this study reveal that the values of character education in Indonesian proverbs consist of 13 values, namely: religious values, honesty, decency, discipline, justice, hard work, humility, independence, love of knowledge, loyalty, courage, frugal living, and social care. These character values are very important to be taught to students to shape their character in the future so that they grow into intelligent and noble human beings and can compete globally. The results of this study indicate that the use of proverbs in our formal education world remains relevant to use because the values in proverbs teach many things. In addition, the results of this study should encourage us to realize that the love movement for Indonesian proverbs needs to be re-invigorated through a series of well-designed activities so that students feel proud and excited to learn Indonesian. Finally, we realize that this study still has many limitations because it only focuses on revealing character values in Indonesian proverbs in general. We hope that this study can be continued by using a different approach to understanding Indonesian proverbs and their rich values.

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