THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study investigates the role of social media in strengthening religious moderation among students of Islamic Religious Education. Employing a literature review methodology, this research synthesizes existing scholarly works to analyze how social media platforms influence the understanding and practice of religious moderation among this specific student demographic. The study explores the potential of social media as a tool for disseminating moderate Islamic teachings, fostering interfaith dialogue, and countering extremist narratives. Furthermore, it examines the challenges and risks associated with social media use, such as the spread of intolerance and radical ideologies. The findings highlight the significant impact of social media on shaping students' religious perspectives and underscore the need for strategic approaches to harness its positive potential while mitigating its negative influences. The implications of this research suggest the importance of developing digital literacy and critical thinking skills among students, as well as designing effective online educational initiatives that promote religious moderation and inclusivity.

Keywords: Social Media, Religious Moderation, Islamic Education

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology, which is characterized by massive social media penetration, has brought significant transformative impacts in various modern life sphes, including in the context of understanding and integration of religious moderation. In this all-round digital era, social media is no longer just serving as a communication tool, but has evolved into a vehicle to disseminate information and internalization of religious values that have a broad influence, especially among students as a young intellectual group. In the scope of Islamic education, social media offers great potential as a strategic instrument to strengthen a deep understanding and concrete implementation of the principles of religious moderation. Given the socio-cultural diversity of Indonesian society and the potential for polarization, efforts to strengthen religious moderation through the use of social media wisely into a necessity for the property of harmony and social cohesion. Students, as a capable generation in digital literacy and has idealism, plays a crucial role as a change agent that is able to use the power of social media constructively to spread tolerance values, inclusiveness, and balance in religion, so that it becomes a role model for future generations.¹

This dynamics meal, it is important to further identify how Islamic religious education students can optimize their roles in Digital Ranah. As a Muslim educator and intellectual candidate, they have a unique capacity to bridge the comprehensive understanding of religion with the skills in tech. Their active involvement in producing and spreading constructive contents, straightening misinformation, as well as developing a healthy dialogue on the social media platform being crusal. More than just delivering messages, their ability to create moderate moderate moderate values and relevant to digital generation language will determine the effectiveness of their influence. Thus, the empowerment of Islamic religious education in digital literacy, attractive content production, as well as an in-depth understanding of the contemporary issues of religion and the society is an important agenda in collective efforts to strengthen the moderation of religion in the Digital Indonesian era.²

The country of Indonesia has a wealth of religious and cultural diversity, moderation of religion plays a central role as the foundation of the creation of solid social harmony. Nevertheless, the digital landscape currently presents its own challenges, especially with the massive spread of extremists through various social media platforms. On the one hand, social media offers convenience that has never existed before in terms of interaction, information exchange, and dynamic public opinion formation. However, on the other hand, the characteristics are open and indefinitely also make it vulnerable to being misused as the medium of the dissemination of misinformation, tendensions, even provocative, which has the potential to tolerate and trigger social disharmony. In this situation, Islamic Education students have great hopes of appearing as a proactive change agent. They are expected to be able to utilize the potential of social media intelligently and responsibly to disseminate moderate values, build peace narratives, and strengthen understanding and practices of religious moderation among the wider community, especially in digital domains.³

Therefore, the empowerment of Islamic religious education students in leveraging on social media strategically became crusal. They need to be released with the ability to protect the contents that are not only interesting and relevant to digital audience, but also rich in moderation of religious moderation. This includes the ability

¹ A Patih, A Nurulah, and F Hamdani, "Upaya Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Pada Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Umum," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2023): 1387–1400, https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i001.6139.

² Rika Sukmawati, "Analisis Kesiapan Mahasiswa Menjadi Calon Guru Profesional Berdasarkan Standar Kompetensi Pendidik," *Jurnal Analisa*, 2019, https://doi.org/10.15575/ja.v5i1.4789.

³ A Siregar, "Media Sosial Sebagai Syiar Nilai Moderasi Beragama," *Jurnal Ilmiah Edunomika* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–10, https://jurnal.stie aas.ac.id/index.php/jie/article/view/12055%0Ahttps://jurnal.stieaas.ac.id/index.php/jie/article/viewFile/12055/4832.

to present contextual and inclusive religious teachings, deny extremist narrations with rational and persuasive arguments, as well as develop constructive dialogue space in the midst of views. Students need to develop awareness of social ethics of social and capabilities of credible information, so they are not just a positive message spread, but also an example in interacting responsibly in Digital Ranah. Thus, the presence of active and intelligent Islamic education students in social media is expected to create counter-narrative waves of extremism and strengthen the main moderate moderately among the younger generation and extensive society.⁴

Previous research by Hidayat (2021) on the role of Islamic Education Students in improving religious moderations in the digital era, explaining that Islamic religious education students can be controlled by creating an attractive religious contents and upload it to Social Media Site. The results show that students can influence teenagers and the general public with its moderate and tolerant content. ⁵ In addition, Yanasari's research explained that social media was effectively used to erode conservative emergencies and developed religious moderate emergence. The author recommends every Indonesian society to echo a religious moderation through social media in the promotion of religious moderation. However, this research is not specific to Islamic education students but more covers to the people of Indonesia in general.⁶

Based on the two researches, this paper is aimed at conducting a more comprehensive study of significance of social media contributions in the practicing of religious moderation practices among Islamic religious education students. The main focus of this Telaah is on how students leverage on social media platforms as a means of searching, sharing, and undertaking the moderation of moderation values, especially in the context of digital landscape that have rapid evolution in recent years. Thus, this paper is capable of presenting a fresh perspective and understanding and provides new theoretical and practical importance in analyzing dynamics of interaction between social media and motto moderation among the candidates of Islamic religious educators.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a library study approach to analyze the social media roles on the master of religious moderation on Islamic religious education students. This method is chosen because it is intended to synthesize and critically evaluate the existing knowledge of various relevant scientific sources, such as journal articles, books, research reports, and other publications. Literature studies allow researchers

⁴ Ali Mursyid Azisi et al., "Islam Cerdas Di Ruang Digital: Urgensi Peran Mahasiswa Dalam Menebar Jala Moderasi Beragama Di Media Sosial," *Medina-Te*: *Jurnal Studi Islam*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.19109/medinate.v18i2.15444.

⁵ M R Hidayat, "Peran Mahasiswa Dalam Implemen-Tasi Moderasi Beragama Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2021): 28–42.

⁶ P Yanasari, "Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Melalui Media Sosial (Studi Terhadap Mahasiswa IAIN SAS Babel," *EDUGAMA: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 7, no. 2 (2021): 242–262, https://doi.org/10.32923/edugama.v7i1.1981.

to identify key themes, important concepts, used methodologies, as well as the gap of knowledge in the literature related literature.⁷

The process of collecting data is done through systematic search on various academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and also a special database of social and religious sciences such as Sinta and Moraref. The keywords used in the search include a combination of terms such as "social media," "religious moderation," "Islamic Education," "University Students," "Interfaith Dialogue," "Extremism," and terms other relevant, both in English and Indonesian.

The source inclusion criteria used in this study are: (1) the relevance of the source with the topic of the role of social media and moderation religion among students or young adult groups; (2) publications within the time span [mention the relevant time span, for example: last 5-10 years] to ensure relevance with contemporary context; (3) Sources that have trusted academic quality (indexed journal articles, books published by leading academic publishers, or research reports from credible institutions). Sources that do not meet these criteria are excluded from the analysis.

After the data collection process, the next step is data analysis. The collected data is analyzed qualitatively through the narrative synthesis method. This method involves identification, comparison, and interpretation of findings from various sources to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in strengthening religious moderation in PAI students. The analysis process includes identification of central themes that arise from the literature, comparison of arguments and findings between studies, and identifying potential implications and recommendations for further research.⁸

The limitations in this study are that the analysis is fully based on the available literature. However, by conducting a systematic and comprehensive library study, this study seeks to provide a valid and relevant picture of the topic studied, and provide a foundation for empirical research in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term social media consists of two words, namely media and social. The media refers to the tools used to communicate, while social refers to the interactions carried out by individuals who contribute to the surrounding communities. Social media or social networking allows users to join, share, and create content on online platforms, such as forums. Thus, social media functions as a means of an internet-based social interaction that allows users to share information, participate, send messages, and build relationships and networks.⁹

Social media has become an integral part of everyday life, offering a significant variety of benefits, but also has a negative impact that cannot be ignored. In a positive context, social media facilitates communication and interaction between individuals, allowing people to stay connected even though it is separated by physical distance.

⁷ Rukin, Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif, Rake Sarasin, 2022.

⁸ Muhammad rizal Pahkeviannur, "Penelitian Kualitatif : Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Jurnal EQUILIBRIUM*, 2022.

⁹ Andrias Pujiono, "Media Sosial Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bagi Generasi Z," *Didache: Journal of Christian Education*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.46445/djce.v2i1.396.

Platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram allow users to share important moments, communicate directly, and build closer relationships.¹⁰

In addition, social media functions as a fast source of information and education. The latest news, articles, and educational content can be easily accessed, helping users remain up-to-date with the development of the world. Many educational institutions also use social media to share knowledge and tutorials, provide opportunities for individuals to learn new things in an interesting way.¹¹ However, behind the benefits, there is a negative impact that needs to be observed. One of the main problems is the spread of false or hoeaks that can mislead the user. The inability of multiple people to filter information well can cause the dissemination of unstable news.¹² In addition, the use of excessive social media can cause mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. Users often feel depressed to show a perfect life, which can trigger a feeling of inferiority and social jealousy.¹³

Cyber evil is also a serious issue in this digital era, where fraud and theft of data are on. This shows that although social media has the potential to connect people and provide educational benefits, its use should be done wisely to avoid negative impacts that may arise.¹⁴ Overall, social media is a powerful tool in forming social interaction and information dissemination. However, it is important for users to realize both sides of this phenomenon in order to be able to take advantage of their benefits while minimizing existing risks. By utilizing the potential of social media wisely, we can optimize its role in strengthening religious moderation, making it an effective tool for building a more tolerant and peaceful society.¹⁵

Moderasi Beragama pada Mahasiswa

The moderation of religion is to practice religious teachings in a balanced and fair way, so that life is harmonious. This means we prioritize human values and benefit in religion, while sticking to the principles of religion and state regulations. Modered is not religion itself, but the way we understand and practice it to always be relevant and have a positive impact on the community. Furthermore, moderation religion invites each religious follower to see religion as a source of peace and goodness, not as a split or justification for violence. This attitude is reflected in the ability to put itself proportionally between personal beliefs and diverse social realities.

¹⁰ Sholeh Utomo et al., "Efektivitas Kampanye Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Whatsapp Group Pada Masyarakat Desa," *Jurnal Riset Agama*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15097.

¹¹ Chairun Nisa Zempi, Ana Kuswanti, and Siti Maryam, "ANALISIS PERAN MEDIA SOSIAL DALAM PEMBENTUKAN PENGETAHUAN POLITIK MASYARAKAT," *EKSPRESI DAN PERSEPSI : JURNAL ILMU KOMUNIKASI*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.33822/jep.v6i1.5286.

¹² Khairullah Khairullah, "Analisis Pemahaman Mahasiswa Polimedia Medan Terhadap Fenomena Hoaks Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi Communique*, 2022.

¹³ Asma Abidah Al Aziz, "Hubungan Antara Intensitas Penggunaan Media Sosial Dan Tingkat Depresi Pada Mahasiswa," *Acta Psychologia*, 2020, https://doi.org/10.21831/ap.v2i2.35100.

¹⁴ Ramadhika Vebryto and Irwansyah Irwansyah, "Pencurian Data Dan Informasi Di Media Sosial Melalui Informasi Hoax: Studi Kasus Pada Media Sosial Facebook," *PERSPEKTIF*, 2020, https://doi.org/10.31289/perspektif.v9i2.3627.

¹⁵ Didin Wahyudin, "RELASI AGAMA, MEDIA DAN NARASI MODERASI BERAGAMA PADA GENERASI Z DI TULUNGAGUNG," *Dinamika Penelitian: Media Komunikasi Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.21274/dinamika.2023.23.01.131-148.

A moderate person in religion will be open to differences in views, being able to dialogue constructively, and avoid exclusive attitudes that consider only the correct group. The practice of moderation religion also involves awareness that in state, there is a joint agreement contained in the constitution, which must be respected and obeyed by all citizens, without exception.¹⁶

Many mistakenly think that moderating religion will make a person's understanding of a shallow religion. In fact, on the contrary, religious moderation is a real way to carry out actual religious values. Someone who truly understands his religion will be kind and open to differences. So, moderation of religion is not mixing religious teachings, but more to respect the diversity of beliefs in Indonesia. Moderation religion is characterized by four indicators, namely tolerance, rejection of violence, acceptance of tradition, and commitment to nationality. If these four things exist, then religious life and a pillar, peaceful, and mutual respect, which ultimately advancing Indonesia, it will be more easily realized. ¹⁷

The notion that religious moderation can erode the depth of religious understanding is a misconception that needs to be straightened. Precisely, moderation of religious is an authentic manifestation of the essence of religious teachings itself. Religions basically teach universal values such as affection, peace, justice, and wisdom. Individuals who have a deep understanding of religion will be able to translate these noble values in their social interaction, especially when dealing with differences of confidence. Hospitality, empathy, and openness to others is the fruit of understanding the mature religion, not the other way around. It is important to be emphasized that religious moderation is completely meaningful in syncretism or confusing dogmas and rituals between religions. It focuses on social levels and society, where differences are a necessity. Appreciating religious diversity in Indonesia is a manifestation of recognition of the reality of the nation's plurality and the implementation of the human values taught by every religion.

Realizing religious moderation in Indonesia faces a number of significant challenges that require the collective attention and efforts of all elements of the nation. One of the main obstacles is the increase in extremism in religion, where groups with rigid and exclusive religious interpretations have the potential to damage social harmony. They often reject differences and even use violence to achieve their ideological goals. Therefore, it is very important to actively spread the understanding of inclusive and peaceful religion through various channels, as well as building strong counter-extremism narratives. Comprehensive religious education and critical thinking skills are also an important fortress in protecting the community from the influence of radicalism.¹⁸

¹⁶ Halen Dwistia et al., "Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Ar-Rusyd: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.61094/arrusyd.2830-2281.33.

¹⁷ Athoillah Islamy, "PENDIDIKAN ISLAM MULTIKULTURAL DALAM INDIKATOR MODERASI BERAGAMA DI INDONESIA," Jurnal Analisa Pemikiran Insaan Cendikia, 2022, https://doi.org/10.54583/apic.vol5.no1.87.

¹⁸ Arrohmanul Khudri, "Internalisasi Nilai Moderasi Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di SMK Negeri 1 Panai Hilir Kabupaten Labuhan Batu Sumatera Utara," *Jurnal Penelitian*, *Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran: JPPP*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.30596/jppp.v3i1.9933.

Moderated issues among students are the role of crusal in shaping the future of the nation. As an intellectual for intellectual and leader, the vulnerable student is exposed to various ideologies, including extreme views that can threaten social cohesions and grow intolerance to diversity. A deep understanding of religious moderations will provide them with cognitive and affective filters that are essential to smart and proportional differences. When the principles of moderate moderate moderation, the way of attitude, attitude, and student action will tend to be more inclusive, open to dialogue, and avoid all forms of extremism.

Furthermore, the moderation urgency of religion among students goes beyond the prevention of extremism. This concept has great potential in strengthening social solidarity in a compound society. Students who understand and practice religious moderation will be able to build communication bridges and collaboration with individuals from various ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. In the increasingly connected and interdependent global era, the ability to interact positively, build cross-cultural understanding, and cooperating with different people will be a very valuable soft skills, not only in personal and professional life, but also in contributing to global peace and progress.

Therefore, investment in the understanding of moderation religion among students is a long-term investment for the formation of a more peaceful, tolerant and civilized society. This effort can be realized through various ways, such as the integration of moderating values in the higher education curriculum, the implementation of discussion and seminar involving various perspectives, as well as the establishment of dialogue forums between students from various backgrounds. By investing a solid understanding of religious moderation since early in the campus environment, we are preparing the next generation that is not only intelligently intelligently, but also has high emotional and social intelligence, able to treat diversity as a wealth of the nation, and contribute actively in Realizing Indonesia's advanced and harmonious.¹⁹

Peran Media Sosial terhadap Penguatan Moderasi Beragama pada Mahasiswa Pendidikan Agama Islam

Islamic religious education students currently live in a very active digital era, where social media has become an important part of their daily lives. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are not only a communication tool, but also the place to spread information and religious values. In terms of religious moderation, social media has an important role to strengthen understanding and moderation practices among students. Social media can be effectively used to reduce conservative understandings and grow moderate religious ways. Because of the many religious fundamentalist understandings on social media and lack of content and discussion about religious moderation, this understanding becomes more and adversely impacts on religious tolerance. However, through social media, students can be invited to voice religious moderation more.

¹⁹ Zulkifli Zulkifli et al., "Pemahaman Mahasiswa Tentang Moderasi Beragama Di Perguruan Tinggi Umum," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v17i1.1902.

All Indonesian people need to actively spread the message of moderating religion in their respective social media in the maximum way. Especially Islamic religious education students, they must agendally convey moderate values through the digital platform. Social media such as Instagram and Facebook are very potentially to promote religious moderation among the generation of millennials and Z. Instagram genes, focusing on visuals, can deliver a message about moderation of religion effectively, informatively, persuasive, and educative through images and video. Packaged interesting content will be more popular. For example, content that explains religious understanding in the context of the present, diversity, tolerance, and humanity based on the Koran and Pancasila will be a source of science for social media users. In addition, cooperation between Islamic education institutions and social media platforms is also very important.²⁰

The use of social media to disseminate information about moderation of religion is crucial. Moderation of religious on social media is not only a matter of conveying messages, but also about how we interact actively with our followers. For example, many young people now prefer digital platforms to spread religious moderating messages compared to old ways. This shows that students have great potential to participate actively in campaigning for religious moderation through social media.²¹ Therefore, social media has a very important role in strengthening religious moderation among PAI students. Social media also acts as a bridge for students to participate directly in religious moderation campaigns. PAI students can make posts, videos or blogs that deliver moderate messages, so they can reach millions of people in a short time.²²

Social media is now a very important platform in strengthening religious mods, especially among Islamic religious education students (PAI). Along with the advancement of technology and its easy access to Internet access, social media provides employees with students to deliver their moderate views and values. This is not just about disseminating information, but also about forming communities and networks that support the religious ideas and religious dialogue.²³

In this digital era, PAI students have the opportunity to become agents of change through the creative content they produce. For example, they can make posts that arouse awareness about the importance of tolerance and respectful attitude. Through platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, or Tiktok, these messages can easily reach a wider audience, even up to millions of people in a short time. Educational videos and blogs that serve moderate narratives can attract the attention of the

²⁰ Nanda Tiara, "Urgensi Syiar Moderasi Beragama Melalui Media Sosial," IAIN Pontianak Repository, 2023.

²¹ Syaifuddin Syaifuddin and Mohd Ali Azis, "Dakwah Moderat Pendakwah Nahdatul Ulama (Analisis Konten Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Sejarah)," *Hikmah*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.24952/hik.v15i1.3248.

²² Jimmi Pindan Pute, Alferdi, and Deflit Dujerslaim Lilo, "REVITALISASI MODERASI BERAGAMA MELALUI PEMANFAATAN LITERASI DIGITAL OLEH GEN-Z," *Masokan: Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.34307/misp.v3i1.108.

²³ Muhammad Alwi HS, Iin Parninsih, and Nahla Fakhriyah Alwi, "Moderasi Beragama Pesantren: Jaringan Dan Paham Keagamaan As'Adiyah, Darul Da'Wah Wal Irsyad, Dan Nahdlatul Ulum Sulawesi Selatan," *Dialog*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v45i1.581.

younger generation, which is often more open to new ideas. PAI students can use an interesting and interactive approach, such as online discussions, webinars, or social media challenges, to encourage active participation in religious moderation campaigns. This creates constructive dialogue and provides space for various perspectives.²⁴

Furthermore, social media also allows students to connect themselves to the organization and global movement that encourage religious moderation. They can collaborate on a joint project, share experiences, and expand insight into various moderate religious practices throughout the world. By utilizing social media effectively, PAI students not only contribute to the strengthening of religious moderation in the campus environment, but can also be an example for the wider community. In the long run, this can help shape a more inclusive and harmonious culture, where differences are considered strength, not a barrier.²⁵

Therefore, the role of social media in religious moderation cannot be underestimated, it is a strategic tool in creating awareness, promoting dialogue, and strengthening tolerance values among the younger generation. However, keep in mind that social media also has a significant risk in the form of false information deployment or a shake that can mislead the public. Therefore, it is important for PAI students to have the ability of strong analytical criticism in filtering the information they receive. They must be able to distinguish between accurate and false information, and anyone who conveys the messages.²⁶

Thus, social media is not only a communication tool, but it is also a strong instrument in revitalizing and strengthening religious moderation among PAI students. Through active and continuous interactions with relevant information, and direct participation in religious moderation campaigns, PAI students can contribute significantly in maintaining religious and social harmony in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media has become one of the most effective facilitators in strengthening religious modes among Islamic religious education students. Social media plays a crusal role in the master of religious moderation among Islamic religious education students (PAI). Social media platforms not only allow students to deliver tolerance values and respect each other, but also create space for dialogue and collaboration with various organizations. By leveraging on creative and interactive contents, students can reach broader audiences, thus spreading moderate messages effectively. However, awareness of the risk of dissemination of false information is very important, and the ability of critical analysis is the key to ensuring the nature of information.

²⁴ Hidayat, "Peran Mahasiswa Dalam Implemen-Tasi Moderasi Beragama Di Media Sosial."

²⁵ Pebi Erika and Paulina Maria E. W, "PEMBAURAN SOSIAL MELALUI PROYEK MODERASI BERAGAMA DI ORGANISASI BEM SE KOTA PALANGKA RAYA," *Sepakat : Jurnal Pastoral Kateketik*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.58374/sepakat.v8i2.97.

²⁶ Khairullah, "Analisis Pemahaman Mahasiswa Polimedia Medan Terhadap Fenomena Hoaks Di Media Sosial."

Thus, social media does not only function as a communication tool, but also as an instrument that strengthens religious moderation and maintains social harmony in the future. With the right strategy, such as interesting modern content and collaboration between educational institutions and social media, PAI students can be invited to echo the maximum moderation of religious. Therefore, it is very important for PAI students to use social media as a learning tool and promotion of moderate values so that they can become the next generation who are ready to maintain social harmony in diverse communities.

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