



Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education through the Qur'an Recitation and Reading Program at the Elementary School Level

Rahma Diana Sayidah

Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Jl. Kaliurang km. 14,5 Sleman, Yogyakarta 55584, Indonesia

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Abstract: Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education through the Qur'an Recitation and Reading Program at the Elementary School Level

Objective: This study aims to examine the values of religious moderation in the Qur'an recitation and reading program implemented in several elementary schools in Kapanewon Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta Special Region. **Methods:** This study used a qualitative approach with a field research design. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was obtained through triangulation of sources and methods. **Results:** The Qur'an recitation and reading program contains the central values in religious moderation, namely justice (tawasuth), balance (tawazun), and tolerance (Masamune). **Conclusion:** The Qur'an recitation and reading program is an effective medium in instilling the values of religious moderation in elementary schools. **Contribution:** This research provides a conceptual and practical basis for developing interfaith education models that strengthen the values of tolerance and diversity in education.

Keyword: Religious Moderation Value; Islamic Education; Qur'an recitation and reading program

Abstrak: Penerapan Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Pendidikan Islam Melalui Program Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab pada Jenjang Sekolah Dasar

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji nilai-nilai moderasi beragama yang terkandung dalam program Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab yang telah diterapkan di beberapa sekolah dasar di Kapanewon Depok, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain penelitian field research. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data diperoleh melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode. **Hasil:** Program Sleman Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab memuat nilai-nilai utama dalam moderasi beragama, yaitu keadilan (tawasuth), keseimbangan (tawazun), dan toleransi (tasamuh). **Kesimpulan:** Program Sleman Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab menjadi media yang efektif dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama di sekolah dasar. **Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memberikan landasan konseptual dan praktis bagi pengembangan model pendidikan lintas agama yang memperkuat nilai-nilai toleransi dan keberagaman dalam dunia pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Nilai Moderasi Beragama; Pendidikan Islam; Program Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab

* Corresponding Author: Rahma Diana Sayidah, 23913059@students.uii.ac.id

Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Address: Jl. Kaliurang km. 14,5 Sleman, Yogyakarta 55584, Indonesia

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's social and cultural capital includes its language, culture, ethnicity, and religious diversity, which contributes to maintaining a tolerant and harmonious living environment. With Pancasila as its foundational philosophy, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) reflects a tolerant attitude demonstrated by the country's founding fathers (Kafid, 2023). Indonesia is a multicultural nation with a wide range of diversity. Society naturally responds to this diversity in various ways. Depending on individual perspectives, these responses can be either positive or negative. A diverse society may become more tolerant or, conversely, less tolerant. However, some segments of the population do not consistently practice tolerance. Some people continue to view diversity as a threat, which can lead to social conflict (Zahroh, 2022).

Several incidents in Indonesia reflect that intolerance still occurs. For example, in Surakarta, a book discussion featuring the work of Haidar Bagir was rejected by a group identifying themselves as ANNAS (National Anti-Shia Alliance) in May 2017. Another incident occurred during Eid al-Fitr in 2019 when a police post was bombed, and there was also a bombing attempt at a house of worship by an irresponsible individual (Kafid, 2023). In response to these incidents, the government began implementing a religious moderation policy in 2020 as part of Indonesia's national development program. This policy aims to integrate religious values into social and national life in a balanced and inclusive manner (Annisa & Tabassum, 2023). Religious moderation encourages people of faith to practice their religion without engaging in extreme actions toward followers of other religions (Kemenag, 2019). According to Sutrisno, religious moderation offers a middle path for addressing differences (Shaleh & Fadhilah, 2022).

Presidential Regulation No. 86 of 2020, in its 2021 Government Work Plan appendix, states that "strengthening religious moderation to enhance tolerance, harmony, and social unity" is one of the national priority programs for the 2021–2024 period (Jayadi, 2025). Religious moderation should be taught to children from an early age. Building a culture of moderation is more effective when started from the ground up (Mulyanti & Muhajarah, 2025). When children are introduced to diversity early on, they are more likely to grow into adults who can practice religion without being overly dogmatic. A study conducted by the Setara Institute in 2016, as cited by Nur Kafid in his book Religious Moderation, found a relatively high level of intolerance among students. The research categorized intolerance into two groups: passive or Puritan intolerance at 2.4 per cent and active or radical intolerance at 0.3 per cent (Kafid, 2023).

These findings indicate an increase in intolerance among students. Therefore, it is essential to teach religious moderation from an early stage (Zaluchu et al., 2023). Elementary school is a crucial phase in a child's development. According to Sabani, as cited by Desnita, elementary school is a period when students are ready to learn. At this stage, children are taught about values and ethics that are the foundation of behaviour and character formation later in life (Desnita & Salminawati, 2024).

Aligned with this idea, the Sleman District Education Office launched a program to enhance character and spiritual education. Education is not only responsible for intellectual development but also for spiritual growth (Nasibulina, 2015). Research conducted by Husnaini suggests that developing intelligence should begin with a spiritual approach. Intelligence without a spiritual foundation may lead people to forget their relationship with God, which could result in moral failure (Husnaini et al., 2021).

The program is called "*Sleman Mengaji dan Membaca Alkitab*" (Sleman Qur'an Recitation and Reading Program). All public elementary schools in Sleman are required to implement this program. It involves Islamic students participating in religious activities such as reciting *Asmaul Husna* and the Qur'an every Tuesday and Thursday morning for 30 minutes before class. Christian and Catholic students engage in Bible reading and reflection. Although the groups are separated by faith, the activities are conducted simultaneously.

This program represents an innovative approach in the field of education in Sleman. However, there are still several challenges in its implementation. Not all schools can carry out these activities consistently due to obstacles such as a lack of Christian or Catholic religious education teachers, limited facilities to accommodate all students in one place and various school-specific issues ([Koukounaras, 2022](#)). Nevertheless, the program continues to impact both students and the school environment positively.

Other researchers have also explored similar topics related to religious moderation in education. [Jasiah et al. \(2023\)](#), for instance, conducted a study on the values of religious moderation within the *Huma Tabela* program. The study found that this program promotes religious moderation through learning activities and social interactions in the school environment ([Hasan & Juhannis, 2024](#)).

Nurlaili's research found that religious moderation is important in maintaining national unity. It encourages tolerance among different religious groups and is a foundation for a harmonious social life in a diverse society ([Millah & Nasution, 2024](#)). Her study showed that applying religious moderation at the elementary school level can lead to high harmony and tolerance among students. By instilling mutual respect and providing space for students to practice their religion freely, schools become an effective platform for promoting the values of diversity ([Lessy et al., 2022](#)).

This study explores the values of religious moderation embedded in the Qur'an recitation and reading program in Depok District, Sleman. It offers a new perspective on religious moderation by focusing on its values and how those values are incorporated into every educational unit. This research aims to explain how religious moderation influences human life, making it a valuable academic contribution to the field. The findings are expected to offer conceptual and practical foundations for developing interfaith education models that strengthen school tolerance and diversity.

B. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using field research. Qualitative research is an approach that focuses on background and individuals as a whole, producing descriptive data from people and their behaviour ([Abdussamad, 2021](#)). This approach was chosen because it allows a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied within its natural context.

The primary focus of this research is to examine the values of religious moderation embedded in implementing the Qur'an recitation and reading program at the elementary school level. This study aims to implement the program in three public elementary schools in the Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The schools involved in this research include SD Negeri Nogopuro, SD Negeri Condongcatur, and SD Negeri Caturtunggal 3.

The research subjects consist of three teachers, each representing one of the selected schools. They were chosen purposively based on their direct involvement in the program. Data were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviews were conducted to gather information from the teachers regarding their understanding, experiences, and program implementation at their schools. Direct field observations were conducted to see how the program was practised daily. Meanwhile, documentation was conducted by collecting and analyzing relevant supporting documents as supplementary data.

Data analysis was carried out in three stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The data reduction stage aimed to simplify and focus the data relevant to the research objectives. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding and analysis. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings to identify thematic patterns and meanings within the data.

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used triangulation techniques, including both source and method triangulation. This process involved comparing and confirming the interview, observation, and documentation results. Triangulation aimed to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, ensuring that the research results are scientifically accountable.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the interview with Respondent 1 (the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SD Negeri Nogopuro), the value of justice in religious moderation refers to the principle that everyone has equal rights. This program reflects the value of justice, also known as *tawasuth* (moderation). She stated that the Qur'an recitation and reading program at SD Negeri Nogopuro is called *Religious Literacy* to convey a more moderate and general meaning. This value of justice is also evident in how Muslim students participate in group recitations (*tadarus*). In contrast, non-Muslim students are given time and space to read their holy scriptures in separate rooms.

In line with the view of Respondent 1, Respondent 2, the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SD Negeri Condongcatur, also emphasized the importance of justice in the program. She stated that students have the same right to freely practice their religion, as all religions ultimately teach goodness. She explained that the school firmly commits to justice and equality in education by implementing the Qur'an recitation and reading program. All Muslim, Christian, or Catholic students are granted the same right to participate in their respective religious activities.

There is no discriminatory treatment among students; they are all treated fairly according to their faith. The school provides space for students of the majority religion and actively accommodates those from minority religious groups. This is demonstrated by offering equal religious activities and providing necessary facilities and infrastructure, including suitable worship spaces and religious teachers for each faith. These efforts reflect respect for diversity and reinforce the values of religious moderation within the elementary school environment.

The third respondent in this study is a teacher at SD Negeri Caturtunggal 3. She stated that the program at her school is uniquely named "*Pendekar Sanga*," which stands for *Tuesday-Thursday Character Education through Quran and Bible Reading*. This program is designed for the student's character development and is held regularly every Tuesday and Thursday. It upholds the principles of justice and inclusiveness. Quran recitation co-occurs for grades 1 through 6 students in the schoolyard. Meanwhile, Christian and Catholic students join Bible reading sessions in their religious classrooms, guided by their teachers.

This shows that the school provides equal opportunities for all students to practice their faith by their beliefs. Interestingly, the program also instils values of responsibility and co-operation. Students take turns preparing and organizing materials for the activity each day, such as rolling out and folding the mats used during the sessions. Through this system, students learn that they each have equal roles and responsibilities in maintaining the order and continuity of school activities. This program strengthens students' spirituality and fosters an inclusive, fair, and collaborative character.

The second value of religious moderation discussed in this study is balance or *tawazun*. According to Respondent 1, the program significantly develops students' religious character and tolerance. It teaches them to balance their relationship with God (*hablum minallah*) through prayer, scripture reading, and remembrance with their relationship with others (*hablum minannas*) by respecting people of different faiths. Students learn that religious followers have the same right to study and worship according to their teachings without interfering with other beliefs. This balance is reflected in how students manage their spirituality and social behaviour in the school environment.

Respondent 3 also shared that the SD Negeri Caturtunggal 3 program begins with a joint prayer and the singing of the national anthem *Indonesia Raya*. She explained that this routine is intentionally implemented to cultivate the value of *tawazun*, the balance between religious values and patriotism. Through this practice, students learn that living according to religious values does not conflict with national identity; instead, both should complement and strengthen each other daily. The Islamic Religious Education teacher at the same school also noted that the program focuses not on the quantity of material but on meaningful understanding. For example, students read one or two-chapters during Quran recitation followed by a simple interpretation. Likewise, Christian and Catholic students can reflect and discuss after their readings. This approach demonstrates the value of *tawazun*, the balance between religious practice and deeper comprehension.

The final value explored in this study is tolerance or *tasamuh*. Based on the interview with Respondent 1, the program contributes to creating an inclusive school atmosphere that values differences. The program provides a shared space to foster mutual respect in a public school attended by students of various religious backgrounds. She explained that religious literacy activities allow students to learn together and collaborate across religious lines in social and cultural education without addressing theological beliefs.

Respondent 2 expressed a similar view, stating that the program strengthens each student's understanding of their religion and promotes peace and harmony among students of different faiths. These views affirm that *tasamuh* (tolerance) is a core value in implementing the program, where students are trained to live peacefully and respectfully in a diverse environment.

Based on the interviews with all three respondents, the Quran recitation and reading program reflects three core values of religious moderation. The value of *tawasuth* (justice) is seen in the equal rights and facilities provided to students of different religions. The value of *tawazun* (balance) is evident in integrating religious devotion, meaningful understanding, and patriotism. The value of *tasamuh* (tolerance) is reflected in mutual respect, interfaith collaboration, and creation of a peaceful school environment.

Discussion

1. The Values of Religious Moderation in the Sleman Quran recitation and reading program

a. The Value of Justice (*Tawasuth*)

The principle of justice means that every individual has equal rights. According to Nikmah, as cited by Arikarani, *tawasuth* comes from the word *wasathan*, which means balanced, moderate, and exemplary (Arikarani et al., 2024). Rosi also explains that *wasathan* refers to fairness, balance, neutrality, and excellence. The term can also mean a referee, as used in sports competitions involving an official mediator (Rosi, 2019). Justice also means promptly and appropriately giving someone what they deserve promptly and appropriately, which is linked to equality in quality. Moreover, justice implies moderation neither giving less nor more than what is proper (Atok, 2022).

From several perspectives, justice or *tawasuth* can be defined as a position that does not take sides between two opposing views. Interviews with several relevant informants indicate that the Quran recitation and reading program reflects this principle of justice (Ainina, 2022). Furthermore, the principle of justice or *tawasuth* shapes noble character (Arikarani et al., 2024).

Considering these views, it can be concluded that the Sleman program, which includes both the Quran recitation and reading program, is based on the principle of justice one of the core values of religious moderation (Hadju et al., 2020). This justice is reflected in many ways, especially in ensuring that all students, both Muslim and non-Muslim, experience a safe, peaceful, and supportive school environment.

b. The Principle of Balance (Tawazun)

Balance, or tawazun, refers to doing things in moderation, neither excessively nor insufficiently, neither extremely conservative nor overly liberal ([Kemenag, 2019](#)). Etymologically, tawazun in Arabic is derived from the words tawazana, yatawazanu, and taazunan, which all mean to be balanced or to give something according to its due without adding or subtracting ([Royyan, 2024](#)).

This principle of balance is evident in the implementation of the Qur'an recitation and reading program, which is conducted 30 minutes before the learning activities start. According to the first informant, one of the key values reflected in this program is balance, particularly in strengthening students' religious character and attitudes of tolerance.

Based on an interview with the Islamic Education teacher at SDN Nogopuro, the program is essential in shaping students' religious identity and tolerance. It teaches students how to maintain balance (tawazun) in their relationship with God (*hablum minallah*) through prayer, scripture reading, and remembrance (*dzikir*) and in their relationships with others (*hablum minannās*) by respecting people of different faiths. Students understand that religious followers have the same right to learn and worship according to their beliefs without disrupting others ([Karataş & Sandıkçı, 2013](#)). This balance is reflected in how students harmonize their spirituality with their social behaviour in school.

The value of tawazun, or balance, is considered very important in the education system by the first informant. Students must be taught to maintain equilibrium between worldly life and the hereafter. Tawazun encourages individuals to balance their religious and worldly responsibilities. To achieve happiness in both realms, one must pursue a balanced life. Thus, tawazun is a mindset, attitude, and commitment to acting reasonably in all aspects of life and the afterlife ([Aziz & Ulya, 2024](#)).

In line with the responses from all informants, implementing the Qur'an recitation and reading program in elementary schools in the Kapanewon Depok area reflects the value of religious moderation through balance, even though the forms and practices may vary. The term tawazun itself is closely related to al-mizan, which means scale. The word al-mizan comes from wazana, meaning balance and consistency ([Abd Rahman & Abd Mutalib, 2018](#)). Therefore, in religious moderation, al-mizan does not merely refer to a physical scale but represents the balance between worldly and spiritual life ([Hassan, 2001](#)).

Tawazun is a concept that seeks to harmonize all aspects of life, including spirituality, social interaction, and material needs ([Aziz & Ulya, 2024](#)). This concept aligns with the national education goals of Indonesia as outlined in Law No. 20 of the Republic of Indonesia on the National Education System, Article 1, Paragraph 1. The law states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and process in which students actively develop their potential to possess religious strength, independence, character, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed for themselves, their community, the nation, and the country.

One of the ways to implement the value of balance or tawazun is by starting the Qur'an recitation and reading program activity with the Qur'an recitation and reading program, and singing the national anthem, "Indonesia Raya."

c. The Principle of Tolerance (*Tasamuh*)

Tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect that allows individuals to express differing opinions, even when those opinions conflict with personal beliefs. According to [Arifin \(2016\)](#), tolerance can be defined as the attitude or action of a person who grants others the freedom to express themselves while acknowledging differences as a fundamental human right. [Jamarudin \(2016\)](#) also explains that tolerance is a means of protecting religious freedom.

Based on these views, tolerance is respecting others' opinions without necessarily agreeing with or adopting them. The Qur'an recitation and reading program promotes and

instils the values of tolerance in students. In an interview with the first informant, it was explained that this program creates a space where students can learn to tolerate and respect one another, especially considering the religious diversity found in public schools.

The first informant stated,

"The religious literacy activities at our school provide space and opportunity for students to learn together. Sometimes, students are encouraged to collaborate across religions, not in matters of faith or belief, but in learning about social and cultural life."

The second informant also shared their thoughts on the program:

"Sleman Qur'an recitation and reading program is an activity-based program that is certainly very beneficial for students, helping them better understand and apply their religious teachings. It also fosters peace among students of different religions."

These perspectives align with the findings of [Helandri et al. \(2022\)](#), who stated in their journal that tolerance is a fundamental value that must be instilled from an early age to achieve peace among religious communities. Developing a tolerant character requires repeated positive habits among students. This view is also supported by [Husnaini et al. \(2020\)](#), who emphasized that positive habit-forming methods effectively build a child's character from a young age.

Therefore, instilling the values of religious moderation in students takes time and consistent practice. Based on the author's analysis, these values can be taught effectively through the Qur'an recitation and reading program. This activity is important in enhancing students' spiritual values and strengthening religious moderation among community members.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of the *Sleman Qur'an Recitation and Reading Program*

During the Qur'an recitation and reading program implementation in elementary schools across Kapanewon Depok, several factors have been identified as either supporting or hindering the program. Based on the findings and interviews conducted by the author, the following are the key points:

a. Supporting Factors

The Qur'an recitation and reading program has run effectively due to several supporting elements. According to the first informant, one of the main supporting factors is the active involvement of teachers in the program. Islamic religious teachers are actively engaged in accompanying Muslim students, and non-Muslim teachers are equally involved in guiding non-Muslim students. In this regard, teachers are important in driving the program forward. This aligns with Wally's perspective in his journal, where he states that teachers should lead by example in demonstrating good behaviour based on established norms and principles ([Wally, 2022](#)).

Additionally, the second informant noted that support from the school environment, including parents who favour the program, is another key factor contributing to its success.

b. Inhibiting Factors

Based on an interview with the third informant, one of the obstacles to implementing the program is the lack of motivation among some students. Agrifina, in her research, explained that motivation is essential in any learning activity because it encourages students to be more active and enthusiastic in participating ([Agrifina, 2024](#)).

Another challenge mentioned by the second informant is the limited amount of time allocated for the program. While the program currently runs for only 30 minutes, the informant suggested extending this duration to allow for deeper reflection and understanding of the Qur'an for Muslim students and the Bible for non-Muslim students.

Furthermore, the limited number of accompanying teachers was also identified as a constraint, especially considering the large number of students needing guidance. As the informant stated:

"One of the challenges of this program is the limited number of supervising teachers, making it difficult to support the students fully during the recitation sessions. Also, the time allocated is relatively short, limiting the program's overall impact and outcomes."

Although the program has flaws and several obstacles, these issues do not pose a significant setback. The program continues to progress with ongoing improvements in its structure and quality. The goal remains to nurture a generation of students with noble character who live in mutual respect and tolerance.

D. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Research Implications

This program can be implemented to strengthen character education based on religious moderation in elementary schools. It serves not only as a regular religious activity but also as a strategic means to instil the values of justice (*tawasuth*), balance (*tawazun*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*) in students' daily lives. Implementing activities that provide equal space and treatment for all students, regardless of their religious backgrounds, reflects an inclusive and adaptive learning model in response to diversity. This serves as a good practice example that can be adopted by other schools, especially those in multicultural settings. In addition, through the interactions built during these activities, students are trained to respect differences and build harmonious social relationships. These skills form an essential foundation for shaping a tolerant generation that can live peacefully with others.

2. Research Contribution

More broadly, the findings contribute to developing education policies grounded in values. Programs like this demonstrate that education is about transferring knowledge and shaping students' attitudes and national character in ways that honour diversity.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future researchers who wish to explore similar topics are encouraged to examine the implementation of religious moderation values at higher levels of education, such as junior or senior high school, to observe the continuity of character development from elementary to secondary education. In addition, future studies may also focus on the roles of families, communities, and social environments in supporting the values of moderation introduced at school. Quantitative research can also be conducted to measure the effectiveness of similar programs on students' tolerance and religious attitudes using more objective statistical approaches.

F. CONCLUSION

The Qur'an recitation and reading program, implemented in several elementary schools in Kapanewon Depok, Sleman, has made a meaningful contribution to strengthening religious moderation values within basic education settings. This program serves not only as a routine religious activity but also as a platform for character education that instils the values of fairness (*tawasuth*), balance (*tawazun*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*). Through this approach, students are encouraged to understand that every religion teaches goodness and the importance of mutual respect in daily life.

Each school implementing the program adopts different methods and practices tailored to their specific environment and student needs. Nevertheless, the program's core goal remains to build a moderate and inclusive understanding of religion. Teachers are key in guiding Muslim and non-Muslim students through these activities, ensuring that all learners feel respected and equally accommodated. This reflects the school's commitment to creating an inclusive environment that embraces diversity and promotes shared values.

Although the program implementation still faces challenges, such as limited time and a shortage of supervising teachers, efforts to improve and evaluate the program continue. Schools remain dedicated to enhancing the quality and impact of this initiative. Overall, Sleman Qur'an recitation and reading program has become an important component of character education rooted in religious moderation, helping to shape a generation that is devout, tolerant, and capable of living peacefully in a diverse society.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

The author declares that the entire research and writing process for this article was conducted independently. The author assumes full responsibility for all data associated with this research. No other individual contributed as a co-author or made any significant contribution to the content of this work.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest financial, professional, or personal that could have influenced the results or interpretation of this research."

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