Diniyyah Jurnal
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Implementation of Problem Solving Based Learning Model in Islamic Religious Education: A Study of Learning Processes and Strategies

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Article Information:
Received October 16, 2026
Revised November 25, 2026
Accepted December 10, 2026

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, problem solving, learning strategies, critical thinking, Islamic character.*

Abstract

Learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) requires an approach that emphasizes not only mastery of religious material but also the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and the application of Islamic values in everyday life. This study aims to analyze the implementation of a problem-solving-based learning model (*problem solving*) in Islamic Religious Education, including the learning implementation process, teacher strategies, student involvement, and learning evaluation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The research analysis covers five main aspects, namely learning planning through determining objectives and formulating contextual problems; learning implementation through problem identification, information collection, analysis of alternative solutions, and reflection; teacher strategies in facilitating discussions and guiding students; student involvement in expressing opinions, collaborating, and connecting religious material with real life; and evaluating material understanding and the application of Islamic values. This study is expected to be a consideration for teachers in developing active, participatory, and contextual Islamic Religious Education learning and supporting the development of critical thinking skills, learning independence, cooperation, and the formation of Islamic character in students.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a crucial component of the education system, aiming to develop students' religious understanding, faith, piety, and noble character. PAI learning is not only oriented toward mastering Islamic teachings but also focuses on students' ability to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives (Inayati, 2022; Jasmaludin et al., 2025). Therefore, the PAI learning process needs to be developed through an approach that encourages active student involvement, critical thinking skills, and skills in addressing various issues related to personal, social, and religious life.

How to cite: Fauzi, R., Sriwardona, S., Lutfiyani, L. (2026). Implementation of Problem Solving Based Learning Model in Islamic Religious Education: A Study of Learning Processes and Strategies. *Diniyyah Jurnal*, 13(2), 17-29.

E-ISSN: 2810-0050
Published by: The Institute for Research and Community Service

In practice, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning faces the challenge of connecting conceptual religious material with students' real-life experiences. Overly teacher-centered learning and verbal delivery of material have the potential to limit students' opportunities to develop analytical, discussion, opinion-building, and problem-solving skills (Syarifah et al., 2025; Saputri, 2025). Yet, various life issues related to morality, responsibility, tolerance, discipline, and social interaction require religious understanding along with the ability to apply Islamic values appropriately. This situation demonstrates the importance of using learning models that provide space for students to actively engage in the process of knowledge construction and attitude development (Ali, 2024).

One of the learning models that can be used to support this goal is a problem-solving based learning model (*problem solving*). This model places problems as the starting point of learning, then directs students to identify problems, collect and analyze information, consider various alternative solutions, and formulate solutions based on relevant knowledge and reasoning (Andini et al., 2024; Wati et al., 2025). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the problem-solving model can be applied through discussions of contextual cases related to the material of faith, morals, jurisprudence, the Qur'an and hadith, as well as social life issues. Through this process, students not only learn religious concepts but also have the opportunity to understand the relevance of Islamic teachings in facing real situations (Lutfiyani et al., 2024).

The implementation of a problem-solving-based learning model also requires a change in the teacher's role in managing the learning process. Teachers function not only as conveyors of information but also as facilitators who design problems, provide provocative questions, direct discussions, guide student analysis, and ensure that the formulated solutions are based on appropriate knowledge and align with Islamic values (Wati et al., 2025). Furthermore, students are required to actively participate through discussions, exchange of ideas, information gathering, and reflection on the results of problem-solving. Therefore, the success of this model's implementation is determined not only by the choice of learning model but also by the teacher's ability to plan activities, manage classroom interactions, select relevant problems, and conduct comprehensive learning evaluations (Khasanah, 2023; Patrysha et al., 2024).

Although the problem-solving model offers opportunities to develop active and contextual learning, its application in Islamic Religious Education requires systematic study. This relates to how teachers plan learning, organize problem-solving stages, determine mentoring strategies, encourage student involvement, and evaluate the learning process and outcomes (Solichin, 2017). Furthermore, the application of this model requires consideration of the characteristics of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material, which involves not only knowledge but also the formation of attitudes and the practice of religious values. Therefore, studying the implementation process and strategies is crucial for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the problem-solving-based learning model in the context of Islamic Religious Education (Astuti et al., 2025).

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the implementation of a problem-solving-based learning model in Islamic Religious Education by focusing on the learning process, teacher strategies, student involvement, and learning evaluation. This study is expected to provide an overview of the practical application of the problem-solving model while identifying aspects that need to be considered in its development (Hermawan et al., 2025). Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of innovative learning models in Islamic education. Practically, the results of the study are expected to be a consideration for

teachers in designing Islamic Religious Education learning that is more participatory, contextual, and oriented towards the development of religious knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the formation of Islamic character in students.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type which aims to analyze the implementation of a problem-solving based learning model (*problem solving*) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the learning process, teacher strategies, student involvement, and the implementation of learning evaluation in a natural context. The research was conducted in the context of Islamic Religious Education learning in vocational high schools, with research subjects including Islamic Religious Education teachers and students involved in the implementation of the learning model. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and relevance to the research focus. Data were collected through observations of the learning process, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and documentation in the form of teaching modules, learning tools, discussion materials, and relevant evaluation documents (Engkizar et al., 2024; Asril et al., 2026; Langputeh et al., 2026). Data analysis was carried out interactively through the processes of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. Data validity was checked through triangulation of techniques and sources by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis focuses on learning planning, problem identification and analysis, formulation of alternative solutions, teacher mentoring strategies, student participation, and learning evaluation. The entire research process was conducted with due regard for research ethics, including informant consent, confidentiality, and data use consistent with academic objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the implementation of a problem-solving-based learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) through five main aspects: planning, implementation, teacher strategy, student involvement, and evaluation of material understanding and application of Islamic values. These five aspects are examined to understand the model's role in developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and Islamic character formation.

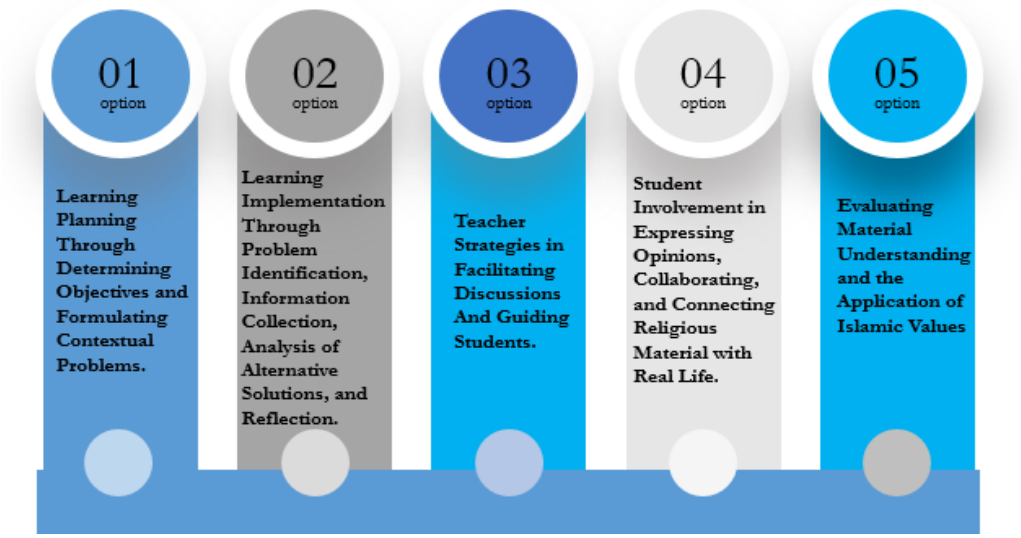


Fig 1. Five forms of Implementing a Problem Solving Based Learning Model in Islamic Religious Education

Learning Planning through Determining Goals and Formulating Contextual Problems

Learning planning is the initial stage that determines the direction and quality of the implementation of problem-solving-based learning models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). At this stage, teachers need to establish clear, measurable learning objectives that align with the competencies to be achieved (Suroyya & Millat, 2022; Siregar, 2024). Learning objectives are not only directed at mastering religious knowledge, but also at students' abilities to analyze problems, present arguments, make decisions, and apply Islamic values in everyday life. Therefore, learning planning must integrate the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a balanced manner.

Learning objectives need to be tailored to the characteristics of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material and the needs of students. Material on morals, worship, social interactions, tolerance, responsibility, and social ethics can be developed through a problem-solving approach because they are closely related to situations encountered in everyday life (Wahyuni & Fitriana, 2021). For example, learning about honesty can begin with the issue of cheating, while material on social responsibility can be linked to bullying or the spread of unverified information on social media. Selecting these contexts allows students to understand the relevance of religious material to their own experiences.

Formulating contextual problems is a crucial part of planning because the quality of the problem will influence the depth of students' thinking processes. Designed problems should be authentic, relevant to students' lives, and allow for the identification, investigation, and consideration of several alternative solutions. Problems should also be tailored to students' cognitive development levels and prior knowledge to ensure they are understandable without eliminating the element of challenge (Rohmawati, 2025). Teachers should avoid problems that are too simple to require analysis or too complex to be difficult to solve within the available learning time.

In addition to determining objectives and formulating problems, teachers need to systematically design learning steps. This planning includes determining time allocation, selecting learning resources, forming groups, developing provocative questions, and determining assessment formats (Aryina et al., 2025; Junaidi, 2025). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, learning resources can include textbooks, the Quran, hadiths, teaching materials, and credible digital sources. The availability of appropriate resources helps students build understanding based on reliable information, not solely on personal opinions or unverified information.

Planning also needs to consider the roles of teachers and students in the learning process. The teacher acts as both a designer and a facilitator, providing guidance as needed, while students are given the space to explore problems and develop alternative solutions (Arman et al., 2026). Therefore, teachers need to prepare clear activity guidelines without providing all the answers from the start. This approach can help create a balance between students' freedom of thought and the direction of learning in line with established objectives.

Thus, problem-solving-based learning planning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) needs to emphasize the integration of learning objectives, problem relevance, learning resources, student activities, and assessment systems. Thorough planning provides the foundation for focused and meaningful learning. From a constructivist perspective, students build understanding through active involvement in the learning process, while contextual problems provide situations that encourage them to connect prior knowledge with new information. This view aligns with Hmelo-Silver's

(2004) discussion of problem-based learning as an approach that encourages knowledge formation and skill development through investigation of meaningful issues (Mawarni & Jambeh, 2025).

Implementation of Learning through Problem Identification, Information Collection, Analysis of Alternative Solutions, and Reflection

Implementing a problem-solving-based learning model is the process of implementing a lesson plan through a series of activities that place the problem as the starting point for learning activities. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, teachers can begin activities by presenting a situation or case related to the material being studied (Andriani et al., 2025). Presenting a problem aims to build students' attention, activate prior knowledge, and encourage the emergence of questions about the problem to be resolved. At this stage, teachers need to ensure that students understand the context of the problem before proceeding with the investigation process.

The problem identification stage is carried out by guiding students to determine the core of the problem, the parties involved, the causal factors, and the resulting impacts. This process is crucial because students need to distinguish between apparent symptoms and the underlying problem that must be resolved (Arfani & Albab, 2026). For example, when facing a case of bullying in a school environment, students are asked not only to identify the behavior but also to consider the causal factors, the impact on the victim, the responsibilities of the parties involved, and relevant Islamic values. In this way, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem before developing a solution.

Once the problem is identified, the activity continues with gathering relevant information. Students can seek information through textbooks, reading materials, group discussions, teacher explanations, and appropriate Islamic sources. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, information gathering needs to be directed so that students are able to discover the basis of Islamic teachings related to the problem being discussed (Muhdi & Ardhy, 2025). Teachers need to help students assess the credibility of sources, distinguish factual information from opinion, and understand the context in which arguments are used. Thus, the information-seeking process not only broadens knowledge but also fosters critical and responsible learning habits.

The collected information is then analyzed to generate several alternative solutions. At this stage, students are encouraged to compare course of action based on their relevance to the problem, potential consequences, and their alignment with Islamic principles (Hasnan et al., 2025). Discussing alternative solutions provides students with the opportunity to understand that a single problem can have multiple possible solutions, but each option must be considered rationally and ethically. The teacher's role is to ensure that the arguments presented are supported by adequate information and do not conflict with the learning objectives or the basic principles of Islamic teachings.

The next stage is the delivery of solutions and reflection on the learning process. Students can present their analysis results individually or in groups, then receive feedback from the teacher and other students. Reflection is carried out by reviewing the accuracy of problem identification, the adequacy of information, the strength of arguments, and the feasibility of the resulting solution (Yulianto & Mujiburrohman, 2026). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, reflection can also be directed at understanding the moral values contained in the problem and its potential application in real life. This process helps students realize that learning does not stop at finding answers but also includes evaluating thinking patterns and

decision-making processes.

Overall, implementing problem-solving-based learning requires continuity between problem identification, information gathering, analysis of alternative solutions, presentation of results, and reflection. Each stage has an interrelated function in gradually building student understanding. Systematic implementation also allows teachers to monitor learning difficulties and provide guidance as needed (Bagherpur et al., 2022). This aligns with Barrows' (1986) view of problem-based learning, which places problems at the center of the learning process and encourages students to develop independent learning skills, reasoning skills, and the application of knowledge to address problems.

Teacher Strategies in Facilitating Discussions and Guiding Students

Teacher strategy is a crucial element in supporting the success of problem-solving-based learning models in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). In this model, teachers not only act as information providers but also as facilitators, guiding students in understanding problems, finding information, constructing arguments, and determining solutions. This shift in role requires teachers to manage learning flexibly without losing sight of established objectives (Slawantya & Sujarwo, 2024). Teachers need to know when to provide direction, when to ask questions, and when to provide opportunities for students to develop their thinking independently.

One strategy that can be used is providing provocative questions that encourage students to conduct deeper analysis. Questions such as "What is the core of the current problem?", "Why does this problem arise?", "What is its impact on others?", and "How can Islamic principles be used to consider its solution?" can help students move from descriptive understanding to analytical thinking. Open-ended questions also create space for diverse opinions to emerge that can be compared and discussed (Marzuki & Zamili, 2026). Teachers should avoid questions that only require short answers if the learning objective is to develop argumentation and problem-solving skills.

Managing group discussions is also an important strategy in the learning process. Teachers can divide students into groups, considering the number of members, varying abilities, and activity requirements. Each member can be assigned responsibilities, such as identifying problems, searching for information, checking sources, developing arguments, or presenting discussion results (Masykuri, 2022). Assigning roles helps reduce the possibility of students dominating activities or relying solely on other group members. Teachers also need to monitor interactions between students to ensure that discussions proceed in an orderly manner, with mutual respect, and are oriented toward problem-solving.

Step-by-step guidance strategy or*scaffolding*can be applied when students experience difficulty understanding a problem or connecting information to religious concepts. Guidance can be provided through instructions, analytical examples, follow-up questions, or recommendations for relevant learning resources (Mahmudi et al., 2024). However, teachers should not immediately provide final solutions, as this can reduce students' opportunities to construct understanding independently. Effective guidance is tailored to students' needs and gradually reduced as they become more able to complete tasks independently. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) ideas regarding the role of social interaction and appropriate support in the development of learning abilities.

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, teachers are also responsible for maintaining the accuracy of religious content during discussions. When students express opinions or cite arguments, teachers need to help check the appropriateness

of the information, the context of the argument, and its relevance to the problem (Suhartini et al., 2025). Teachers can encourage an open attitude toward differing views, but this openness must be accompanied by respect for Islamic sources and scientific principles. Thus, discussions serve not only as a means of exchanging opinions but also as an opportunity to build responsible religious understanding and develop etiquette in expressing views.

Teacher strategies in problem-solving-based learning ultimately require a combination of discussion facilitation, prompting questions, step-by-step guidance, group management, and reinforcement of Islamic values. The success of these strategies is determined not only by the number of activities undertaken, but also by the quality of the interactions formed and the extent to which these activities help students achieve learning objectives (Rozana et al., 2026). Teachers need to reflect on the strategies used to adapt the approach to the characteristics of the material and the needs of the students. With proper management, teachers can create a learning environment that encourages active engagement while maintaining the depth and accuracy of religious understanding (Ahmad et al., 2025).

Student Involvement in Expressing Opinions, Collaborating, and Connecting Religious Material with Real Life

Student engagement is a key aspect of problem-solving-based learning because this model positions students as active participants in the knowledge-building process. This engagement can be seen through activities such as identifying problems, asking questions, seeking information, expressing opinions, responding to arguments, and developing solutions (Farhan et al., 2026). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, active engagement allows students not only to receive teacher explanations but also to process the material more deeply through meaningful learning experiences. However, the form and level of engagement need to be observed based on the actual learning process, not simply assumed from the use of the model.

The ability to express opinions is an essential part of student engagement. When asked to express their views on an issue, students need to explain their reasons, use relevant information, and connect their arguments to religious material (Alsya'bani et al., 2025). This activity can help develop communication and reasoning skills while also fostering the courage to express opinions responsibly. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), teachers need to encourage students to express their opinions politely, respect the views of others, and be willing to correct their understanding if more accurate information is found.

In addition to expressing opinions, group collaboration is a form of engagement that supports problem-solving-based learning. Students can share information, compare views, examine arguments, and develop solutions together. This interaction allows students to gain different perspectives and learn to resolve disagreements constructively (Fauziah & Hasanah, 2024). However, collaboration does not automatically develop simply by dividing students into groups. Teachers need to design tasks that require contributions from each member, assign individual responsibilities, and ensure that group outcomes reflect the collaborative discussion process.

Student engagement can also be developed by linking religious material to real-life issues. For example, material on trustworthiness (amanah), can be linked to the responsibility of completing schoolwork, while material on tabayyun (verification) can be applied to the habit of checking the accuracy of information before sharing it (Lutfi, 2025). Learning about social awareness can be linked to helping friends in difficulty or preventing bullying. These connections help students understand that

religious concepts are not only learned to answer academic questions but also have relevance in shaping attitudes and behavior.

The connection between religious material and real life needs to be built through a reflective process that encourages students to consider possible actions. Teachers can ask students to explain Islamic values related to the problem, determine steps to resolve it, and explain the reasons for choosing those actions (Marpaung et al., 2025). This activity can be complemented with reflective assignments or case studies that ask students to connect concepts to everyday experiences (Mutathahirin et al., 2026). However, the ability to explain religious values does not automatically prove that those values have been applied in behavior. Therefore, assessment of value application needs to use indicators and evidence that align with the research objectives.

Thus, student engagement in problem-solving-based learning models encompasses cognitive, social, communicative, and reflective dimensions. The quality of engagement can be assessed through the ability to understand problems, present arguments, contribute to group work, respect differences of opinion, and connect Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material to real life (Polem et al., 2024). Teachers need to provide a balanced space for participation for all students and provide support to those experiencing difficulties. This approach aligns with the social constructivist perspective, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and the exchange of ideas in building understanding.

Evaluation of Material Understanding and Application of Islamic Values

Evaluation is an integral part of implementing a problem-solving-based learning model because it serves to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, evaluation should not be limited to the ability to memorize definitions, cite arguments, or answer factual questions. Evaluation should also consider students' ability to understand problems, explain relevant religious concepts, construct arguments, and formulate solutions based on reliable information (Wahid & Jusmaniar, 2025). With this scope, assessment can provide a more comprehensive picture of students' mastery of the material and thinking skills.

Assessment of material understanding can be conducted through written tests, oral questions, case analysis, individual assignments, or group reports. The assessment format should be tailored to the characteristics of the material and the competencies being measured. For example, students could be asked to analyze a case involving dishonest behavior, identify relevant Islamic values, and explain possible alternative solutions. Through these assignments, teachers can assess students' ability to connect knowledge to specific situations, rather than simply repeating information presented during the lesson (Rohim & Al Madzaly, 2025).

Evaluation of the problem-solving process also needs to be considered. Teachers can use observation sheets or rubrics to assess students' ability to identify the core of the problem, seek information, assess the credibility of sources, compare alternative solutions, and provide reasons to support decisions (Wisran & Furwana, 2025). Process assessment provides information on the thinking strategies used by students and areas of learning that still need reinforcement. Furthermore, process assessment can help teachers distinguish between students who are able to understand problems independently and those who still need additional guidance.

Another important aspect is evaluating the understanding and application of Islamic values. Assessment can be directed at students' ability to explain the relationship between problems and Islamic values, use relevant evidence, consider

the moral consequences of an action, and formulate behaviors that align with Islamic principles (Haikal et al., 2025). For example, in learning about tabayyun (religious verification), students can be assessed based on their ability to explain the importance of checking information, determine verification steps, and provide ethical reasons for not spreading news whose veracity is uncertain. This type of assessment connects conceptual mastery with consideration of actions in real-life contexts.

To enhance objectivity, teachers need to use clear assessment criteria aligned with the targeted competencies. Rubrics can include accuracy of material understanding, relevance of evidence or sources, quality of argumentation, feasibility of solutions, collaboration, and reflective skills. Self-assessment and peer assessment can also be used as complements if accompanied by clear guidelines and implemented responsibly. However, aspects of behavior and moral development require careful assessment because they cannot be concluded based on a single assignment or observation. Assessment evidence needs to be collected through appropriate methods and within an adequate timeframe if the evaluation objective includes behavioral change (Septianto et al., 2026).

Overall, evaluation in problem-solving-based learning needs to integrate assessments of material mastery, thinking processes, solution quality, and understanding of Islamic values. Evaluation results can be used as a basis for providing feedback, enrichment, remediation, and improving subsequent learning strategies. Comprehensive evaluation helps teachers understand not only what students have learned but also how they use that knowledge to consider a problem. Thus, evaluation becomes a crucial instrument in maintaining alignment between Islamic Religious Education learning objectives, problem-solving processes, and the development of students' abilities to understand and apply Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

The problem solvin based learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an approach that integrates mastery of religious material with the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Its implementation encompasses five main aspects: learning planning through goal setting and contextual problem formulation, systematic learning implementation, teacher strategies in facilitating discussions and providing guidance, active student involvement, and evaluation of material understanding and application of Islamic values. These five aspects are interrelated in supporting a learning process that is directed, participatory, and relevant to everyday life. The application of this model provides opportunities for students to develop their ability to analyze problems, express opinions, collaborate, and formulate solutions based on Islamic principles. Optimizing its implementation requires careful planning, teacher competence, relevant learning resources, and evaluation that encompasses aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, the problem-solving-based learning model can be an alternative to improving the quality of PAI learning that is oriented not only toward mastery of knowledge but also toward the appreciation and application of Islamic values in everyday life. However, the effectiveness of its application needs to be proven through empirical findings that are appropriate to the context and characteristics of the students.

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Diniyyah Jurnal

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