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# Significance of preventing radicalism among students through strengthening religiousness and Pancasila ideology in Indonesia

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Abstract: Student radicalism poses a severe danger to the nation's social stability and ideology. This study aims to examine the effect of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers in universities in East Java in preventing radicalization by improving moderate religious understanding and comprehension of Pancasila ideology. The study used in-depth interviews and surveys of PAI lecturers from several state and private universities to collect the data. The results indicated that strengthening an inclusive and moderate understanding of religion and instilling Pancasila values was effective in protecting students from the influence of radical ideology. PAI lecturers also played a role in supervising religious activities on campus, ensuring that these activities remained within the corridor of moderation and tolerance. This study emphasized the importance of synergy between strengthening moderate religious education and socializing Pancasila values to form strong ideological resilience among students. This study also conveyed the need for support from educational institutions and the government in maintaining an inclusive campus environment free from radicalism.

Keywords: Islamic religious education lecturer, Pancasila, Radicalism, Religion.

### 1. Introduction

In regards to radicalism among Indonesia's young generation, a study conducted by Mata Air Foundation and Alvara Research Center found that 23.4% of college students and 23.3% of high school students have been exposed to radical ideology. They support jihad to build an Islamic state or caliphate. Intolerant teachings have permeated students and become more prevalent as they pursue academics on campus. The survey aimed to assess the attitudes and religious beliefs of Indonesian high school and college students. It was conducted on 1800 students from 25 leading universities in Indonesia and 2400 students from leading higher secondary schools in Java along with major cities in Indonesia [1]. In connection with the phenomenon of radical intolerance, the findings of the study published by the Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta indicate that the magnitude of intolerance-radicalism can be demonstrated by teachers' and students' understanding and attitudes. The PPIM study indicates that intolerant-radical ideology, despite being invisible, has penetrated, matured, and influenced the implementation of instruction in schools through two main sources: literature and extracurricular activities. In reality, radicalism (extremist groups) has distorted the image of Islam in Indonesia today. Some of the faces of Indonesian Islam are connected with many extremist Muslim-based groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), Laskar Jihad (LJ), and Jama'ah al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun Indonesia (JAMI). Although these extreme groups are few when compared to moderate Islamic groups like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and other Islamic

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mass organizations, they have the potential to draw public attention. These groups stand out in the context of modern Indonesian Islam for religious understanding [2].

According to Syam [3] radicalism is based on a literal interpretation of religion, one-sided understanding, and textual analysis. This group also believes that only their religious understanding should be carried out and that other groups' religious understandings are erroneous or misguided and must be removed. These groups are becoming more popular, and many young people are following them on social media. To address this difficulty, equal conversation, openness, and cooperation are required. Radicalization among students is a growing concern in Indonesia, especially concerning the country's cultural and religious diversity [4]. It is a process in which people or groups develop strong viewpoints that frequently collide with the moderate and tolerant ideals that are promoted in society [5]. In the Indonesian context, this radicalization might be viewed as a danger to the Pancasila ideology, which serves as the foundation for the state and the nation's way of life. Pancasila, which encompasses the virtues of humanity, unity, and social justice, serves as a balance in dealing with numerous clashing ideologies, especially radicalism Natalis and Setiyono [6]. Hanafi, et al. [7] investigated the existence of extremism at the State University of Malang (UM) and advised that serious measures be taken. They carried out various activities intensively and massively, both secretly and openly, ranging from distributing bulletins, pamphlets, and brochures to various discussion and halaqah activities containing indoctrination of anti-Pancasila, anti-NKRI ideologies, and calls for intolerance toward parties with different understandings and beliefs.

The importance of preventing radicalism among students cannot be overstated as youths play a critical role in national development. As a result, reinforcing religion and Pancasila worldview in higher education institutions is extremely important. Some studies show that education that prioritizes moderate values and tolerance, as well as strengthening understanding of Pancasila, can contribute to preventing the spread of radical ideology among students [8-10]. It is intended that by internalizing Pancasila values and religious moderation, students will become agents of change capable of overcoming radicalism and promoting peace and harmony in society [11, 12]. Furthermore, efforts to prevent radicalization through strengthening religion and the Pancasila ideology must involve various parties, including the government, educational institutions, and the wider community. This collaboration was important in creating a conducive environment for the development of moderate national and religious values. In this setting, the work of lecturers and educators is very crucial in guiding students to comprehend and apply the concepts of Pancasila and religious moderation [10, 13]. Thus, combating radicalism among students by strengthening religion and Pancasila philosophy is a common obligation shared by all members of society. Radicalism in higher education can be generated by a restricted concept of religion, non-inclusive groupings, anti-pluralism feelings, intolerant attitudes toward other opinions, and the use of social media to disseminate radical ideology. These factors play an important role in triggering the process of radicalization among students. Therefore, this study has significance for preventing radicalism among students by promoting religion and Pancasila ideology.

# 2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative method. Therefore, researchers rely more on narrative presentations based on phenomena and evidence based on existing facts [14-22]. This study investigated the efforts of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers at East Java universities to protect students from extremism and described their attitudes toward the Pancasila ideology. The subjects of the study were PAI lecturers from six state universities and one private university in East Java, all of which were considered representative. They were chosen using a purposive sampling technique The study used an interview and a questionnaire to collect the data. Interviews were undertaken to study PAI instructors' efforts to protect students from radicalism and to build the teaching of Pancasila. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was used to strengthen the data obtained through interviews. The data came from PAI lecturers in East Java as primary sources and from journals or media that were under the research topic as secondary sources. After the data were collected, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted

with PAI lecturers throughout East Java. The obtained data were analyzed using a qualitative analysis involving data presentation, reduction, and verification.

# 3. Results

Based on the data collected through the research methods that have been used, the following are the research results as presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1.**Results of interviews with respondents

Lecturer Name	Question: As a PAI lecturer, what efforts have been made to prevent students from being exposed to radicalism?
Shofiyun Nahidloh (UTM)	Answer:
	Efforts to improve the quality of understanding and application of religion
	comprehensively:
	- Increasing concern for the environment both internally and externally on campus
	- Adding activities that led to ethical activities and humanism
	- Including national insight material in PAI material and local content material
Nur Chanifah (Universitas Brawijaya)	Answer:
	- Equipping students with an understanding of Islam rahmatan lil alamin
	- Controlling student activities by collaborating with mosque administrators and
	several centers on campus
	- Fostering activities in UKM, especially Islamic Spirituality or Campus Dakwah
	Institutions (LDK)
Sunan Fanani (Universitas	Answer:
Airlangga)	Implementing Pancasila ideals in integrated learning in moderate Islamic studies using a
	time-appropriate method
Ahmad Munjin Nasikh	Answer:
Ahmad Munjin Nasikh (Universitas Negeri Malang)	
	- Conducting moderate Islamic studies for students
	- Supporting organizations that prioritized moderate Islamic ideology
	- Always providing discussion space for students both inside and outside the classroom
	- Selecting off-campus resource persons
Choirul Mahfud (Institut	Answer:
Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember)	- Input-process-output needed to be maintained.
	- Interaction with instructors and students was necessary.
	- The process required guidance and direction from Islamic religious lecturers and
	other senior academics.
Yusuf Hanafi (Universitas	Answer:
Negeri Malang)	Preventive and curative efforts were used to avoid the spread of radical ideology, while
	curative efforts restored and cured individuals who had been exposed to it. All higher
	education institutions must continue to promote respect for Indonesian values and
	nationalism.
Kasuwi Saiban (Universitas	Answer:
Merdeka)	
	Holding activities aimed at empowering students to protect themselves from extremism
Lecturer Name	Question: As a PAI lecturer, what is your opinion about the Pancasila Ideology?
Shofiyun Nahidloh (UTM)	Answer:
	The basic ideology in life for many Indonesian, the foundation of the unitary state of the
N. Ol. 'Cl. 'XX	Republic of Indonesia
Nur Chanifah (Universitas	Answer:
Brawijaya)	Pancasila was the final ideology that accommodated the diversity of the Indonesian
	nation. Moreover, in its formulation, it involved scholars so there was no need to doubt it
	anymore.
Sunan Fanani (Universitas	Answer:
Airlangga)	Pancasila was the state principle structured from the perspective of the life of the
	Indonesian nation. The implementation of national and state life could be symbolized by
	Pancasila Ideology.
Ahmad Munjin Nasikh	Answer:
(Universitas Negeri Malang)	Pancasila became the most important instrument to unite all the differences that existed

	in Indonesia with its multi-religions, tribes, languages and races.
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Choirul Mahfud (Institut	Answer:
Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember)	Pancasila was a state ideology that needed to be understood and implemented for the
XZ C XX C (XX :	common good in national and state life.
Yusuf Hanafi (Universitas	Answer:
Negeri Malang)	Pancasila was the philosophy and source of all sources of law in Indonesia. Pancasila was
	final and non-negotiable along with the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and
	Bhineka Tunggal Ika.
Kasuwi Saiban (Universitas	Answer:
Merdeka)	Pancasila must be preserved as the state's foundation by strengthening religious activities
	associated with Aswaja. The ideology agreed upon in Indonesia followed the essence of
	Islamic teachings, which meant it did not contradict Islamic principles.
Lecturer Name	Question: As a PAI lecturer, what is your opinion about other ideologies that want
	to replace Pancasila?
Shofiyun Nahidloh (UTM)	Answer:
	The Pancasila principle, as a unifier, was Bhineka Tunggal Ika, and it must be maintained
	as a unifier of religious pluralism.
Nur Chanifah (Universitas	Answer:
Brawijaya)	Strongly disagree, because it was extremely harmful and threatened national unity.
Sunan Fanani (Universitas	Answer:
Airlangga)	Many different ideologies could be explored as a contrast to Pancasila ideology; however,
	Pancasila remained the most suited.
Ahmad Munjin Nasikh	Answer:
(Universitas Negeri Malang)	I did not think there was any other ideology at this time that was more appropriate to
	implement in Indonesia.
Choirul Mahfud (Institut	Answer:
Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember)	Disagree, the establishment of Pancasila was a legacy of the nation's founders, who used
	ijtihad to construct this nation based on the different growths of religion, culture, and
	political beliefs in the nation.
Yusuf Hanafi (Universitas	Answer:
Negeri Malang)	Other ideologies, which were intended to replace Pancasila, could not be allowed to live
	in Indonesia. The government must take firm action.
Kasuwi Saiban (Universitas	Answer:
Merdeka)	It was very dangerous considering that the Indonesian nation consisted of various
	religions, tribes and races.

According to the above data, the most effective way to prevent radicalism on campus was to reinforce moderate religious features and gain a thorough understanding of the Pancasila ideology. The following is the primary relevance of attempts to prevent radicalism that rely on both approaches.

### 3.1. Strengthening Moderate Religion as a Preventive Effort

Radicalism frequently occurred from misunderstandings and a restricted view of religion. As a result, fostering a reasonable perspective of religion was critical to averting radicalization among students. As explained by various lecturers, first, Comprehensive Efforts for Religious Understanding conveyed by Shofiyun Nahidloh (UTM) aimed to increase overall religious understanding. This complete view of religion highlighted moderate qualities of Islam, such as tolerance, compassion, and respect for variety. Second, Moderate Islamic Studies and Open Discussions undertaken by Ahmad Munjin Nasikh (Universitas Negeri Malang) provided a balanced understanding of Islam while also encouraging open discussion spaces on campus. This was important because discussion spaces reduced the tendency for students to be isolated by extreme ideologies. Third, Control of Religious Activities on Campus conveyed by Nur Chanifah (Universitas Brawijaya) supervised and guided Student Activity Units (UKM) related to religion, such as the Campus Da'wah Institute (LDK). This supervision aimed to ensure that religious activities on campus were carried out under the peaceful and inclusive teachings of Islam.

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# 3.2. Strengthening the Pancasila Ideology as a Unifier and Antidote to Radicalism

Pancasila, as the foundation of the Indonesian state, was an essential instrument in combating radicalization. PAI lecturers also frequently emphasized the significance of instilling Pancasila ideals in students to combat the threat of extreme ideology, which had the potential to divide the nation. Several key points were found: First, Pancasila was the final ideology. Nur Chanifah (Universitas Brawijaya) and Yusuf Hanafi (Universitas Negeri Malang) regarded Pancasila as the ultimate ideology that accepted the variety of the Indonesian people. Pancasila was also the highest legal foundation that must be understood and practiced by all parts of society, including students. Second, Kasuwi Saiban (Universitas Merdeka) emphasized Pancasila's compatibility with Islamic principles. Strengthening the Pancasila worldview aligned with universal ideals espoused in Islam, making it relevant from both a nationalist and religious perspective. Third, Shofiyun Nahidloh (UTM) and Sunan Fanani (Universitas Airlangga) argued that Pancasila was a uniting concept that underlined the significance of sustaining plurality and religious diversity in Indonesia. This was crucial to stop radicalism, which was often restrictive and anti-pluralistic.

# 3.3. The Synergy between Religious Strengthening and Pancasila

One of the main strengths of preventing radicalism was the synergy between strengthening moderate religion and Pancasila ideology. These two approaches complemented each other: First, Ahmad Munjin Nasikh (Universitas Negeri Malang) stated that religious values must be carried out within a national framework guided by Pancasila. This ensured that any discussion or study of religion did not stray from the path of moderation and nationalism. Second, Integrating Religious and National Values conveyed by Sunan Fanani (Universitas Airlangga) suggested that learning must be designed in an integrative manner, where Islamic studies were linked directly to Pancasila values. This made students understand that religion and nationality did not conflict but strengthened each other.

#### 4. Discussion

Radicalism was a significant threat in the context of national security and stability, especially among the younger generation such as students. It could develop in a campus environment due to several factors, such as social alienation, deviant ideological influences, and a narrow and exclusive understanding of religion. Based on data submitted by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers, there were several strategic steps taken to prevent the spread of radicalism among students through a moderate religious strengthening approach and an understanding of the Pancasila ideology. In this discussion, we reviewed in more depth the significance of the two approaches and how their synergy formed a solid ideological defense.

### 4.1. Strengthening Moderate Religion to Prevent Radicalism

Religion was a vital element that frequently led to radicalization. Radical groups frequently employed narrow and extreme interpretations of religion to persuade people, particularly students who were in the process of discovering their identity and comprehending religious beliefs [23]. In this setting, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers had a key role in guiding students toward a moderate and inclusive perspective of religion [24]. First, the religious approach emphasized by Nur Chanifah from Brawijaya University referred to the principle of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin, namely Islam as a blessing for all nature. This understanding emphasized that Islam was not only for Muslims but also brought universal values that could be applied to the lives of pluralistic societies. This understanding of Islam strengthened tolerance, respected differences, and rejected all forms of violence that were often characteristic of radical movements [25]. This was supported by the concept of Wasatiyyah or the middle way in Islam, which emphasized balance, moderation, and justice [20]. Wasatiyyah had been a strong antidote to radicalism because it rejected extremism in any form, both in religious practice and in socio-political life [26, 27]. Second, the development of religious Student Activity Unit (UKM) activities carried out by lecturers such as Nur Chanifah and Ahmad Munjin

Nasikh was also an important step in preventing radicalization on campus. Campus Da'wah Institutions (LDK) and other religious student organizations were often targeted by radical groups to spread their ideology [28]. Strict supervision and development of these religious activities ensured that the values taught in UKM were inclusive and supported moderate Islam. In a study of the radicalization process, it was found that closed communities and exclusive ideologies tended to encourage radicalization [24]. Thus, supervision and guidance of religious activities on campus could prevent exclusivism, which became the gateway for radicalism [29].

Third, the strategy carried out by Ahmad Munjin Nasikh from Universitas Negeri Malang by providing discussion space for students, both inside and outside the classroom, had made a major contribution to preventing radicalism. Open discussions about moderate Islam, accompanied by discussions about contemporary issues, provided space for students to understand religious and national issues in depth without getting caught up in extreme views [30, 31]. Research showed that radicalization was often accelerated by social and intellectual alienation [28]. By providing an inclusive discussion space, students felt more involved in open intellectual and religious discourse, making it more difficult for them to get caught up in radical narratives [32, 33]. Thus, strengthening moderate religion was significant because it provided a strong foundation for students to understand their religious teachings in the context of nationality and pluralism. This also reduced the gap for radicalism to develop because students were equipped with moderate and constructive religious narratives [34]. This approach also emphasized good control over religious activities on campus so the students were not easily influenced by misleading beliefs [35].

# 4.2. Pancasila as the Final Ideology in Countering Radicalism

Strengthening students' comprehension of Pancasila as the official ideology was critical to averting radicalization. Radicalism frequently sought to replace Pancasila with other ideologies, such as the caliphate, endangering the ideological and social stability of Indonesia. As a result, maintaining the nation's integrity required a thorough comprehension of Pancasila as the state's ultimate foundation [36, 37]. First, Pancasila functioned as a unifier of the nation. In the context of Indonesia's diversity, Pancasila could accommodate various ethnicities, religions, and races. Shofiyun Nahidloh and Nur Chanifah emphasized that the values of Pancasila, which were based on humanity, unity, and social justice, prioritized inclusivity and rejected radical exclusivism Eddy [38]. Adha and Susanto [39] also emphasized that Pancasila was an ideological meeting point that was a national consensus in maintaining Indonesia's diversity [39]. In dealing with radicalism, Pancasila functioned as an important instrument to maintain the pluralism and diversity of the nation [40-42]. Second, Pancasila was in line with religious values. Kasuwi Saiban argued that Pancasila did not conflict with Islamic teachings but rather reflected the core teachings of Islam, such as justice and humanity [43]. This was important because some radical groups tried to portray Pancasila as a secular ideology that was not in line with Islam [41]. This narrative needed to be countered by showing that the values of Pancasila were in line with religious values. Madjid [44] in his work "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No" emphasized that Islam as a religion did not conflict with Pancasila, which stipulated space for all religions to develop within a national framework that valued pluralism [45].

Third, the rejection of other ideologies to replace Pancasila was agreed upon by PAI lecturers. The rejection of ideologies such as the caliphate showed a deep understanding of the importance of maintaining the national consensus built through Pancasila. Huntington [46] revealed that ideological conflicts often arose in plural and diverse societies. In the Indonesian context, Pancasila functioned as a bond that maintained unity in plurality so the rejection of other radical ideologies was important to undertake to maintain national stability [44]. Thus, strengthening Pancasila's ideology was very significant because it provided a strong foundation for students to understand and appreciate diversity. Pancasila, with its values that prioritized humanity, unity, and social justice, functioned as an ideological protection against radical ideologies that wanted to damage national unity. By internalizing the

Pancasila values, students would be stronger in fighting all forms of threats to the Republic of Indonesia, including radicalism [47-49].

# 4.3. Synergy between Strengthening Moderate Religion and Pancasila Ideology in Preventing Radicalism

Radicalism, especially among students, developed when there was a gap or imbalance in the understanding of religion and national ideology. The synergy between strengthening moderate religion and instilling the Pancasila ideology was the key factor in forming ideological resilience among students. These two approaches, which each addressed spiritual and nationalism aspects, provided a solid foundation to fortify students from radical influences [50, 51]. Moderate religious values, as emphasized by PAI lecturers, showed tolerance, inclusivity, and social justice—values that were also found in Pancasila. The integration of these two values provided a foundation for students to understand that spirituality and nationality were not contradictory but rather mutually reinforcing [52]. Pancasila bridged religious values with social-national life. In moderate religious education, Islamic teachings that were rahmatan lil 'alamin emphasized peace, justice, and harmony among fellow human beings. These values were in line with the points in Pancasila, especially in terms of Just and Civilized Humanity (second principle) and the Unity of Indonesia (third principle). This synergy was important because it showed that moderate religious teachings and Pancasila did not only function in the theoretical realm but had direct applications in the context of national and state life. This was emphasized by research showing that Pancasila could accommodate universal values of religion, including Islam [53].

Pancasila as the state ideology provided a framework that maintained a balance between religious freedom and commitment to the state. In the context of synergy with moderate religious teachings, Pancasila helped direct an understanding of religion that did not only focus on ritual aspects but also on nationality and humanity aspects [54, 55]. Pancasila maintained moderation in religion through the principle of Belief in One Almighty God (the first principle), placing religion as an important element in national life but still within boundaries that did not threaten diversity [56]. As expressed by several researchers, Pancasila allowed for an inclusive religious framework, which rejected exclusive truth claims often carried by radical groups [57]. This moderation in religion was the main antidote to the narrative of radicalism, which often used the pretext of religion to divide the nation [58]. Islamic Religious Education lecturers involved in preventing radicalism integrated contextual understanding of religion with the conditions of Indonesia, which was ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse. One of the strengths of Pancasila was its ability to contextualize religious teachings within a pluralistic national framework [52]. Pancasila was a platform for a religious context that was relevant to plurality. Through the integration of religious teachings and Pancasila, students were taught to understand that religiosity in Indonesia must consider the plurality of the nation. An understanding of religion that was not only normative but also contextual was important to prevent the spread of radical ideology that rejected diversity and plurality [53]. Thus, Pancasila helped students understand religion in a broader context, namely in the context of pluralistic social and state life [59].

The implementation of synergy between strengthening moderate religion and Pancasila was also seen in collaborative efforts between lecturers, campus institutions, and religious organizations on campus. Lecturers such as Nur Chanifah and Yusuf Hanafi prioritized collaboration with student activity units (UKM), campus mosques, and da'wah organizations to ensure that the religious values taught on campus remained in line with Pancasila and did not deviate towards radicalism [60]. Social control through religious activities that are in line with Pancasila. In this case, a collaboration between religious activities and Pancasila values on campus is an effective antidote to radicalism [30, 56]. Students involved in religious UKM were fostered with a religious understanding that was not only oriented towards individual spirituality but also social responsibility as part of citizens who upheld unity and diversity [61]. Prior research showed that radicalism often developed in religious spaces that did not have strong ideological supervision [62]. Here, Pancasila played an important role as a national framework that directed religious activities to remain within the corridor of moderation and maintain

national unity [63]. Thus, the synergy between moderate religious values and the Pancasila ideology created a strong basis for countering radicalism. Students were not only taught religion more moderately and inclusively but were also strengthened with solid national insight so they became agents of the guardians of Pancasila and the Republic of Indonesia [64-67]. This synergy can be strengthened through the context of education, art (literature, film, fine art), media/social media, and culture [68] so that the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia is established.

### 5. Conclusion

Strengthening students' comprehension of Pancasila as the official ideology is critical to averting radicalization. Radicalism frequently seeks to replace Pancasila with other ideologies, such as the caliphate, endangering the ideological and social stability of Indonesia. As a result, maintaining the nation's integrity requires a thorough comprehension of Pancasila as the state's ultimate foundation. Meanwhile, Pancasila serves as a unifying and final philosophy, providing pupils with a firm national foundation for understanding Indonesia's pluralism and variety. The combination of these two techniques, namely religion and Pancasila ideology, fosters great ideological resilience in students, making them more resistant to the impact of radicalism and prepared to protect and defend the Republic of Indonesia. To prevent radicalism among students in the future, campuses must promote moderate and inclusive religious education by encouraging student activity units (UKM) and open dialogue that values tolerance. Pancasila values must also be contextualized so students can comprehend their relevance in everyday life and avoid extremist ideas. Furthermore, collaboration among colleges, lecturers, and religious organizations is critical to ensuring that religious activities remain moderate and encourage national unity.

# **Transparency:**

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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