


Profile of Early Childhood Religious Feeling in Islam-Based Schools

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Recieved : 05-07-2024 Revised : 28-08-2024 Accepted : 29-08-2024</p> <p>Keyword: Early Childhood; Islamic-Based School; Religious Feeling.</p>	<p>This study aims to understanding the origins of religious feelings in early childhood, specifically in children aged 5-6 years who attend Islamic-based schools. This research method is qualitative descriptive research. The number of respondents is 33 children from 3 different schools, namely two Integrated Islamic Schools (IT) and one RA (Raudatul Athfal). Data collection was carried out through image-based interviews. (worship practices and emotional expressions). The research results show that most children engage in religious activities because they believe that after worshipping, they will receive goodness. (rewards). What children like the most is praying and reading the Quran. The most commonly chosen emotional expression is being very happy and joyful while engaging in their favorite worship activities.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a period where development and growth require supervision from parents, one of which is in the moral and religious aspects. Morals and religion are a very important foundation for child development, therefore instilling morals and religion is needed from an early age. The right stimulus greatly influences children's behavior to teach right and wrong, good and bad, and right in carrying out religious teachings. Religion and morals are closely related to a person's life, because they determine the relationship between humans and their God (Anwar & Cholimah, 2023). Therefore, introducing God to early childhood is considered very important. The ideal age for instilling religious and moral values in children starts from birth to the age of six years, this is in line with the definition of Early Childhood Education (PAUD), namely based on (Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, n.d.)), PAUD is an effort to foster children starting from birth to the age of 6 years which is carried out through providing educational

stimuli or stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are better prepared to enter further education. Religious and moral values if not instilled in children from an early age will cause obstacles to their development in life (Ardiansari & Dimiyati, 2021), so it can be concluded that the process of stimulation in the moral and religious aspects is very necessary in forming children who are in accordance with the norms prevailing in society. The formation of morals and religion is most importantly formed from the family.

According to data on cases of violence in early childhood recorded by the Indonesian Children's Protection Commission as of August 2023 there were 2,355 cases involving underage children. There are 87 cases of child victims, 27 cases of children victims of educational facilities, 24 cases of the child victim of education policy, 236 cases of physical and psychological violence, 487 cases of sexual violence, and there are other cases that are not brought to the KPAI. The party stated that the high rate of violence in the educational environment is due to learning loss as the impact of the covid-19 pandemic and the influence of online games as well as social media that present images full of violence and unfriendly in early childhood. This is what causes the character, morals, morality and politeness of a child to decline.

Today, the education world in Indonesia is experiencing a decline in religiosity. Therefore, the cultivation of religious character must continue to be broadcast in the educational world both in the family, school and community environment, this is in line with Shabrina's view, dkk (2020) that the formation of a person's personality should be done from an early age in various ways and stimulation in order to grow character in a child. According to Ulil Amri Syarif, religious can also be called by attitudes and behavior that are obedient to the teachings of religion, tolerance to the implementation of other religions, also establish a good relationship with other believers (living rukun). A person who has a religious value in his life is a proof of the existence of the One God. This religious values are very popular in Indonesia, which is proved in the first sentence of the Pancasila is the Divinity of the Only One. In the sentence one pancasila contains the meaning of character growth in society, in this case the cultivation of religious character on the pattern of life and education applied both in the home, school and community environment.

The role of parents in forming children's morals and religion is very important, if parents understand religion, obey religious commands, are able to be good role models (uswatun hasanah) and accustom their children to religion and have noble morals, of course it will form children who have a strong foundation of faith and obedience to God. Likewise, if there are no examples and stimulation of their religion, then there is nothing that can be imitated by their children (Ananda, 2017). According to Ernes Harms, religious development in children goes through several levels. Early childhood is at the fairy tale stage. At this stage, the concept of knowing God uses more fantasy and emotion. Since birth, children have brought religious nature, this nature will only function when they receive guidance and training after reaching maturity (Jalaluddin, 2016) To form a child's religious development, comprehensive, contextual investigation and study are needed, as well as phenomenological understanding. Religious development in children can be practiced when children are

studying, playing and also daily practices, especially in worship, daily activities, no matter how simple, can be used as material for religious development that can be exemplified to children.

The instillation of religious values, concerning the concept of divinity, worship, moral values, which takes place from an early age can form a child's religiosity that is strongly embedded and has a lifelong influence. This can happen because at that age the child does not yet have basic concepts that can be used to reject or agree with basic concepts that can enter him. So the religious values that are accustomed to will become the color that forms the child's self-concept, where the religious values that color the child's soul will form into a conscience where in adolescence it will become the foundation for assessing and filtering the values that enter him. Social conditions accelerated by science and technology and information that is so fast and easy to obtain, can be a major change in all aspects of life. A strong spiritual/religious foundation is absolutely necessary to anticipate the tendency of plagiarism (imitating) bad behavior (Khadijah, 2016). Over time, society increasingly understands the importance of instilling religiousness in early childhood. Religious Feeling in early childhood begins early in life with guidance for daily life. Children will gain experience through sight, hearing and feeling.

In the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education in the Content Standards Concerning the Level of Achievement of Children's Education, it is stated that children aged 5-6 years, in the development of their religious moral values, can already carry out worship, namely behaving honestly, helpfully, politely, respectfully, sportively, and so on. Good habits that are applied from an early age will become habits when they are adults, children will do behavior that children are used to seeing and doing usually. This habit can be in the form of reading prayers before and after eating, before and after studying, and so on.

This research has a difference to previous research. Research by Nisa (2022) in developing religious character in children is carried out with routine implementation of religious activities. Tri Utami (2023) researched the impressions of educational games on the game of snake stairs in developing spiritual intelligence in children aged 5-6 years. In his research there was an increase in values between pre-cycle, first cycle and second cycle. Purwaningsih (2022) succeeded in researching the religious intelligence of children needed a conflict between parenting of parents, school and also society. Based on previous research, no one has yet studied religious feelings in children or religious feeling especially in 5-6 year-olds in Islamic-based schools.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Meaning of Religious Feelings

Religiosity in the Islamic perspective is the implementation of the values of monotheism that stem from the belief in the oneness of Allah SWT (Fatmawati et al., 2023). Religious feelings are a dimension of a person's experience with religious spiritual activities.

Feeling close to God, afraid of making mistakes, and feeling watched. Religious feeling is a religious experience related to a person's feelings, perceptions, and religious sensations. In theology, philosophy, and other disciplines, the concept of "religious feeling" has long been associated with individual beliefs and subjective religious experiences.

According to Stark & Glock, there are five dimensions of religiosity: the dimension of belief, the dimension of practice, the dimension of experience, the dimension of application, and the dimension of knowledge (Fatmawati et al., 2023). In the dimension of religious feeling, it relates to the individual's experience in savoring the joy of practicing the teachings of their faith. This feeling involves religious values, such as the fear of committing sins and the feeling of closeness to God.

Early Childhood Religious Feelings

Early childhood is someone aged between 0-6 Years. This age is a childhood. Experts refer to this age as the golden age in which children quickly absorb the things around them. At this time the child is also experiencing an increase in the development of intelligence up to 50%. ((Sulastri, 2021)). For this reason, proper stimulation in early childhood is essential. Early childhood growth and development encompasses five aspects: religious and moral, physical, cognitive, linguistic and social. In other words, early childhood should be given good stimuli to match the developmental stages of the child's age.

Religion and spirituality are the most important foundations that need to be instilled in children from an early age to shape their future personalities. The image of God is formed as quickly as possible so that the relationship can be properly lined. (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005). According to Ernes Hermer, early childhood religious development is on the fairy tale stage. (Fitri & Sugiyono Pranoto, 2023). Children understand God through imagination and emotion. The cultivation of religious feelings in childhood is done through the upbringing of children's personalities. Religious feelings are the feelings of a person when carrying out religious activities. One of the important stages in a child aged 5-6 years is religious development. One of the goals of early childhood education institutions is to develop moral and religious values. Because it becomes the foundation of one's behavior in society and to understand the norms of life. Therefore, the development of early childhood religious feelings is very important to be observed as early as possible.

Religious Feeling in an Islamic-Based School

The cultivation of religious feeling cannot be separated from the support in the form of an organized environment as expected. In addition to internal factors from the child, external factors such as the family environment, school to the community environment. How environmental conditions and the provision of stimulus to children from an early age will determine the child's attitude in the future. Children at the age of 0-6 years are golden age and at that age children need various stimuli in the process of growth and development.

The selection of Islamic-based schools can be a reference for parents so that children not only get cognitive lessons but also get spiritual lessons. Presented Islamic-based schools

certainly make students familiar with religious activities and the hope of Islamic-based schools is to produce pious children. Islamic-based schools use a curriculum that is harmonized between the school's religious curriculum and the independent curriculum, and complementary programs. Basically, Islamic-based education has the concept of education with Islamic values sourced from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith (Muhjab & Sunawan, 2021). Then children are also accustomed to always pray before and after carrying out activities. Based on the results of the research, Islamic-based schools have a positive impact on children's religious development, the concept of Islamic education is contained in their moral behavior and character.

METHOD

The research method used is qualitative research. Data collection is influenced more by the facts found in the field than by theory. This research uses data collection methods such as observation, interviews with 33 respondents, documentation, and triangulation. The data analysis technique using the Miles and Huberman model involves data reduction, data display (data presentation), and conclusion drawing (Sazali, 2020)

This study uses observation, interviews, and documentation methods. Data collection was carried out through observations and interviews with participants, namely children aged 5-6 years at three institutions: TK IT Bunayya Semarang, TK IT Co-Fidz Indramayu, and RA Al-Khairiyah Indramayu. This research directly involves children to obtain accurate information; the involvement of children's aspirations is an important part of educational research that promotes effective learning and child well-being, making it appropriate for children to be the primary source of data in this study. Documentation techniques are also used in this research, and video interviews with each child can serve as a medium for data collection. The sample size in this study is 33 children, consisting of 14 children aged 5 years and 19 children aged 6 years from TK IT Bunayya Semarang, TK IT Co-Fidz Indramayu, and RA Al-Khairiyah Indramayu.

Table 1. Data Responden

Child Age Data	Male	Female	Total
Age 5th	5	9	14
Age 6th	7	12	19
Total	12	21	33

Documents resulting from data collection such as child identity (code name), transcriptions of each interview, recordings, notes are stored in a closed folder, which can only be accessed by the author to ensure its security. The observation process carried out by the researcher is the learning agenda when learning both inside and outside school such as daily activities, annual semesters and Islamic holy days. Observation activities are in line with the observation sheet that the researcher has designed. This study conducted face-to-face interviews with children individually. One by one the children were called to answer the same question. All children will answer the following open questions, "What worship practice do you like the most?".

The interview was conducted in a structured manner where previously the researcher made a draft of questions to the children, the researcher also asked questions that were freer and more open but still related to the prepared question topics. The data taken in the form of children's religious practice experiences using an instrument of children's worship illustration images. There are four images of children practicing their religious practices, namely children praying, children praying, children sharing, and children reciting the Al-Qur'an. Children were asked to indicate which image they liked the most and were asked to tell their experiences. Then the researcher prepared a face scale instrument, this scale is used to measure children's expressions of perception about the emotions they feel. The scale in question contains six simple expression images positioned parallel to a horizontal line, which depict various mouth expressions, from very upturned (indicating extraordinary happiness) to very downturned (indicating unhappiness).

Figure 1. Face Scale Modification



The following is a table of data collection instruments for this research,

Table 2. Data Collection Instrument

No	Data	Data Source	Data Collection
1	<p>Religious Feeling</p> <p>Dimensions of obedience according to Glock and Stark in (Ahsanul Khaq, 2019)</p> <p>Religious Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believing in the existence of God through His creation • Happiness in worship • Gratitude for the presence of God in the experience of worship • Carrying out Worship <p>Religious and Moral Development Standards</p> <p>Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 137 of 2014, Yuliana (2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing the religion they believe in. • Performing religious rituals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Children aged 5-6 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Interview • Documentation

- Behaving honestly, helpfully, politely, respectfully, sportingly, and so on.
- Maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness.
- Knowing religious holidays.
- Respecting (tolerant) the religion of others

2 **Islamic Based Schools**

The meaning of the Islamic education curriculum according to Jalaudin and Usman Said (Suhada et al., 2017), (Rahman & Wahyuningtyas, 2023)

- a learning plan in learning that contains worldly, physical, and mental summaries.
- learning experiences in the form of real activities in the learning process towards maturity according to Islamic teachings.

- Teacher
- Principal
- Observation
- Documentation

The data analysis technique used is guided by the Milles & Huberman analysis model which is simplified to make it easier to read and understand. According to Miles and Huberman the analysis consists of three flows that are carried out simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation and then drawing conclusions.

FINDINGS

The initial stage of analysis was carried out by classifying the references to worship and the most preferred worship activities, as well as the emotional expressions shown by children on a facial scale, and worship presented in a frequency table.

1. **Worship Preferences of Children Aged 5-6 Years**

Based on interviews with respondents regarding the most preferred worship activities, the results of the respondents are that children have various different worship activities, as seen in the table:

Table 3. Children's Worship Activities While at School

Preferensi Ibadah	Age 5th		Age 6th	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Worship because Allah loves you	1	3	1	1

Worship to enter heaven	-	-	1	-
Worship because of reward	1	-	-	7
Worship because of sustenance	-	1	1	-
Worship to be smart/pious	-	2	-	1
Worship to be diligent	1	1	1	-
Worship to become a hafidz of the Quran	-	1	-	1
Without reason	-	1	-	1
Worship because of friends	1	-	-	1
No answer	-	1	2	1
Total	4	10	6	13

Most respondents tend to perform worship at school because they want to get rewards and the second biggest reason respondents perform worship is to be loved by Allah SWT. As mentioned in the following interview, “We will get a reward, so we can go to heaven. In heaven, we will get anything from Allah.” (A, female, 6 years old). “Because Allah commands us.” (R, male, 5 years old).

Worship practices that are generally carried out by early childhood both at school and at home are prayer, reciting the Qur’an, sharing/ alms and fasting during the month of Ramadan. Each school implements different worship, both schools in this study emphasize memorizing the Qur’an, in other schools do not have worship targets in their curriculum.

Respondents have certain worship based on what worship they like with various reasons and some answer without reason. Here are the preferences of worship practices according to respondents' preferences.

Table 4. Children's Favorite Worship Activities

Worship Activities	Age 5th		Age 6th	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Reciting	3	5	1	7
Praying	1	2	3	5
Learning	-	1	1	-
Almsgiving/ Sharing	1	1	2	-
Total	5	9	7	12

The interview results showed that reciting the Al-Qur’an and praying were the most preferred worships by respondents. These two worships are very close to daily practices, prayer is a mandatory practice for a Muslim. Reciting the Al-Qur’an and praying are practices that respondents do every day. When at school, children are required to perform

congregational prayers with their classmates. The habit of praying is usually carried out in class before the main activities take place which are carried out 5 days a week (Monday-Thursday sunnah dhuha prayers, Friday practice obligatory prayers). The following are statements made by respondents, "I like reciting the Quran, reciting the Quran is fun, I like reciting the Quran because it is fun, Z likes reciting the Quran because Allah loves me. (It is) so fun that I don't want to play with my cellphone." (Z, male, 5 years old). "I like praying, so I get rewards, because praying is obligatory." (S, male, 5 years old).

Respondents seemed to like religious activities at school, and a Muslim's sense of responsibility to carry out obligatory prayers had begun to emerge. This is in accordance with the following concept of monotheistic education for early childhood (Liriwati & Armizi, 2021); 1) Make children love Allah SWT more, 2) There is nothing to fear except Allah SWT, 3) Strengthen their worship of Allah SWT, 4) Guide children to always be grateful for all the blessings that Allah SWT has given.

Sharing activities at school are practiced through Friday alms programs and dawn alms at home. There is one respondent who really likes the practice of sharing, when asked the reason why he likes to share "because I love my friends" (B, Male, 5 Years). Based on data from parents and class teachers, the respondent is indeed a child who likes to share, when the sharing program every Friday B always takes the initiative to share snacks with his friends in class.

Each school has its own method in developing children's religious practices, as do parents at home. There is one respondent who lives with his parents but with his grandmother, in the implementation of his worship is quite monitored and very emphasized in the practice of prayer and also reciting the Qur'an. Although the respondent only lives with his grandmother, the practice of worship when at school and at home can still be followed well. However, there are also respondents who live at home with their parents but the practice of worship when at school is less able to follow, for example, memorization targets, based on data from the respondent's class teacher when at home it is not emphasized enough to murajaah (repeat memorization) so that when at school he often lags behind his other friends. However, the respondent still expressed that he really liked the activity of worshipping with the Qur'an.

2. Children's Emotional Expressions During Worship

The following is a table of results obtained regarding children's emotional expressions during worship.

Table 5. Emotional Expression

Emotional Expression	Age 5th		Age 6th	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very Happy	4	5	6	8
Happy	-	3	1	4
No Expression/Neutral	1	1	-	-
Quite Sad	-	-	-	-
Sad	-	-	-	-

Very Sad	-	-	-	-
Total	5	9	7	12

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the respondents showed positive emotional expressions, namely very happy and pleased. A person will feel positive emotions when carrying out religious practices (including worship). This emotional expression was chosen by the respondents without coercion from various parties. When asked the reason, the respondents answered "It's nice, happy, Because I want to be a hafidz of the Quran" (N, Female, 5 Years) "I like praying, Because being diligent, being diligent is from Allah, if you are diligent you will be given heaven" (R, Male, 6 Years).

Children aged 5-6 years already understand the meaning of worship when they are often accustomed to it. Children cannot worship like adults, but children begin to understand their identity as Muslims who must carry out their duties, namely worshiping Allah. Although at the beginning the child's intention to worship varies (see table 3), the more mature the child will understand the meaning of worship as a servant's devotion to the Creator (God).

DISCUSSION

Religious feeling is a character that must be developed in every human being to foster behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings based on the Al-Quran and Hadith. The results of the study showed that the religious feeling profile of children aged 5-6 years was formed due to religious habits both at school and at home. Habituation is a method of forming a behavior or character that is carried out repeatedly every day (Nurani & Leonita, 2019). The goal is for children to acquire new attitudes and habits that are more appropriate and positive (Ahsanulhaq, 2019). The worship preferences of children aged 5-6 years show that children have their own reasons for doing an activity (see Table 3). The positive response from children provides an explanation that the religious feeling of children aged 5-6 years who get the habit of worship already represents a sense of responsibility as a servant who has obligations. Children want to do worship because they will get rewards and be loved by Allah, children can already reason why there are obligations, why they have to do these activities and why they do these worship activities. Kohlberg (1977) said that the reasoning (thinking) process experienced by a person will influence his behavior.

Children's religious feeling preferences are influenced by cooperation between teachers and parents in instilling habits, when at school children get the habit of worshiping but if it is not harmonized at home then the habit at school will be less in line with what is expected. Based on the results of research conducted by Ihat Hatimah (2016) in the journal of education, cooperation between teachers and parents has a very good impact on children. The impact is that it can provide a positive influence on school performance, attitudes and behavior of children, increase children's attendance rates, quality of time for children and parents, reduce discipline problems in children.

It was further stated that the feelings of children aged 5-6 years when analyzed simultaneously related to religious feelings, which were reported by children mostly in the

category of very happy and happy. At this stage, religious feelings in children are still in the learning stage, this study shows how children know God and how religious feelings children feel when they are doing religious activities while at school with teachers and when at home with parents. Children know daily religious activities such as praying, reciting the Al-Qur'an, writing the mushaf, fasting, and sharing (*shadaqah/infag*). Children enjoy religious activities because there is no pressure from parents and teachers, but rather to provide direction and examples. Teachers are the adults closest to children when at school, and parents when at home. Therefore (teachers and parents) must display actions and listen to good words to children (Khairini, 2017).

In this study, based on children's favorite worship preferences, it shows that reciting the Al-Qur'an and praying are the most preferred by most children aged 5-6 years. This is because reciting the Al-Qur'an and praying are activities that are very close to children, five days a week children pray before starting core activities, namely Monday-Thursday practicing the Dhuha prayer and Friday practicing obligatory prayers (5 daily prayers). In a study on the implementation of commendable morals through the habit of praying the Dhuha prayer in children aged 5-6 years, it was explained that the habit of praying the Dhuha prayer together at the An-Nuur Islamic Kindergarten was quite effective and influential in forming commendable morals (Nurani & Leonita, 2019). At school, reciting the Al-Qur'an is packaged with various learning methods such as games, cards, stickers, and giving rewards. As explained in the following interview transcript with the respondent, "I want to recite the Al-Qur'an with the teacher, because if I'm smart I get a star, then it's shuffled" (H, Female, 6 Years). Therefore, creative learning can be a means of getting children used to good worship activities.

In fostering children's religious feelings, patience and perseverance are needed from adults. Religious feelings in children aged 5-6 years have emerged because of feelings of joy and enjoyment of worship activities such as prayer and reciting the Qur'an, this is also supported by the belief that when doing it he will get a reward (Rahayu et al., 2023). Because children are still in the learning stage, this also adjusts the child's mood. When the child feels good, he feels happy doing the activity and vice versa, this is in line with research by Muhjab & Sunawan (2021), (Wahidin, 2017), (Abintara & Bagus, 2015), (Almutia, 2019) regarding the influence of spirituality on happiness in Islamic-based schools which shows that there is a positive influence between spirituality and happiness.

Regarding the expression of children's emotions in this study, it shows that children carry out habitual activities at school with positive feelings (see table 5). Rahayu & Pranoto's (2023) research examines how the application of independent learning and independent play in fostering a sense of religion in children shows that in fostering religious feelings in early childhood, it can be seen from the feelings and practices of children's worship. Religious feelings display children's emotional expressions when carrying out worship activities based on their preferences. As explained in the article written by (Tatala & Mańkowska, 2015) in the discussion of religious feelings in early childhood from their own perspective and the mother's perspective, it explains that positive feelings can be more dominant than negative

feelings in religious expression itself. This shows that positive expressions can emerge when children understand the meaning of religious feelings.

Related to efforts to foster children's religious feelings, choosing the right school is a very urgent supporting factor for parents to be more selective. Presented in Islamic-based schools certainly makes students familiar with religious activities and the hope of Islamic-based schools is to produce pious children. Islamic-based schools use a curriculum that is aligned between the school's religious curriculum and the independent curriculum, and complementary programs. Basically, Islamic-based education has an educational concept with Islamic values sourced from the Al-Quran and Hadith. Then children are also accustomed to always praying before and after carrying out activities. Based on the results of the study, Islamic-based schools have a positive impact on the development of children's religion, the concept of Islamic education is reflected in their moral and character behavior.

CONCLUSION

Religious feeling is a person's feeling about their God in carrying out activities, both worship activities and when doing other activities. Children aged 5-6 years already know the reasons why they should worship, children aged 5 years more often answer because if they worship they will be loved by Allah (the creator), and children aged 6 years more often answer because when they worship they get goodness in the form of rewards. There is no difference in preference for worship activities in children aged 5-6 years who are accustomed to worshipping every day at home or at school, both of them like the same activities, namely praying and reciting the Al-Qur'an. Religious feeling is formed from daily worship habits, such as praying, reciting the Al-Qur'an, sharing and studying. When worshipping, some children show a very happy expression, meaning that children do these activities without coercion and of their own will. The limitation of this study is that it only focuses on children's religious feelings when at school, while at home it is limited only from parental validation. This study focuses on how children feel when they are worshipping at school so that the correlation of data is also associated with children's feelings. Further research is expected to be able to examine children's feelings more broadly from other aspects so that knowledge can be further developed. In addition, further research is expected to be able to compare the development of children's religious feelings between children who attend Islamic schools and public schools.

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