



Voices of the Marginalized: Djauharah Magazine (1923–1924) and the Empowerment of Women's Education

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the struggle of women in the early 20th century to gain equal rights and access to education, as reflected in the Djauharah magazine (1923–1924). The magazine was initiated by Abdul Latif Syakur, an Islamic scholar from Ampek Angkek, West Sumatra, along with his daughter, Sa'diyah Syakurah, and students from his madrasah. The method used is a literature review with text analysis of the magazine's content. The findings show that Djauharah played a crucial role in advocating for women's educational rights by criticizing societal norms that restricted women and encouraging them to pursue both worldly and religious knowledge. The magazine also encouraged women to participate actively in social struggles and national progress. The conclusion of this study reveals that Djauharah made a significant contribution to raising awareness among Muslim women about the importance of education as part of their empowerment. The implications of this study demonstrate that Djauharah became a significant platform for advancing Islamic women's education.

Kata Kunci

Perempuan;
Majalah Djauharah;
Hak Perempuan

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan menganalisis perjuangan perempuan pada awal abad ke-20 untuk memperoleh hak dan akses pendidikan yang setara dengan laki-laki, tercermin dalam majalah *Djauharah* (1923–1924). Majalah ini dipelopori oleh Abdul Latif Syakur, ulama dari Ampek Angkek, Sumatra Barat, bersama putrinya, Sa'diyah Syakurah, dan murid-murid madrasah yang ia pimpin. Metode yang digunakan adalah kajian literatur dengan analisis teks terhadap isi majalah tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Djauharah* berperan penting dalam memperjuangkan hak pendidikan perempuan dengan mengkritik norma sosial yang membatasi perempuan dan mendorong mereka untuk mendidik diri dalam pendidikan duniawi dan agama. Majalah ini juga mengajak perempuan untuk berperan aktif dalam perjuangan sosial dan kemajuan bangsa. Kesimpulan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa *Djauharah* berkontribusi besar dalam menyadarkan perempuan Muslim tentang pentingnya pendidikan sebagai bagian dari pemberdayaan mereka. Implikasi studi ini menunjukkan bahwa *Djauharah* menjadi media penting dalam memajukan pendidikan perempuan Islam.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender issues remain one of the essential topics in social, cultural, and religious studies, especially in understanding how norms, values, and power systems shape the roles and relations between men and women. Joan Scott argued that gender is not just a biological category, but a complex system of meaning that governs social relations, identity, and daily practices (Scott, 1986). Gender is a social and cultural construct attributed to both men and women (Nurman, 2019). A misunderstanding of gender has perpetuated social injustices, particularly for women (Telaumbanua & Marbun, 2025).

The discussion of gender becomes more complex when linked to specific religions and cultures. In Islam, the debate about the role and position of women continues to evolve with different interpretations of religious texts and the influence of contemporary social contexts (Asniah et al., 2023; Haikal & Kholid, 2023). Ideally, social and religious systems should create gender relations that are fair, equal, and provide equal access for both women and men, especially in education.

In the multicultural context of Indonesia, where Islam is the majority religion, gender relations are clearly visible in the Minangkabau community, which practices a matrilineal system. This system places women at the center of lineage and inheritance, giving them symbolic authority as *bundo kanduang*, the matriarchs of the house (Herman, 2022; Nurman, 2019; Warnis et al., 2018). However, this structural position does not fully guarantee freedom and equality for women in social practices. Minangkabau women gained a significant voice only after attaining the status of *bundo kanduang*, whereas prior to that, they were still under the influence of male dominance, as represented by the term "mamak" (Azwar, 2018; Blackburn, 2004; Nurman, 2019). Thus, although women hold a special position in the customary structure, this privilege does not automatically guarantee freedom and equality in social practice.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Dutch colonial government implemented the Ethical Policy aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the indigenous people, including expanding access to education (Susilo & Isbandiyah, 2018). This policy introduced significant changes to the education system in Minangkabau, expanding opportunities for women to access formal education (Ulaini & Handayani, 2023). Before that, Minangkabau women generally received religious education and domestic skills, and could read Arabic-Malay script, though few were proficient in Latin letters. The presence of colonial modern schools led to the emergence of an educated female generation, fluent in Latin reading and writing, arithmetic, and Dutch (Yanti, 2017). Awareness of the importance of women's education grew, marked by the emergence of female figures such as Roehanna Koeddos, Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, and Rasuna Said. This development was further reinforced by the Islamic reform movement led by Minangkabau youth, including Syekh Abdul Latif Syakur, who emphasized the importance of moral and educational development. Syakur founded the al-Tarbiyatu al-Hasanah school and educated his daughter, Sa'diyah Syakurah, a progressive step that encouraged more Minangkabau families to send their daughters to school (Riza, 2021, 2024).

In addition to his work in education, Abdul Latif Syakur established the *Djauharah Oentoek Bangsa Perempoean* magazine, first published in 1923, as a platform for women to voice their ideas (Nofa & Jie, 2023; Wendry et al., 2024). The magazine featured Sa'diyah Syakurah, as well as students and teachers from the al-Tarbiyatu al-Hasanah Madrasah, who served as contributors and editors, publishing opinions and critiques on women's issues, particularly regarding educational rights (Riza, 2024).

Djauharah, published after the golden age of *Soenting Melajoe* (1912–1921), a popular media outlet for women, shared similar goals with its predecessor in advocating for women's advancement, particularly through expanding access to education and fostering intellectual awareness. While *Soenting Melajoe* was seen as a space for women to plant the seeds of knowledge and envision social change, *Djauharah* emerged as an alternative educational space rooted in Islamic tradition and Minangkabau customs (Jones, 2020). Both of these media outlets used Arabic-Malay script to reach a wider audience. *Djauharah* published various studies, opinions, and critiques on women's conditions and gender relations, particularly regarding the inequities in women's access to education. These writings

documented how women expressed their experiences, criticisms, and ideas about the unequal education system of the time.

The main issue addressed in this study is how *Djauharah* advocated for women's educational rights amid the social, customary, and religious structures of early 20th-century Minangkabau. How did women criticize the unequal educational conditions of the time? This paper aims to identify and analyze how women's rights, particularly in education, were represented in *Djauharah* during the early 20th century.

Although it played an important role in the development of gender discourse and Islam in Minangkabau, research on *Djauharah* remains limited. Existing studies tend to focus more on *Soenting Melajoe* as a symbol of early female emancipation in Minangkabau, while *Djauharah* is often only briefly mentioned. Yulfira Riza (2021) conducted a study titled "Majalah 'Djauharah' dan Manuskrip Al Mu'āsyaarah: Eksistensi Gender dalam Masyarakat Minangkabau Awal Abad Ke-20," which made an important contribution to the study of *Djauharah* but focused more broadly on gender. Nofa (2021), in her book "Haji Abdul Latif Syakur (1299 H-1383 H/1882-1963 M): Pemikiran, Wacana, dan Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Minangkabau Abad XX," also touched upon *Djauharah*, but did not provide a holistic view of the magazine's perspective on women's educational rights. Most existing research situates *Djauharah* within broader studies of the press or women's movements in Minangkabau, without a deep analysis of the magazine's content itself. Notably, studies such as those by Ahmat Adam (2012), Sastri Sunarti and Silfia Hanani (2018), and Risa Marta Yati (2020) briefly mention *Djauharah* but do not focus on the magazine's educational narratives. Therefore, a gap remains in research concerning the lack of a specific study analyzing the representation of women's education in *Djauharah* as an Islamic women's media outlet in early 20th-century Minangkabau. This article will examine the narratives promoted by *Djauharah* regarding women's rights, particularly in the context of education.

Although several studies have been conducted on *Suara Kaum Marjinal: Djauharah Magazine (1923–1924)* and its role in empowering women's education, in-depth research on the magazine's impact on marginalized groups, particularly women, remains very limited. Most existing studies focus on the role and position of women in the socio-cultural context, status, and discrimination (Aryani & Lindawati, 2025; Nurmadani et al., 2025; Silitonga et al., 2025; Okoye et al., 2025; Andriana, 2024; Hidayah, 2024), without giving sufficient attention to its impact on educational policy or the empowerment of women's education across different social classes. Further research is needed to explore how *Djauharah* not only served as a platform for women to voice their concerns but also as a tool to influence social change in the field of education, making it more inclusive and providing access for marginalized groups.

Based on this background, the main issue in this study is how *Djauharah* advocated for women's educational rights amidst the social, customary, and religious structures of early 20th-century Minangkabau, and how women expressed their criticisms of the educational inequalities they experienced. This study aims to identify and analyze the representation of women's rights, particularly in education, as voiced in *Djauharah*, and to understand the role of this magazine in raising social and intellectual awareness among Muslim women at the time.

The study of women has always been an intriguing field for deeper exploration. The presence of *Djauharah* became an important phenomenon in the history and society of Minangkabau. Although Minangkabau is known for its matrilineal society, which places women in strong structural positions, this magazine highlighted and criticized the socio-cultural practices of the time. However, research on *Djauharah* remains limited. Therefore, this study is of academic value in addressing the existing research gap on the magazine. Additionally, this research presents a new perspective on how gender construction and the socio-cultural dynamics of early 20th-century Minangkabau are reflected through a media platform that has yet to be widely studied in the fields of history and gender studies.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study with a historical approach conducted between 2024 and 2025. The focus of this study is on the educational and intellectual conditions of the Minangkabau society in the early 20th century, as examined through the content of *Djauharah* magazine, specifically its educational aspects as formulated by its contributors, to reveal the educational inequalities that existed in Minangkabau at the time.

The choice of *Djauharah* magazine was driven by several factors, including its uniqueness compared to other magazines published during the same period and the lack of in-depth studies on this publication. The uniqueness of *Djauharah* lies in its function as a medium that provides criticism of Minangkabau cultural practices, which still restrict women's roles, despite the theoretically strong social position of women within the matrilineal system. This magazine also served as a platform for female students of Syekh Syakur's madrasah to express their ideas. Furthermore, *Djauharah* maintained the use of Arabic-Malay script, unlike many other publications that had switched to the Latin alphabet. All of these features make *Djauharah* a significant phenomenon in the history of the Islamic press and the women's movement in early 20th-century Indonesia, serving as the basis for this research topic.

In its implementation, this research follows the historical method as outlined by Kuntowijoyo, which includes five stages: topic selection, heuristic, source criticism, interpretation or synthesis, and historical writing (historiography) (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). The heuristic stage involves gathering relevant historical sources through literature studies. The primary source used is the digitalization of *Djauharah* magazine obtained from the Minangkabau Cultural Documentation and Information Center (PDIKM). Of the twelve issues published, only ten are available and accessible. *Djauharah* was published in two volumes. The first volume consists of five issues, all of which have been digitized by PDIKM. The second volume consists of seven issues; however, the first and third issues are missing, resulting in only ten usable issues. Additionally, this research utilizes supporting sources, including works by Syekh Abdul Latif Syakur and his daughter, Sa'diyah Syakurah, as well as newspapers and magazines published during the same period. Secondary sources were obtained from various written references, including archives, manuscripts, books, journal articles, and other scholarly works relevant to the focus of this study, such as academic research in history and gender, including theses, dissertations, and other scientific publications that support the primary sources.

Once the research materials were collected, the next stage was verification through source criticism. At this stage, the author selects sources that are worthy of use and eliminates data that does not meet authenticity and validity standards (Laksono, 2018). External criticism is carried out with a philological approach, which involves observing the physical and technical aspects of the text, such as the font and presentation style, and ensuring that the digital form of *Djauharah* can still be read and understood clearly. The date and year of publication are also examined to ensure they align with the study period. Internal criticism is used to assess the content and credibility of the text, requiring an understanding of the social position, ideas, and ideological tendencies of the authors at the time of writing. The author then reviews the arguments presented in the sources to ensure their relevance and accuracy in supporting the research.

Next, a classification process is carried out to systematically organize and categorize the data, analyzing the texts that contain educational aspects in *Djauharah*. Based on the classification of educational themes, the author develops a research instrument in the form of an analytical table, utilizing Joan Scott's gender theory framework, which comprises four main elements (symbols, normative concepts, social-political institutions, and subjective identity) as analysis variables. Each theme is analyzed using indicators answered through the 5W+1H approach (what, who, when, where, why, how) to comprehensively understand how educational discourse was constructed in Minangkabau at the time and how the contributors of *Djauharah* proposed efforts to reconstruct the educational conditions of the period. Afterward, an analysis and elaboration of the facts obtained from

the data are conducted. The interpreted results of these facts are then written into a cohesive historical narrative (Herlina, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Djauharah magazine made a significant contribution to shaping women's awareness. The magazine played an important role in fostering intellectual and social awareness among Muslim women by providing a platform that combined their thoughts and writings. The magazine's main contribution lies in its function as an educational space and a means of strengthening the Islamic identity of women. Through articles that contain teachings on theology, fiqh, and ethics, written in an easily understandable language, *Djauharah* became both a medium for da'wah (Islamic propagation) and a learning space for women. The magazine emphasized that being a pious woman involved both spiritual obedience and the enthusiasm to seek and spread knowledge.

The following are the results of reading articles that advocate for women's educational rights.

Table 1. Educational Aspects in *Djauharah* Magazine

Variant	Indicator	Questions	Findings
Norms	Gender Inequality in Access and Religious Roles	What social norms differentiate the education treatment between men and women?	Boys are sent to school, while girls are taught domestic tasks.
		Who sets the norms restricting women's religious roles?	Society and religious authorities, who only give space to men.
		When did gender inequality in education start being questioned?	This inequality has been passed down through generations.
		Where are the norms of restricting women's education access applied?	The restrictions are applied in households and village communities.
Religious Education and the Obligation to Seek Knowledge	What is the normative value of seeking knowledge for women?	Why are women considered unsuitable for religious roles?	Women are seen as unsuitable for religious roles due to the belief that religious authority is only for men.
		How are these inequalities maintained in society?	Through societal skepticism and restrictions on women's movement.
		Religious education is a duty for both men and women.	
		Why is religious education considered a social and religious obligation?	Knowledge is the means to live according to the law and a religious responsibility.
		Who is responsible for ensuring women receive religious education?	Families are urged to send daughters to school, with religious schools being the primary institution.
		Where should the process of women's education ideally occur?	Women's education should take place both at home and in formal schools.
		When (in terms of life stage or child development) is religious	Religious education is taught to children from an early age,

Variant	Indicator	Questions	Findings
Importance of Practical Knowledge for Women	What practical knowledge should women have?	education considered important for women?	when they are able to be educated.
		How are these norms formed and reinforced?	By example, teaching religious basics, and providing access to education.
		Child health, domestic skills, and general knowledge.	
		Who needs to understand practical knowledge related to child health?	Women, especially mothers, need to understand practical knowledge about child health and care.
		Where can women obtain knowledge about proper child care?	Women can acquire practical knowledge, such as child care, through trusted information sources.
		When does practical knowledge, such as child health or child-rearing, begin to be taught to women?	Practical knowledge should be taught when they are young or before they have children.
Symbols	Symbolic Construction of Progress and Modernity	Why is it important for women to have knowledge about child health and care?	Women are directly responsible for family health.
		How can practical knowledge be integrated into formal education?	By recognizing that women need competence in various fields.
		What symbols of progress are constructed?	Europe is seen as a symbol of modernity, and knowledge as essential for life.
		Who is seen as a symbol of intellectual progress?	Men are seen as symbols of intellectual progress, while women lag behind.
		Where can the comparison between the knowledge of Europeans and the Dutch East Indies be seen in terms of progress?	The comparison is evident in the statement that knowledge is a skill of Europeans, while in the Dutch East Indies, it still needs to be spread.
		When was the symbol of modernity adopted?	This symbol of modernity was adopted when awareness of progress and education emerged.
Gender Symbols	Role	Why is Europe used as a symbol of progress?	Europe is used as the standard for societal progress.
		How is the symbol of progress constructed for the Muslim Minangkabau community?	Through comparison with Europeans and setting standards for progress in the Minangkabau Muslim community.
		What is the symbol for women's roles?	The kitchen is the symbol of women's domestication.

Variant	Indicator	Questions	Findings
Institutions	Institutions Promoting Educational Equality	Who bears this symbol?	Women, who have been doing domestic tasks since childhood.
		Since when has this symbol been formed?	This symbol has been formed for a long time, since childhood.
		Where does this symbol apply?	This symbol is prevalent in society.
		Why is this symbol given to women?	Because this social model is continuously reinforced in the community.
		How is this symbol perpetuated in society?	Through early socialization via work and role models at home.
		What demands are made on social institutions regarding educational equality?	Social institutions are required to provide equal educational rights for all genders.
		Who is responsible for ensuring educational equality?	Families, particularly fathers and mothers, are responsible for supporting educational equality.
		Where should educational institutions for equality be established?	In religious schools and formal educational institutions.
		When should institutions implement educational equality?	Immediately, to prevent future generations from regretting the lack of equality.
		Why should educational norms and rights be reformed?	Because seeking knowledge is a religious obligation for all.
Family's Role and Responsibility in Education	What is the role of the family institution in education?	How can the educational system be reformed?	By sending women to religious schools and providing equal access.
		The family is the first institution responsible for the education of children.	
		Who in the family is most responsible?	Parents (father and mother) share responsibility.
		Where in the family structure is education provided?	At home, as the first school, through modeling.
		When should families provide good education?	Families should provide good education from an early age in a child's development.
		Why is the family key to change?	Because the family is the foundation of character and value formation.
		How does the family perform its educational function?	The family performs its educational function through guidance, modeling, and support for formal education.

Variant	Indicator	Questions	Findings
Subjects	Women Marginalized in Religious Roles	<p>What happens to women regarding their position in religious roles?</p> <p>Which women experience this religious role inequality?</p> <p>When did women start to realize this inequality?</p> <p>Where does this inequality occur?</p> <p>Why are they marginalized in access and religious roles?</p> <p>How can this inequality be addressed?</p>	<p>Women do not have the same rights as men in teaching.</p> <p>Muslim women/girls in Minangkabau.</p> <p>Women started to realize this inequality when they compared their situation to men's.</p> <p>In public religious spaces and religious educational institutions.</p> <p>They are marginalized due to upbringing focused on worldly matters. Also, societal norms suggest women don't need to be involved in religion.</p> <p>Women are expected to focus not only on worldly matters but also to study religious knowledge.</p>
Redefining Women's Roles and Identity	What is the ideal characteristic of women?	<p>Women who are knowledgeable, religious, active in religious practices, involved in social movements, and contribute to the advancement of religion.</p> <p>Who plays a role in redefining women's identity?</p> <p>Where does the formation of the new female subject take place?</p> <p>When did the redefinition of women's roles begin?</p> <p>Why is the redefinition of women's roles necessary?</p> <p>How can the ideal woman subject be formed?</p>	<p>Women themselves and figures who support emancipation.</p> <p>In family education and religious activities.</p> <p>When awareness of gender equality started to emerge.</p> <p>The redefinition is necessary because women have been too restricted in their roles.</p> <p>The ideal woman is formed through education, lifelong learning, and active participation.</p>

The majority of articles in *Djauharah* magazine focus on issues of education and character formation in society, demonstrating that *Djauharah* places great emphasis on the importance of intellectual and moral development for women. The magazine regards education as the foundation for the formation of the identity of Minangkabau Muslim women. Through the readings of *Djauharah*, it was found that the magazine is closely tied to traditional values and Islamic teachings in shaping the understanding of gender roles.

Discussion

In the *Djauharah* magazine, women are not only depicted through norms or roles defined by society, but also appear as subjects who begin to realize and respond to the conditions that limit them, especially in the field of education. They do not merely accept their circumstances but begin to reflect on their marginalization and propose changes through writing and ideas.

In various articles published in *Djauharah*, women are not only shown as those who accept social rules and restricting structures, but also as subjects who recognize their own marginalization, particularly in the fields of education and religion. Although they did not yet hold formal positions in *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) or religious teaching, *Djauharah* shows that women began to reflect on and voice the inequalities they faced. One expression of this awareness is seen in the statement:

"Islam has stood in our land for centuries, passed down from our ancestors to us, yet we have never seen or heard of a woman who teaches like our male teachers." (Khadijah, Page 6, Article 3, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This statement acknowledges the underrepresentation of women in religious roles. Rather than merely noting the inequality, this sentence indicates that women had reached the point of questioning their exclusion from the tradition of Islamic scholarship. From this awareness, their desire to be recognized as part of the learned community began to grow. This awareness is based on the Islamic view that does not restrict women's activities, as long as they are carried out in ways that preserve honor and religious values. Kasir (2016) explains that since the early days of Islam, women have had the right to work and be active in various fields, both inside and outside the home, independently or in collaboration with other institutions, as long as they do so honorably and without causing harm to themselves or their environment. With the knowledge and skills possessed by everyone, including women, they have the right to work and hold positions of authority. The basic principle is that women may work if the job is needed or if they themselves require the work.

Khadijah also reflects on the reasons for their marginalization, realizing that it was not just due to explicit prohibitions but also the result of role formation processes from childhood. In the same article, Khadijah states:

"...And our teachers always say that the current era is one of movement and progress, that the present time is a barrier to religious advancement, but according to them, this barrier to religion is only for men. Meanwhile, the women's community is also further behind in religious matters..." (Khadijah, Page 6, Article 3, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This quote demonstrates that women, as subjects, not only critique the structure but also engage in self-evaluation. They acknowledge that they were not directed toward religious fields from an early age and that they need to rebuild their connection with religious knowledge. Here, we can see the emergence of women's awareness of their own lag, which becomes the foundation for pushing change, at least for future generations. Thus, women's role as subjects in *Djauharah* magazine is not only one of being restricted, but also as agents of new awareness. They gradually propose changes from within the religious discourse itself.

When analyzed using Joan Scott's framework, the narratives in *Djauharah* reveal that gender operates not only as a division of roles between men and women but also as a power relation institutionalized through social norms, religious institutions, and cultural symbols (Scott, 1986). The absence of women as religious teachers, as recognized and questioned by the female writers in *Djauharah*, reflects how access to religious authority is constructed as a masculine domain. In this context, gender functions as the primary way to mark and maintain the distribution of power in the fields of education and religion, as Scott argues that gender is a constitutive element of social relations and a marker of power relations in society.

In society, the roles and status of women are determined not only by formal rules but also by developing social and religious norms. These norms shape society's views on what is considered appropriate or inappropriate for women, including in education, work, and religious roles. Through

Djauharah, it is evident that many norms of the time restricted women's mobility, particularly in accessing education and fulfilling roles outside the home. However, at the same time, some writings in *Djauharah* also reflect a growing awareness of the need to correct and challenge these norms.

In several articles published in *Djauharah*, writers express complaints about the educational conditions for women, which are still far behind those of men, especially in religious fields. The writers note a social view that hindered women from studying outside the village because it was considered "scandalous." Meanwhile, boys were fully supported in their pursuit of knowledge. One narrative that emerges in an article states:

"If a girl goes to study in another region, there is much scandal about it, and they ask, how can she be studying? She is a girl. But if it is a boy, with diligence, he is sent and enrolled in school." (Rasimin, Page 6, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This quote clearly indicates that there was a social norm that differentiated the treatment of boys and girls in terms of access to education. At that time, girls did not receive adequate religious education and knowledge. Boys were supported to study outside the area, while girls were hindered by social concerns labeled as "scandalous." This norm indirectly limited women's expression in the domestic sphere and restricted their opportunities to access education. This inequality shows the subordinate position of women in society and the great need for a change in these norms to ensure education is fair and equal for both genders.

Radjab also describes this concern in his book titled *Semasa Kecil di Kampung*. Radjab (2019) explains the societal concerns of the time regarding girls' lack of access to education. The reason was that if they became good at writing, it was feared they would use it to send love letters to men. Meanwhile, the matter of marriage was controlled by the parents. Such policies were essentially a form of restriction on women in the educational world, under the guise of "protection," but actually limiting their mobility. The reason women were not allowed to leave the house was also mentioned by Deliani et al. (2019), stating that girls had to be secluded, not allowed to leave the house, and must be ready for marriage to a man chosen by their parents.

Women were seen as sufficient only in domestic roles, so education was not considered essential for them. Educational access was more focused on boys because they were expected to become heads of households. Meanwhile, women were positioned as heirs and thus did not need to strive for income or knowledge. If a woman were sent by her parents to study outside Minangkabau, she would be ridiculed by society (Deliani et al., 2019).

Another article states that although women began to receive education and hold formal jobs such as teaching or working in offices, there were no women who became religious teachers:

"Let us say that many women today have delved into advanced knowledge, such as knitting, sewing, weaving, reading, writing, etc., and many have also held positions such as being teachers and working in offices. Compared to this knowledge and other fields, it seems that our elders are happy. However, Islam has stood in our land for centuries, passed down from our ancestors, yet we have never seen or heard of a woman who teaches like our male teachers." (Khadijah, Page 6, Article 3, Volume 1, Issue 1)

The restriction of women's religious roles, in this case as religious teachers, and the delegation of authority to men, has been applied by society for a long time. This delegation of authority shows that inequality exists not only in access to religious education but also in the granting of religious roles. Religious scholarship is constructed as an exclusive domain of men. Even when women began entering the workforce, such as becoming teachers or office employees, the role of religious authority remained with men. Putri (2018) notes that with the widespread introduction of education in the early 20th century, Minangkabau women began to transcend boundaries previously considered taboo, such as traveling abroad. Going abroad here refers to leaving the *rumah gadang* (family home) and *nagari* (village) to go to the city, as most Minangkabau women who went abroad in the early 20th century did so to continue their education or work as teachers.

The opportunity to travel is narrated by Sa'diyah Syakurah, who, after finishing her schooling at the Government school, saw two of her female friends continue their education as midwives in Bandung (Syakurah, 1992). This shows that the education received by women enabled them to access public spaces and work in various sectors, as stated by Khadijah in *Djauharah*, that there were women who became teachers and worked in offices. However, despite all these opportunities and educational spaces, women still did not have the opportunity to play a role in religious affairs.

This inequality is considered natural because it has been passed down through generations by the *ninik mamak* (traditional leaders), so it is rarely questioned critically. This aligns with Syahrul Amar's findings, which indicate that women at that time were generally not allowed to access higher education or hold positions in society, let alone occupy important religious roles (Amar, 2017). The writers of *Djauharah* mention that this inequality exists because of traditions that have been inherited, not because women are incapable.

However, at the same time, a new awareness emerged among some writers that progress and the movement of time should also involve women:

"The more years pass, the more progress there is in religious knowledge. But who benefits from this progress? It is only the men. As for women – *wallahu a'lam*." (Sa'diyah Syakurah, Page 25, Article 6, Volume 1, Issue 2)

Syakurah uses the phrase "*wallahu a'lam*" at the end of the sentence not to express ignorance but to highlight the irony, as if the fate of women's education has been left to God's will, when in fact, it is the result of an imbalanced social norm that views the rights of men and women differently.

This statement marks a crucial starting point in addressing the need to correct gender norms, particularly in terms of women's access to religious education. This inequality does not only exist in religious institutions. However, it is also preserved in village communities and families, which often restrict the movement of girls, as seen in the parental view that it is sufficient for girls to work in the kitchen and help at home:

"All girls should not just sit idle without seeking knowledge and should not always be made to work in the kitchen preparing food..." (Page 5, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This quote illustrates that social norms confine women's roles to the domestic sphere, such as cooking, cleaning, and household chores, without providing opportunities for seeking knowledge. This norm is widely applied in villages and reinforced by the stereotype that women do not need higher education because they will only become housewives. Even when Radjab (2019) personally witnessed this reality through his mother, he stated that if his mother were not cooking in the kitchen, she would undoubtedly be weaving or sewing. Radjab's statement is direct evidence reflecting the condition of women at the time.

Although Minangkabau's matrilineal system places women in a structurally important position, their mobility is still limited. Women are directed to focus solely on domestic roles, with the primary responsibility being managing the household, often summarized in the terms *sumur*, *dapur*, and *kasur* (well, kitchen, and bed). Access to spaces for progress outside the home remains very limited for women (Deliani et al., 2019; Hanani, 2011).

The article's quote above also includes an encouragement for women to study, which arises because the initial condition had confined women to the role of domestic labor. In this context, *Djauharah* not only publishes criticism but also attempts to reconstruct women's roles, asserting that they have the right and duty to become knowledgeable and educated, while still within the bounds of religion.

One of the key narratives that emerged in *Djauharah* was the encouragement that religious education is an obligation for both men and women. In one article, a sharp rhetorical question emerged, seemingly challenging the old view that limited women's right to seek knowledge:

"Is it not obligatory for us, the daughters, to seek knowledge? If so, why does Allah Ta'ala command us to seek knowledge and worship Him, when Allah Ta'ala commands the seeking of knowledge for both men and women..." (Rasimin, Page 6, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This statement affirms that Islam does not distinguish between genders in the obligation to seek knowledge. Women have a high status and the same rights in practicing religion (Kasir, 2016). The affirmation in the quote is a rejection of societal norms that have long supported education for men alone. Here, Rasimin affirms that women also have the same religious rights and responsibilities as men, particularly in terms of basic religious knowledge and worship. Religion does not teach discrimination between men and women as human beings. Before God, men and women have the same degree, but the problem lies in the implementation of these teachings (Kasir, 2016).

In another narrative, knowledge is also positioned as provision for life in this world and the hereafter, not merely for obtaining a job or social recognition. In the form of a poem, knowledge is depicted as a rope that strengthens the spirit and guards against poverty and ignorance:

"...when knowledge is obtained | sustenance will never be cut off

Knowledge is in the body | surely not afraid of facing the battlefield

because carrying the rope of adornment | it surely becomes the provision..." (Akidah, Page 66, Article 2, Volume 2).

Another related narrative speaks about the position of knowledge:

"...If a child does not have knowledge about the hereafter or does not know religion, surely they will perish because they do not know how to distinguish between what is bad and what is good..." (Burina, Page 59, Article 4, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This quote suggests that the need for religious knowledge is not only a matter of spiritual ability but also about the ability to adapt to changing times. In other words, religious education is not only necessary for worshiping God but also for determining the right direction in life, distinguishing between what is halal and haram, and shaping wise individuals. According to Ibnu Faris, education in Islam encompasses all aspects of human life, from spiritual, moral, and intellectual development to social, economic, and political abilities (Ainiyah, 2013). This gives rise to the concept of comprehensive moral education, which not only connects humans with God but also with fellow humans and their environment (Ainiyah, 2013). Therefore, religious education in this context is not narrow, but instead forms the foundation for shaping a complete human being: one who is faithful, knowledgeable, and able to live responsibly in society. In the context of Minangkabau and Islam in the 1920s, this quote demonstrates that *Djauharah* magazine encouraged a shift in societal views, from initially equipping women only with domestic skills, to one where women are also knowledgeable and understand religion, as a foundation for building pious and moral families.

Religious education is also understood as a long process that begins in childhood when a child's heart is still pure and easily shaped:

"...a child is a trust (pitaruh) placed in the hands of their parents. The hearts of children are like beautiful and clean pearls that have not yet been engraved with fine writing. Moreover, with their purity, they will accept whatever is engraved and follow what attracts them, so if a child is accustomed to doing good, they will do good in this world and the hereafter..." (Page 59, Article 6, Volume 2)

Here, the home and family are referred to as the first environment where education takes place. Therefore, the obligation to seek knowledge becomes part of the parents' responsibility in shaping their children from an early age. Early education is important because children tend to follow and do what they see and practice. Therefore, it is crucial to educate children with good religious guidance from the beginning (Muthoifin et al., 2017).

Thus, religious education in the narratives of *Djauharah* magazine is not only understood as worship but also as preparation for living in society. Education becomes part of the effort to improve morals, and women are seen as important participants in this process, both as learners and as part of the group that needs guidance. The norm built is that women must seek knowledge, not only because it is their right, but because it is a religious obligation.

Not only do women require religious knowledge, but they also need practical knowledge to fulfill their roles as mothers and wives. *Djauharah* magazine constructs a narrative that women, particularly

as mothers, must possess practical knowledge encompassing household skills, child health, and other fundamental skills. This knowledge is not only viewed as supplementary but as an essential need to maintain household life and ensure the safety of children. In one quote discussing infant health, the writer critiques the common misconceptions among mothers:

"...(It is common for children to vomit because of wind entering their bodies, which we see when they nurse properly, they usually fall into a deep sleep – not as some mothers mistakenly think: they cry because they are not satisfied with the milk...)" (Syakurah, Page 107, Article 6, Volume 2, Issue 7)

This statement highlights that a mother's role extends beyond physical caregiving to include understanding common symptoms in babies, such as vomiting, colic, or crying. Mothers need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to perform early detection of children's developmental deviations. In this context, quality caregiving by parents, especially mothers, is crucial in determining the growth and development of children. A mother's perception can even serve as an effective early detection tool for recognizing issues, allowing for faster and more accurate intervention (Indrayani et al., 2019). In the social-cultural context of the time, women were considered most responsible for child health, and ignorance was seen as potentially dangerous, even fatal, for their children's lives. This is emphasized in the following statement:

"...It is clear that care starts from the physical aspect of the child, but an ignorant woman can poison her children to the point that they die..." (Rosnye, Page 79, Article 8, Volume 2, Issue 5)

The ignorance of women was not only seen as a personal deficiency but could have fatal social and biological consequences. Practical education was not seen as an option but a necessity, especially for prospective mothers. Therefore, *Djauharah* magazine recommends that this knowledge be taught from a young age, before women marry or have children. This aligns with Indrayani et al. (2019: 116), who explain that ideal education includes the period before marriage, during pregnancy, and until the child reaches adulthood. During these stages, parents, especially mothers, play a significant role in nurturing and shaping children comprehensively, including their physical, mental, spiritual, social, and educational development.

In another narrative related to health, it is mentioned:

"According to some midwives, binding the child with too many cloth layers damages the child's joint bones..." (Quote from *Al-Hikmah* magazine, Egypt, Page 88, Article 3, Volume 2, Issue 6).

This quote serves as a crucial reminder about the importance of reliable sources of information, specifically experts or experienced individuals, rather than relying solely on inherited traditions. It marks a shift from traditional knowledge to modern medical knowledge. Thus, women need to learn from doctors, midwives, or scholars who understand new sciences, not just from customary practices.

In addition to child health knowledge, skills considered important for women include the ability to read, write, calculate, sew, cook, and even learn foreign languages:

"...skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, learning foreign languages, as well as hand skills like sewing, weaving, and cooking..." (Syakurah, Page 8, Article 4, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This quote demonstrates that Syakurah encourages women to be proficient in multiple areas, not only spiritually and religiously, but also productively skilled. In this case, domestic work is not portrayed as a "lowly" task, but rather as an activity that requires knowledge and expertise.

Thus, *Djauharah* magazine not only idealizes women as household caregivers but also as rational beings who are knowledgeable, able to manage child health, run household duties, and adhere to Islamic values. Practical education here does not contradict religious roles; instead, it supports the achievement of a well-ordered family that aligns with the teachings of religion.

In several articles in *Djauharah*, the construction of progress and modernity is built through comparisons between European society and the society of the Indies (including Minangkabau). Europe is symbolically presented as a representation of knowledge, order, and intellectual perfection, while the inhabitants of the Indies are depicted as a group that still needs to catch up. This is reflected in the following quote:

"Lessons for maintaining health in Europe have been spread everywhere, so much so that one could say that knowledge has become the expertise of the people of Europe..." (Rosnye, Page 80, Article 8, Volume 2, Issue 5)

This statement is not only praise for Europe but also a symbol of the ideal of progress desired by intellectual Muslims of the time. Progress is not only assessed materially but also symbolized through the mastery of knowledge. Europe is used as a reference not because of blind imitation, but because it is seen as having successfully applied knowledge in everyday life, which had not yet become common among the indigenous people. As Rosnye states in another article:

"...It is fitting that knowledge should spread in the Netherlands Indies, because we and the European nations are both human..." (Rosnye, Page 80, Article 8, Volume 2, Issue 5).

This statement carries a strong symbolic meaning, suggesting that there is no inherent difference between Europeans and natives; the only difference lies in the level of access to knowledge. This view reflects a spirit of equality and is also a reflection of the indigenous community's collective awareness that knowledge is the key to change and progress.

In a broader context, Atikhurrahman et al. (2021) note that society generally views Western education as more privileged than traditional education, such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Those who received European-style education began to realize their position as different from their surrounding environment, thus forming a new generation. This Western education was designed to prepare natives to fill modern professions within the colonial society's structure. However, in the secular curriculum system, religion no longer holds a central position.

Unlike the secular approach of the colonial education system, as mentioned by Atikhurrahman et al. above, the symbols of modernity in *Djauharah* do not fully adopt the Western style. This discourse on modernity is aligned with Islamic principles:

"...It is proper that when we know about worldly progress, we do not neglect religious knowledge, which comes from Allah Ta'ala and was conveyed to us by His Messenger. All of this is true and is also called Islamic religious knowledge..." (Khadijah, Page 7, Article 3, Volume 1, Issue 1)

Here, it is clear that although Western knowledge is valued, religious knowledge remains the foundation for progress. Progress can be adopted, but it must be directed and filtered through religious values.

The symbol of modernity is also linked to gender, especially in discussions about who represents intellectual progress. One article states:

"...The more years pass, the more progress is made in knowledge and religion. But who benefits from this progress? It is only the men who are advancing..." (Syakurah, Page 25, Article 6, Volume 1, Issue 2).

This quote shows that men are positioned as symbols of progress, while women are not yet considered part of the developing intellectual group. In the prevailing cultural construction, women are not given equal access to education, while men are encouraged to pursue it to high levels. As a result, women lag in terms of intellectualism and have minimal opportunities to advance in knowledge (Sari, 2016).

Thus, the symbol of progress in *Djauharah* magazine is formed from three main elements: First, the comparison between Europe and the indigenous people, to represent the standard of progress. Second, knowledge is a means of progress, yet it remains within the bounds of Islamic law. Third, men are the main subjects of modernity, and women are those who need to be encouraged to catch up. The symbols of modernity presented by *Djauharah* do not reject the presence of women, but rather demonstrate that the space for women in the modern world remains unequal and must be continually formed.

Djauharah magazine strongly urges social institutions to take responsibility for creating equal access to knowledge. The texts in *Djauharah* emphasize that educating girls is not solely an individual responsibility, but a social one, including the responsibility of *ninik mamak* (traditional leaders) and,

especially, parents. Criticism of this inequality appears in the form of sharp questions addressed to the institutions closest to children's lives, namely, families and *ninik mamak*:

"...Why is it so, oh *inacak mamak* and parents? Why are girls treated differently from boys in terms of upbringing and education? Is it not obligatory for us, the daughters, to seek knowledge?..." (Rasimin, Page 6, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1)

This question highlights the unjust treatment within the family, where boys are supported to go to school, while girls are left at home. In the discourse of *Djauharah*, the family is not only about the nurturing environment and emotional closeness but also part of the societal structure that either perpetuates or corrects gender inequalities in education.

In another quote, the writer expresses gratitude to parents who send their children to school, while criticizing some parents who only send their sons:

"...Most parents do not like to send their daughters to seek knowledge; if that is the case, when will we ever progress?..." (Akidah, Page 97, Article 1, Volume 2, Issue 7).

Akidah positions parents as the shapers of the nation's future. Parents, as the primary educators, have the responsibility to provide education for their children (Rufaedah, 2020). Educating girls is not viewed as a burden, but rather as a prerequisite for societal progress. In the context of the 1920s, this call can be seen as an early form of emancipation based on Islamic values.

Educational institutions also became a focal point in the effort to achieve equality. One quote mentions:

"...Send her to religious school, teach her everything pleasing to Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger..." (Rasimin, Page 5, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1). Rasimin not only advocates for girls to be educated at home but also directly encourages sending them to formal educational institutions, particularly religious schools. These religious schools are not just places to learn the Qur'an, but also spaces to gain Islamic understanding and practical knowledge, providing guidance for life in this world and the hereafter. The ideal curriculum mentioned is even quite progressive:

"...It is truly obligatory for us women to seek knowledge about our holy religion and salvation in this world, such as learning Arabic, Malay, Dutch, and English. Of these, Arabic is the first and foremost, for it is the language of the Prophet, our beloved. It is the language with the most beautiful teachings. Then, knowledge of the other languages is important, as well as learning how to write, read, count, cook, sew, manage the household, raise children, and care for the family..." (Akidah, Page 97, Article 1, Volume 2, Issue 7).

This statement from Akidah demonstrates that *Djauharah* advocates for the establishment of integrated educational institutions that not only impart religious knowledge but also teach household skills and foreign languages, which, at the time, could be considered very progressive.

Social institutions are called upon to act immediately. One quote states:

"...Send her to religious school, teach her everything pleasing to Allah Ta'ala and His Messenger, so that no regrets follow, like the servant who was negligent, and like our mothers..." (Rasimin, Page 5, Article 2, Volume 1, Issue 1).

It is clear that there is an awareness that previous generations lost the opportunity for education, and to prevent this from happening again, the implementation of educational equality is necessary. Radjab also expresses his concern about this. Radjab (2019) highlights the negative impact of past education policies, where many children in Minangkabau during that era faced limited access to education due to their parents' limited understanding of the importance of formal education. The older generation, who were considered role models, suffered setbacks due to illiteracy and a lack of interest in learning new things. This situation creates a contradiction, where the same generation that was negatively impacted by illiteracy becomes an obstacle for the younger generation to access education, despite learning opportunities having become more accessible.

In this context, the role and responsibility of the family become increasingly important. In the discourse constructed by *Djauharah*, the family plays a central role as the primary institution for

educating both male and female children. The family is the first and most important institution in a child's education (Muthoifin et al., 2017). Fathers and mothers are not just caregivers but also educators, role models, and guides for the future, as shown in the following quote:

"The first thing we must know – and what is obligatory for mothers and fathers to teach their sons and daughters – is to teach the pillars and conditions of prayer..." (Rasimin, Page 38, Article 4, Volume 1, Issue 3).

In this context, basic religious education, such as prayer and worship, is not delegated to schools or prayer halls; instead, it is the direct responsibility of parents. Education does not begin in schools, but at home, and this role is primarily held by parents. This responsibility cannot be abandoned except in certain circumstances, and even with the establishment of educational institutions for children, parents cannot be relieved of this duty. This is because educational institutions cannot replace the family's role in fostering emotional closeness and love, which is the foundational element of character development (Rufaedah, 2020).

In addition to providing knowledge, families also shape children through their example, especially that of the mother. The following quote illustrates this:

"A daughter always follows the queen mother, in her words, behavior, feelings, wisdom, and religion, because, according to the child's thoughts, her mother is the perfect human being." (Ahmad, Page 107, Article 7, Volume 2, Issue 7).

The mother is portrayed as the ideal figure who indirectly transfers values to her daughter. Thus, family education does not only occur through instructions or advice but also through the lifestyle that children observe and imitate (Bahri, 2015). The educational function of the family is also shown from the time the child is young. For example, in the following quote:

"Most people buy toys for their children that are of no use for their future... Why not buy them things that will benefit them in the future?" (Syakurah, Page 58, Article 5, Volume 2, Issue 4).

This message encourages parents to think about the long-term effects of what they provide to their children, including toys. Choosing educational items from an early age is considered part of the gradual effort to shape the child's character and intelligence.

The family is also considered a key to social change because a new generation, which will determine the community's future, is born within the home. In several articles, the writers even express gratitude to parents who support education:

"Let us be grateful to God and to our fathers and mothers who send us to study... to advance and honor our nation..." (Page 97, Article 1, Volume 2, Issue 7).

Thus, family education in *Djauharah* is not only presented as a domestic issue but also as a social responsibility.

Djauharah magazine offers a valuable lesson on how media can be an effective tool for advocating on behalf of marginalized groups, particularly women. The findings from this research on the magazine demonstrate that, despite being published nearly a century ago, the ideas and strategies employed remain highly relevant to the current context of women's empowerment struggles in Indonesia.

One important aspect of *Djauharah* magazine is its ability to provide a space for women from various regions to write and share their views. *Djauharah* also played an important role in raising women's awareness. Its articles not only provided information but also shaped a mindset that encouraged readers to learn and actively participate in society. Modern media could apply this approach by creating educational content that is easy to understand, such as videos, podcasts, or online webinars discussing women's rights and their roles in society.

Djauharah was able to combine Islamic values with local culture in the spirit of women's progress. The founder of the magazine, Syaikh Abdul Latif Syakur, chose a middle path that did not align with any particular group's ideology but focused on education and moral development. He demonstrated that women could advance without compromising their religious values and traditions. This approach is well-suited to the diverse Indonesian society. Modern media can follow this example by involving

religious and traditional leaders to convey messages that encourage women's progress without conflicting with societal values.

Djauharah also reminds us of the importance of building intellectual networks. Today, digital media can create online communities that connect activists, academics, and practitioners from various regions. Digital media can foster communities where women learn from one another, engage in discussions, and offer mutual support. Just like *Djauharah* sparked national spirit, modern media can emphasize that the struggle for women's rights is part of the vision of building the nation. When narratives about women's roles are conveyed inclusively and wisely, society will be more receptive to and supportive of women's empowerment.

The four gender elements formulated by Scott appear to function in *Djauharah's* discourse. Cultural symbols of pious and honorable women are used to both limit and justify women's roles. Religious and social norms shape the perception that religious education is more suitable for men. Social institutions such as the family, *ninik mamak*, and educational institutions play an active role in perpetuating unequal access to knowledge. Meanwhile, through their reflective writings, the women in *Djauharah* begin to build a new subjectivity as knowledgeable subjects, aware of their marginalization, and striving to renegotiate their position within the framework of Islam and tradition.

CONCLUSION

Djauharah magazine raised awareness among women about their right to education. The magazine strongly criticized the mindset of parents and *ninik mamak* (traditional leaders) who restricted and confined women to the domestic sphere without access to formal education. It played a significant role in building social and intellectual awareness among Muslim women. Many articles highlighted the importance of education for women and called for a rise from their disadvantaged position. Parents, as the primary institution, were urged to teach and educate their children, especially in religious education, as they are responsible for their children's education, and the future well-being of the children will reflect upon them. The magazine explicitly encouraged female readers to participate in societal improvements actively. In some writings, the idea of equaling men in knowledge emerged, indicating that *Djauharah* carried an emancipatory spirit rooted in Islamic values.

Not only emphasizing women's educational rights, but *Djauharah* also served as a da'wah medium by instilling Islamic values through articles grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It not only criticized the social reality that was not ideal at the time but also called for societal change toward improvement, offering solutions based on Islamic values to encourage change.

Djauharah was not just a women's magazine, but also a platform for social transformation, showing how early 20th-century Muslim women responded to challenges and positioned themselves amidst the values of tradition, religion, and changing times. Through reflective and progressive writings, this magazine contributed to broadening women's perspectives, raising awareness of the importance of both religious and practical knowledge, as well as active roles in society. This contribution makes *Djauharah* an important part of the history of the women's press and the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia.

Research on *Djauharah* makes a significant contribution to the development of historiography in the press and women's and gender studies in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Islam and Minangkabau culture in the early 20th century. This research affirms that Muslim women were not merely objects in socio-religious history, but also active agents who developed ideas, spread knowledge, and participated in the public sphere. The presence of *Djauharah* serves as evidence that progressive Islamic discourse was once voiced through a media outlet managed and written by women, even amidst limited access and geographical barriers for the writers.

The study of *Djauharah* opens a new space for research on the Islamic press, highlighting women's struggles beyond the dominance of colonial or modernist-secular narratives. Historically, the women's press has focused mainly on modernist or secular women figures. At the same time, *Djauharah*

demonstrates that critical voices on gender inequality also emerged from madrasah (Islamic school) environments, with an approach grounded in religious and local cultural values. Thus, this research can serve as a foundation for future studies examining women's media and the contribution of scholars and Islamic educational institutions in fostering gender awareness in line with Islamic principles.

Djauharah also provides an opportunity to revisit the discourse on women in Islam, adapting it to the socio-cultural context. Through its content and method of delivery, *Djauharah* affirms that women can assume public roles and express their thoughts without compromising Islamic values. The narratives it brings can serve as an inspiration for developing contemporary alternative media that not only provides information but also stands on Islamic values and encourages women to play an active role in society. Media with such characteristics are needed to promote social justice and gender equality among Muslim women. *Djauharah* demonstrates that women's struggles can coexist with respect for religious teachings and local wisdom.

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