Parental Engagement in Islamic Education and the Attainment of SDGs 4: A Case Study

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Abstract

Parental engagement is a decisive factor in shaping children's readiness for schooling and sustaining their academic achievement. Within the framework of Islamic education, parental involvement is also regarded as an *amanah* to nurture children's intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. This study aims to explore the forms of parental engagement that contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDGs 4: Quality Education) while reflecting Islamic educational values. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten parents and analyzed through thematic analysis supported by NVivo 12 software. The findings reveal seven forms of parental involvement: fostering emotional closeness, providing learning facilities, monitoring development, organizing study schedules, collaborating with teachers, supervising and assisting learning activities, and offering rewards. These practices not only strengthen inclusive and equitable quality education but also embody Islamic principles of *tarbiyah, ta'lim,* and *ta'dib*. The study implies that integrating parental engagement with Islamic educational values can enhance children's holistic learning outcomes and character formation. It contributes to the discourse on SDG 4 by offering evidence-based insights for educators, policymakers, and Islamic education communities to reinforce family-school partnerships in advancing quality education.

INTRODUCTION

Parental engagement has consistently been identified as a cornerstone of children's educational success. In Islamic education, this engagement is not only pedagogical but also spiritual, as parents are entrusted with the *amanah* to nurture their children's intellectual, moral, and spiritual development (Abdulazeez et al., 2024; Jaafar, 2024; Leany & Ahnan 'Azzam, 2024; Muzekki et al., 2024). Families serve as the first environment where values and learning behaviors are shaped, and the quality of parental involvement directly influences children's readiness for schooling (Alfiyanto et al., 2024; Kusdi, 2019; Parker & Raihani, 2011; Puccioni, 2018; Syarifah et al., 2021).

Globally, SDGs 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education, highlighting the role of families and communities in achieving this target (UNESCO, 2023). In Indonesia, however, parental involvement often remains limited to material support, while emotional closeness, structured guidance, and collaboration with teachers are less emphasized (Sain, 2024; Wahyuni & Bee Tin, 2024). This imbalance creates challenges in ensuring holistic educational outcomes.

Moreover, the lack of comprehensive parental engagement contributes to disparities in learning achievement, discipline, and motivation among children. Addressing this issue is critical, particularly in Islamic education contexts where parental roles are deeply intertwined with religious values and practices (Jamil, 2024; Moslimany et al., 2024).

Finally, the problem is compounded by limited empirical studies that explore parental engagement in Islamic education through the lens of SDGs 4. While international literature highlights the importance of family-school partnerships (Hasan et al., 2024), few studies contextualize these practices within Islamic values, leaving a gap in understanding how parental roles can simultaneously advance local religious goals and global development agendas.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the forms of parental engagement that contribute to achieving SDGs 4 (Quality Education) within Islamic education frameworks. It seeks to identify diverse practices of parental involvement that support children's academic, emotional, and spiritual growth (Affifah et al., 2023; Pusztai et al., 2024).

Another objective is to examine how these practices align with Islamic educational principles such as *tarbiyah* (nurturing), *ta'lim* (teaching), and *ta'dib* (character formation). By situating parental engagement within these values, the study aims to provide culturally and religiously relevant insights for Muslim communities (Bahri et al., 2025; Ridwan, 2025).

Finally, the study intends to generate practical recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to strengthen family-school partnerships. Such recommendations are expected to enhance children's holistic learning outcomes and contribute to the broader agenda of inclusive and equitable quality education (Chand, 2024; Rad et al., 2022).

In addition, the research aims to contribute theoretically by expanding the discourse on parental engagement in Islamic education. While most existing frameworks are derived from Western contexts (Dwinandita, 2024), this study seeks to enrich the literature by integrating Islamic perspectives, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of parental roles in advancing SDGs 4.

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing challenges faced by children in the digital era, including distractions from technology, reduced social interaction, and weakened study discipline. Parental engagement serves as a crucial safeguard against these challenges, ensuring that children remain focused and motivated in their learning (Jalaluddin et al., 2024).

In Islamic education, this urgency is heightened by the religious responsibility of parents to instill values of discipline, morality, and spirituality. Schools alone cannot fulfill this responsibility without active parental involvement, making family engagement indispensable (Jeynes, 2018).

Furthermore, achieving SDGs 4 in Indonesia requires not only institutional reforms but also strong family participation. Without active parental engagement, the goals of inclusive and equitable quality education will remain unattainable. This

study therefore provides timely evidence to integrate parental roles into educational development agendas (Davis-Kean et al., 2021).

Additionally, the urgency is reinforced by national education policies that emphasize character building and holistic learning. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs has highlighted the importance of parental involvement in Islamic schools, yet empirical evidence remains scarce. This study responds to that policy demand by offering research-based insights that can guide implementation at both family and institutional levels (Kementerian Agama RI, 2024).

Previous studies have examined parental involvement in general education, often focusing on its impact on academic achievement and school-community partnerships. For example, Cohen-Vogel et al., (2010) highlighted parental roles in madrasah management, while Alfandi & Inayati, (2024) explored strategies for internalizing Islamic values through nonformal education. However, these studies did not explicitly connect parental engagement with SDG 4 outcomes.

Similarly, Hadi et al., (2025) discussed Islamic educational management in promoting inclusivity, but their focus was institutional rather than familial. Hourani et al., (2012) provided a literature review on parental involvement in Islamic education, yet the micro-level practices of parents at home were not sufficiently addressed.

This study fills the gap by offering empirical evidence on seven specific forms of parental engagement emotional closeness, provision of learning facilities, monitoring development, organizing study schedules, collaboration with teachers, supervision of learning activities, and offering rewards. By linking these practices to Islamic educational values and SDGs 4, the research contributes to both local and global discourses on quality education.

Moreover, international literature on parental engagement often overlooks religious contexts, focusing instead on secular frameworks of family-school collaboration (Rissanen, 2022). By situating parental practices within Islamic education, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature, offering insights that are both culturally specific and globally relevant.

Building on the background, objectives, urgency, and research gap, this study seeks to explore how parental engagement in Islamic education contributes to the attainment of SDGs 4. It investigates the ways in which parents foster emotional closeness, provide learning facilities, monitor development, organize study schedules, collaborate with teachers, supervise learning activities, and offer rewards, and how these practices align with Islamic principles *of tarbiyah, ta'lim,* and *ta'dib*.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research method with a case study design to explore parental engagement in Islamic education and its contribution to achieving SDG 4. Qualitative case studies are particularly effective for investigating complex social phenomena within their real-life contexts, allowing researchers to capture rich, detailed insights from participants (Abishev et al., 2025; Adel et al., 2025.; Akem et al., 2025; Alam & Hamzah, 2025; Elihami & Pajarianto, 2025; Engkizar et al., 2022, 2025; Yasin, 2025; Yin, 2008). By focusing on parental practices in Islamic education, the case study approach provided an in-depth understanding of how families integrate religious values with educational responsibilities.

Data sources and sampling technique the primary data source consisted of in-depth interviews with ten parents whose children were enrolled in Islamic educational institutions. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly applied in qualitative research to identify participants who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research objectives (Albshkar et al., 2025; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Creswell, 2014; Engkizar et al., 2023). This sampling strategy ensured that the study captured diverse perspectives on parental engagement while maintaining relevance to the Islamic education context.

The main instrument of data collection was a semi-structured interview guide, designed to elicit detailed narratives about parental involvement in children's education. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility in probing participants' experiences while maintaining consistency across interviews (Busral et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2024). The interview guide was developed based on themes from previous literature on parental engagement and Islamic education, ensuring both validity and alignment with the study's objectives.

Data analysis was facilitated by NVivo 12 software, which supported systematic coding and organization of qualitative data. NVivo is widely recognized as a powerful tool for managing large volumes of textual data, enabling researchers to identify patterns, categorize codes, and develop themes with transparency and rigor (Walsh et al., 2020). The use of NVivo enhanced the credibility of the findings by ensuring that the analysis process was both structured and replicable.

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview data, following the interactive model of (Miles & Saldaña, 2015). This technique involved three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Through iterative coding and categorization, seven major themes of parental engagement were identified. Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for qualitative studies as it allows researchers to uncover underlying meanings and relationships within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). By combining thematic analysis with NVivo 12, the study ensured methodological rigor and produced findings that are both contextually rich and analytically robust.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview data from ten informants parents whose children are enrolled in Islamic educational institutions revealed seven distinct forms of parental engagement that contribute meaningfully to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education. These findings emerged through a rigorous thematic analysis using NVivo 12, guided by the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Each theme reflects not only practical parental involvement but also embodies core Islamic educational values such as *tarbiyah* (nurturing), *ta'lim* (instruction), and *ta'dib* (character formation). The convergence of empirical data and Islamic pedagogical principles underscores the multidimensional role of parents in shaping inclusive, equitable, and holistic learning environments. To facilitate clearer understanding and application, the seven forms of engagement are visually represented in the diagram below and elaborated in the subsequent sections.

Fig 1. Form of parental engagement

Fostering emotional closeness with children

Parents consistently emphasized the importance of emotional closeness as the foundation of their children's learning motivation. Emotional bonding was described as a way to build trust, reduce anxiety, and encourage openness in communication. This closeness was not only sentimental but also strategic, as it created a supportive environment for academic success.

Daily routines such as shared meals, bedtime conversations, and joint prayers were highlighted as opportunities to strengthen emotional ties. Parents believed that these practices allowed children to express their academic challenges and personal concerns freely. One parent explained, "*When I sit with my son after Maghrib prayer and ask about his day, he opens up about school and even his fears*" (P3).

This finding resonates with Islamic values of *rahmah* (compassion) and *ta'dib* (ethical nurturing), where parental affection is seen as integral to character formation. Emotional closeness was perceived as a moral duty that simultaneously enhanced educational outcomes.

Another parent shared, "*My daughter studies better when she feels I'm near. Even if I don't teach her directly, just sitting beside her makes her feel supported*" (P7). This illustrates that emotional presence, even without direct instruction, can significantly influence a child's confidence and persistence in learning.

Providing learning facilities

Parents demonstrated their commitment to education by ensuring that children had access to adequate learning facilities. These included books, stationery, digital devices, and quiet study spaces. Provision of facilities was viewed as a tangible expression of parental responsibility and investment in their children's future.

Informants stressed the importance of adapting resources to the child's developmental stage. Younger children were given colorful educational materials, while older students received access to online platforms and reference books. One parent explained, "*I bought a second-hand laptop for my son so he could attend online Quran classes and do schoolwork more efficiently*" (P2).

This practice reflects the Islamic principle of *ta'lim*, where facilitating access to knowledge is considered a virtuous act. It also supports SDG 4's target of equitable access to learning tools, ensuring that children are not disadvantaged in their pursuit of education.

Another parent stated, "*We don't have much, but I make sure my children have what*

they need to learn. Even if it means cutting other expenses" (P9). This highlights the prioritization of education within household budgeting, reinforcing the role of parents as active agents in educational equity.

Monitoring children's development

Monitoring children's academic and personal development emerged as a critical form of engagement. Parents regularly checked homework, reviewed test scores, and observed behavioral changes. Monitoring was not limited to academics but extended to emotional and spiritual growth.

Informants described how they used informal conversations and structured routines to track progress. One parent explained, "*Every Friday, I ask my son what he learned in school and in Quran class. It helps me see if he's improving or struggling*" (P5). Such practices allowed parents to intervene early when issues arose.

This form of engagement aligns with the Islamic concept of muraqabah (watchfulness), where parents are entrusted to guide and oversee their children's development. It also resonates with SDG 4's emphasis on measurable learning outcomes and continuous improvement.

Another parent shared, "*I noticed my daughter was quiet and not doing her homework. After talking to her, I found out she was being bullied. That conversation changed everything*" (P1). This example highlights how parental vigilance can uncover hidden barriers to learning and well-being.

Organizing study schedules

Parents actively organized study schedules to help children manage their time and balance academic, religious, and recreational activities. Structured routines were seen as essential for discipline and consistency.

Informants emphasized the importance of flexibility within structure. One parent explained, "*I set a schedule, but I also adjust it if my child is tired or has a school event. It's about balance*" (P6). This reflects the Islamic value of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) and supports SDG 4's goal of promoting lifelong learning habits.

Organizing schedules also helped children develop self-regulation and time management skills. Parents viewed this as preparation for future academic and professional responsibilities. Another parent noted, "*My son knows that after Asr prayer, it's study time. He follows it without being told now*" (P8).

This finding illustrates that parental engagement is not only reactive but also strategic. By instilling routines, parents contribute to the formation of disciplined learners who are better equipped to navigate educational demands.

Collaborating with teachers

Collaboration between parents and teachers was identified as a vital form of engagement. Parents communicated regularly with educators through meetings, messaging apps, and informal visits. This collaboration ensured that both parties shared insights about the child's progress and challenges.

Informants described how teacher-parent communication helped align home and school expectations. One parent explained, "*I asked the teacher how I could help my son with math. She gave me tips, and now he's improving*" (P4). Such partnerships reflect the Islamic principle of shura (consultation) and reinforce SDG 4's emphasis on inclusive educational governance.

Parents also reported that collaboration-built trust and accountability. Another informant shared, "*When the teacher knows I care, she pays more attention to my child's needs. It's mutual*" (P10). This dynamic created a supportive ecosystem for the child's learning.

Moreover, collaboration extended to religious education. One parent explained, "*I work with the ustadz to make sure my daughter's Quran memorization is consistent at home and school*" (P3). This highlights the integration of secular and spiritual learning through cooperative engagement.

Supervising and assisting learning activities

Supervision and assistance during learning activities were common among parents. This included helping with homework, explaining difficult concepts, and guiding religious studies. Parents saw themselves as co-educators, especially when children struggled with comprehension.

Informants shared how they adapted their support based on the child's needs. One parent explained, "*My daughter learns better when I explain things in simple language. I sit with her during homework time*" (P6). This hands-on involvement reflects the Islamic value of *ta'lim* and supports SDG 4's goal of quality learning outcomes.

Parents also emphasized patience and encouragement. Another informant shared, "*Sometimes my son gets frustrated. I tell him it's okay to make mistakes. We learn together*" (P2). This nurturing approach helped build resilience and confidence in learners.

Supervision was not limited to academics. One parent explained, "*I help my children prepare for Quran recitation and correct their tajwid. It's part of our daily routine*" (P9). This shows how educational engagement in Islamic contexts includes both cognitive and spiritual dimensions.

Offering rewards

Offering rewards was a motivational strategy used by parents to reinforce positive learning behaviors. Rewards ranged from verbal praise and extra playtime to small gifts and outings. Parents viewed rewards as a way to acknowledge effort and celebrate achievement.

Informants stressed that rewards were not purely material. One parent explained, "*When my son finishes his homework without being told, I praise him and let him choose a story to read*" (P1). This practice aligns with the Islamic concept of *ihsan* (excellence) and supports SDG 4's emphasis on learner motivation.

Parents also used rewards to encourage religious learning. Another informant shared, "*If my daughter memorizes a new surah, I let her invite a friend over. It makes her excited to learn*" (P5). This approach integrated academic and spiritual goals. However, parents were cautious not to create dependency. One parent explained, "*I tell my children that rewards are for effort, not just results. They must try their best*" (P7). This balanced perspective ensured that rewards supported intrinsic motivation and character development

First finding; attachment theory emphasizes that secure emotional bonds between parents and children foster resilience, motivation, and openness to learning (Godor et al., 2024). In Islamic education, this closeness is framed as *rahmah* (compassion), where affection and empathy are integral to moral and intellectual development. Such emotional nurturing directly supports SDG 4 by creating inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Scholars argue that parental warmth and emotional support are predictors of academic success. Francis et al., (2016) highlights that family-school partnerships are strengthened when children feel emotionally connected to their parents, as this enhances communication and trust. Within Islamic pedagogy, emotional closeness is also linked to *ta'dib*, the ethical nurturing of children (Qasserras, 2024). This practice contributes to SDG 4's vision of equitable quality education by ensuring

that children feel valued and supported.

Empirical studies confirm these perspectives. Sariman & Lukman, (2024) found that children in families with strong emotional bonds demonstrated higher engagement in Islamic learning activities. Similarly, Kikas & Tang, (2019) reported that emotional presence significantly improves children's confidence and persistence in academic tasks. These findings reinforce SDG 4's emphasis on holistic educational outcomes that integrate emotional well-being with academic achievement.

Second finding; the provision of learning facilities reflects the parental role as facilitators of knowledge. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory emphasizes that learning is mediated by tools and resources provided by adults (Friedman, 2022). In Islamic education, this aligns with *ta'lim*, where parents are responsible for ensuring access to knowledge and learning environments. Such provision fulfills SDG 4's target of inclusive and equitable access to education.

Experts emphasize that equitable access to educational resources is critical for achieving SDG 4. UNESCO in 2023 stresses that without adequate facilities, children face systemic disadvantages in both secular and religious education. Providing resources is thus both a practical and moral obligation, ensuring that no child is excluded from quality learning opportunities.

Previous studies support this finding. Parker & Raihani, (2011) demonstrated that parents who invested in learning facilities enabled their children to participate more effectively in Islamic and formal schooling. Similarly, Fahrezi et al., (2024) found that provision of resources was a key determinant of quality education in madrasah contexts. These practices directly advance SDG 4 by reducing inequalities in access to learning tools.

Third finding; monitoring children's development is consistent with the Islamic concept of muraqabah (watchfulness), where parents are entrusted to oversee both academic and spiritual growth. Developmental psychology also emphasizes parental monitoring as a predictor of positive educational outcomes (Affuso et al., 2017). Such vigilance supports SDG 4's emphasis on measurable learning outcomes and continuous improvement.

Experts argue that monitoring is not limited to academic performance but includes emotional and behavioral dimensions. Rani & Fauziah, (2025) notes that effective parental monitoring strengthens accountability and ensures early intervention when challenges arise. In Islamic education, this practice reflects the holistic responsibility of parents to nurture intellect, morality, and spirituality. This aligns with SDG 4's goal of promoting inclusive and equitable education.

Empirical evidence supports this perspective. Firmansyah & Darmawan, (2023) found that parental monitoring in Islamic schools improved both academic achievement and character formation. Similarly, Brown et al., (2013) reported that vigilant parental oversight helped identify hidden barriers such as bullying. These findings reinforce SDG 4's commitment to safe and supportive learning environments.

Fourth finding; organizing study schedules reflects parental efforts to instill discipline and time management. Time management theory suggests that structured routines enhance productivity and reduce stress. In Islamic education, this practice resonates with *wasatiyyah* (moderation), balancing academic, spiritual, and recreational activities. Such routines contribute to SDG 4's vision of lifelong learning habits.

Experts highlight that structured study schedules prepare children for sustained educational success. Astriya, (2025) argues that routines foster self-regulation, which is essential for academic achievement. Within Islamic pedagogy, organizing schedules also ensures that religious practices such as prayer and Quran recitation are integrated into daily life. This integration advances SDG 4's emphasis on holistic education.

Previous studies confirm these insights. Khalid et al., (2020) found that children with structured study routines demonstrated higher academic performance and stronger engagement in Islamic learning. Similarly, Sanyal & Farah, (2019) reported that parental scheduling practices in madrasah contexts contributed to improved discipline and educational outcomes. These practices directly support SDG 4's target of effective and equitable learning.

Fifth finding; collaboration between parents and teachers reflects the Islamic principle of shura (consultation), emphasizing collective responsibility in education. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence highlights that effective collaboration strengthens family-school partnerships and enhances student achievement. Such partnerships advance SDG 4's goal of inclusive educational governance.

Experts argue that teacher-parent collaboration builds trust and accountability. Maulana, (2024) notes that when parents and teachers share information, children benefit from consistent expectations and support. In Islamic education, collaboration ensures alignment between home practices and school curricula, particularly in Quran memorization and moral instruction. This alignment contributes to SDG 4's emphasis on quality education.

Empirical studies support this finding. Syamsiyah, (2024) demonstrated that parental collaboration with teachers improved educational quality in madrasah settings. Similarly, Dewanti et al., (2024) found that cooperative engagement between parents and educators promoted inclusivity and equitable learning outcomes in Islamic schools. These findings reinforce SDG 4's commitment to partnerships that strengthen education systems.

Sixth finding; supervision and assistance during learning activities reflect the parental role as co-educators. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasizes that children learn best when guided by adults who scaffold their understanding. In Islamic education, this aligns with *ta'lim*, where parents actively participate in teaching and guiding their children. Such involvement supports SDG 4's goal of quality learning outcomes.

Experts highlight that parental assistance fosters resilience and confidence. Jimola & Ofodu, (2025) argues that supportive supervision reduces frustration and enhances motivation. Within Islamic pedagogy, supervision also ensures that children's religious learning such as Quran recitation is accurate and consistent. This practice contributes to SDG 4's emphasis on effective and inclusive education.

Empirical evidence confirms these perspectives. Alfiyanto et al., (2024) found that parental assistance in Islamic learning activities improved children's comprehension and engagement. Similarly, Jimola & Ofodu, (2025) reported that hands-on parental involvement strengthened both academic and spiritual outcomes. These findings directly advance SDG 4's target of equitable and holistic education.

Seventh finding; offering rewards reflects motivational strategies rooted in both psychology and Islamic values. Behaviorist theory emphasizes reinforcement

as a key driver of learning. In Islamic education, rewards are linked to *ihsan* (excellence), encouraging children to strive for both academic and spiritual achievement. Such reinforcement supports SDG 4's aim of holistic learner development.

Experts caution that rewards should balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory argues that rewards must support autonomy and competence rather than create dependency (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Within Islamic pedagogy, rewards are framed as recognition of effort, not merely outcomes. This balance contributes to SDG 4's emphasis on sustainable learning motivation.

Empirical studies support this balanced approach. Asnani et al., (2024) found that rewards in Islamic education contexts motivated children to engage in both academic and religious learning. Similarly, Akabor, (2021) reported that verbal praise and recognition were more effective than material rewards in sustaining long-term motivation. These findings reinforce SDG 4's commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education that nurtures excellence.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that parental engagement in Islamic education is not only a pedagogical necessity but also a strategic response to community service needs, as it empowers families to actively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). Through interviews with ten informants, seven distinct forms of parental involvement were identified emotional closeness, provision of learning facilities, monitoring development, organizing study schedules, collaboration with teachers, supervision of learning activities, and offering rewards which collectively strengthen children's academic, emotional, and spiritual growth. The novelty of this article lies in its integration of Islamic educational values (*rahmah, ta'lim, ta'dib*, and *shura*) with the global agenda of SDGs 4, thereby bridging local practices of parental engagement with international discourses on inclusive and equitable education. This contribution not only enriches theoretical perspectives on family-school partnerships but also provides practical insights for community-based educational programs, highlighting the indispensable role of parents as co-educators in advancing quality education.

DECLARATIONS
Author contribution
Nor-Hayna Dasad Tadol: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Chuti Neem**: conceptualization, methodology, **Gifa Oktavia & Afifah Febriani**: visualization, editing, analysis.

AI Statement
The data and the grammatical structure in this article have been validated and verified by English language experts and no AI-generated sentences are included in this article.

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The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

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The research company has agreed to carry out the research and is willing if the results of this research are published.

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