

Strengthening Worthwhile Traits of Grade 12 Students Through Values-Based Learning at Taysan San Jose Integrated National High School

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Abstract

Values formation plays a crucial role in shaping students' behavior, relationships, and decision-making, particularly among senior high school learners preparing for future academic and career demands. This study examined the effectiveness of values-based learning in strengthening the worthwhile traits of Grade 12 students at Taysan San Jose Integrated National High School during the School Year 2025–2026. It aimed to determine students' current level of academic behavior, interpersonal relationships, and self-discipline; assess the impact of values-based learning on leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and decision-making ability; identify how students demonstrate these traits; examine challenges in applying values in academic and personal contexts; and propose enhancement activities to further nurture positive traits. A descriptive–quantitative design was utilized, complemented by a quasi-experimental approach involving a structured questionnaire. The participants consisted of 203 Grade 12 students from eleven sections. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, composite mean, ranking, frequency and percentage.

Findings revealed that students exhibited a very high level of worthwhile traits in academic behavior, interpersonal relationships, and self-discipline. Values-based learning was very effective in developing leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and decision-making ability. Students showed a very great extent of trait development, though moderate challenges were noted in applying values independently and handling peer influence. Enhancement activities such as community service like Project SMILE were proposed to further strengthen students' moral, social, and personal growth. Based on the findings, the study proposed enhancement activities such as community service, journaling for self-reflection and leadership workshops to sustain values formation. Overall, the study concludes that values-based learning is an effective on strengthening students' worthwhile traits. Based on the findings, it was concluded that E-learning platforms such as YouTube, Canva, and Educaplay significantly enhanced the teaching and learning process, as reflected by a composite mean of 3.45 interpreted as high influence. These platforms provided dynamic visuals and meaningful hands-on experiences that improved students' understanding and participation, while also promoting



independent learning, collaboration, and active engagement. However, challenges such as unreliable internet access remained major barriers to effective participation in online learning. In light of these, it was recommended that teachers integrate e-learning platforms into daily lessons, design interactive and skill-based digital activities, and maximize these tools to address diverse learning needs, while schools ensure consistent access to digital resources and stable internet connectivity to support effective implementation.

Keywords: Values-based learning, worthwhile traits, Grade 12 students, academic behavior, interpersonal relationships, self-discipline, leadership skills, emotional intelligence, decision making, quasi-experimental design, enhancement activities

Introduction

Education is not merely about imparting knowledge and academic skills, it is fundamentally about shaping learners into morally upright, socially responsible, and emotionally intelligent individuals. It involves holistic development which requires values be integrated into the educational experience and enabling students to make ethical decisions, nurture positive relationships, and contribute meaningfully to society. In today's fast-paced, digitally connected world, students are exposed to diverse influences, including social media and peer pressure, which may challenge their ability to practice integrity, empathy, and self-discipline. In response to these realities, this study aims to explore how values-based learning can strengthen worthwhile traits among Grade 12 students, helping them cultivate a moral compass that complements their academic growth.

The importance of character education and values integration in schooling has been widely recognized. Countries such as Finland, Japan, and Singapore have implemented curricula that embed values across subjects, resulting in improved social-emotional skills, academic performance, resilience, and civic engagement. International studies also highlight pressing issues, including rising rates of bullying, unethical decision-making, and adolescent disengagement, emphasizing the necessity of nurturing moral and social values alongside cognitive skills. These global trends underscore the relevance of equipping students with strong character traits to prepare them for both personal success and responsible participation in society.

The Philippine education system similarly emphasizes values formation as a core component of the K-12 curriculum. The Department of Education (DepEd) mandates the integration of core values such as respect, honesty, responsibility, and compassion across all subjects.

While facilitating lessons and group activities, it is observed that students who excel academically yet display lapses in cooperation, empathy, and accountability. For instance, some learners rely heavily on peers to complete group tasks, while others dismiss classmates' ideas during discussions, showing a gap in respect and empathy. There are also occasions when learners react impulsively to disagreements, raising voices or expressing frustration, indicating challenges in emotional regulation. These firsthand observations highlight the need for intentional, structured strategies that reinforce moral and ethical development alongside academic learning.

This study draws on theoretical frameworks from character education, moral development, and values integration to provide a structured approach to embedding meaningful values into learning activities.

This study is therefore grounded in the belief that values-based learning bridges the gap between academic achievement and moral development. By designing activities that promote reflection, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility, students can internalize and

consistently demonstrate positive traits essential for personal growth and social contribution. Strengthening these traits in Grade 12 learners at Taysan San Jose Integrated National High School equips them not only for further education and future careers but also for life as conscientious, compassionate, and principled members of society. This study underscores the transformative potential of education when it integrates values, preparing students to navigate both local and global challenges with competence and integrity.

To establish a theoretical and empirical foundation for this study, relevant literature and previous studies were reviewed, focusing on the impact of values-based learning on students' cognitive, emotional, and social development.

MacCann et al. (2020) conducted a large meta-analysis and found that students' emotional intelligence (EI) is significantly associated with academic performance. The ability measures of EI showed the strongest associations, and EI remained an important predictor even after controlling for intelligence and personality. This suggests that values-based activities that build emotional skills (self-awareness, emotion management) can contribute to measurable gains in school performance.

According to Sánchez-Álvarez 2022, examined EI and academic performance specifically in secondary education and reported a low-to-moderate but reliable association between EI and academic outcomes, with ability EI again producing larger effects than self-report measures. These findings reinforce the idea that teaching emotional competencies as part of values education can support both affective development and academic success among adolescents.

Buzi et al. (2020) emphasized the multidimensional nature of value formation, encompassing respect, responsibility, and empathy. The study emphasizes that structured value assessment tools can help teachers monitor students' moral and ethical growth.

In addition, Nasário et al. (2020) examined how attitudes and values influence behavior among students and physical education professionals. The research revealed that values-based approaches promote healthier, more cooperative attitudes and support the integration of personal and social responsibility in academic and extracurricular settings. This supports the concept that values-based education enhances character formation and ethical engagement.

According to Zhu (2025), parent-child, teacher-student, and peer relationships play a crucial role in high school students' learning engagement. The study found that supportive relationships enhance students' motivation and persistence in academic tasks. Students with positive social interactions tend to exhibit stronger academic behavior. Zhu emphasizes that fostering these relationships is essential for academic success.

In line with this, Moreira (2020) highlighted that students' personality traits, learning approaches, and well-being significantly predict academic performance. Those who adopt structured learning strategies and self-regulation show higher achievement levels. Academic

behavior is closely linked to these personal factors. Encouraging organized learning habits is vital to improve student outcomes.

As cited by Zhu (2025), interpersonal relationships greatly influence students' engagement and collaboration in academic activities. Positive peer and teacher support promote effective communication and conflict management. Students with strong social bonds participate more actively and show better cooperation.

In line with this, Shao (2024) found that peer relationships indirectly affect academic achievement through learning motivation and engagement. Supportive peers enhance students' collaboration, empathy, and communication. Positive peer interactions improve motivation and overall academic performance. The study emphasizes nurturing peer connections to promote holistic student development.

According to Shi (2022), self-discipline enables students to maintain focus and resist distractions, resulting in better learning outcomes. Higher self-discipline is associated with persistence, goal achievement, and effective study habits. Students with well-developed self-regulation perform better academically. The study highlights the importance of fostering self-discipline for academic success.

In line with this, Tekin (2024) investigated how self-discipline mediates the effect of social media use on students' academic performance. Findings show that disciplined students manage time efficiently and maintain consistent study routines. Self-discipline supports resilience against distractions and promotes achievement. The study stresses the need for programs that cultivate self-regulatory skills.

Similarly, Lovat et. al (2023) highlighted that student wellbeing is linked to consistent value-oriented interventions. Schools that fail to provide structured values education often see students struggle with self-discipline and peer collaboration.

According to Guerrero and Estera (2025), values-based education positively impacts students' leadership qualities. Students participating in values-focused activities showed improved initiative, responsibility, and teamwork. The study indicates that classroom behavior improves alongside leadership development. Integrating values education strengthens students' capacity to lead ethically.

In line with this, Farmen (2021), a qualitative study found that school principals who model core values influence students' leadership skills. Students exposed to these environments develop accountability, problem-solving, and collaboration abilities. Values-guided practices contribute to effective decision-making. Embedding values in leadership training is essential for adolescents' development.

As cited by Agacer (2025), implementing values-based education enhances students' emotional intelligence. Activities focusing on values develop self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. Students demonstrate improved interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The

study supports integrating values-based programs to nurture holistic emotional growth.

Moreover, Palma-Luengo (2025) emphasized that cultivating emotional intelligence and critical thinking among pre-service teachers improves both personal and professional interactions. Students involved in values-oriented activities develop stronger stress management and empathy. Emotional competencies contribute to better social functioning. The study highlights the importance of embedding emotional learning within curricula.

Vogeler et al. (2022), social-emotional learning (SEL) programs help students develop stronger decision-making skills. Values-based activities enhance judgment, problem-solving, and responsible choices. Students learn to apply ethical reasoning in real-life scenarios. SEL integration is crucial to developing practical decision-making abilities.

In the study, Pulcu (2024), observed that value-based decision-making combines affective and cognitive processes to produce socially responsible choices. Students with heightened value awareness make balanced, reflective decisions. The study underscores the role of values education in strengthening adolescents' ethical and practical reasoning.

According to Lin (2024), values-based learning improves students' social-emotional competencies and interpersonal effectiveness. Participants showed better communication, cooperation, and empathy. These traits contribute to teamwork and conflict resolution. The study confirms that values education translates into observable positive behaviors.

In line with this, Berkowitz (2021) emphasized that students internalize values through consistent observation and practice. For instance, students demonstrate self-discipline through punctuality and persistence, and interpersonal skills through cooperative projects

Additionally, Klinkosz (2021) found that students with higher emotional intelligence exhibited stronger interpersonal competence. Values-based learning enhanced social skills, empathy, and collaboration. Students demonstrated improved relationships and effective communication. This emphasizes the role of values education in behavioral development.

According to Okeke (2021), challenges in values education include limited teacher training and dependence on traditional teaching methods. Students struggle to apply learned values to their daily lives. Overcoming these obstacles requires better teacher preparation and curriculum alignment. Addressing such challenges ensures more effective values-based learning implementation.

Additionally, Ertürk (2020) highlighted that integrating values into course content faces barriers like insufficient instructional resources and weak connection to students' lives. Learners find it difficult to translate theoretical knowledge into practical behavior. The study suggests developing activities that bridge classroom learning with real-life application.

Moreover, Guerrero and Estera (2025), incorporating values education into co-curricular and classroom activities strengthens students' leadership and ethical reasoning. Peer mentoring,

debates, and community projects help students internalize values. Practical application reinforces learning and behavior. The study emphasizes activity-based approaches to cultivate worthwhile traits.

In line with this, Agacer (2025) recommends structured values-based programs, including reflective journaling, role-playing, and group discussions. These activities enhance emotional intelligence, moral reasoning, and self-regulation. Students internalize values through experiential learning. The study supports hands-on activities for effective values development.

In summary, values-based learning plays a crucial role in developing worthwhile traits in Grade 12 students including leadership, emotional intelligence, and decision-making. Despite challenges in implementation, practical strategies and enrichment activities can enhance its effectiveness. These findings provide a foundation for the current study emphasizing the potential of values-based programs to strengthen students' character and overall development.

Considering these related studies, a gap remains in understanding how values-based learning specifically affects the development and application of worthwhile traits among senior high school learners, prompting the need for this study. This aims to strengthen the worthwhile traits of Grade 12 students through values-based learning. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current level of Grade 12 students' worthwhile traits in terms of:
 - 1.1. academic behavior;
 - 1.2. interpersonal relationships; and
 - 1.3. self-discipline?
2. How effective is values-based learning in developing Grade 12 students' worthwhile traits in terms of:
 - 2.1. leadership skills;
 - 2.2. emotional intelligence; and
 - 2.3. decision-making ability?
3. In what ways do Grade 12 students demonstrate the development of worthwhile traits as an outcome of values-based learning?
4. What challenges do Grade 12 students face in applying values-based learning to their academic and personal lives?
5. Based on the findings, what values-based enhancement activities may be designed to further strengthen students' worthwhile traits?

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the effectiveness of values based learning in strengthening worthwhile traits of Grade 12 students at Taysan San Jose Integrated National High School during the School Year 2025–2026. The respondents consisted of 203 Grade 12 students selected through stratified random sampling from a population of 429 students across ABM, HUMSS, and STEM strands during the School Year 2025–2026. A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool, consisting of four parts: level of worthwhile traits, effectiveness of values-based learning, demonstration of traits, and challenges encountered. The instrument employed a four-point Likert scale and underwent expert validation to ensure reliability and validity. Data were gathered after the implementation of values

based learning activities, with proper consent and orientation provided to participants. Additional qualitative data were collected through interviews and observations. Statistical tools such as weighted mean, composite mean, frequency, percentage, and ranking were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data.

Results

Table 1
Level of Worthwhile Traits in terms of Academic Behavior

Academic Behavior		
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Completes academic tasks on time	4.00	Very High
2. Participates in class discussions	4.00	Very High
3. Modify my study strategies when my usual methods are not effective	4.00	Very High
4. Complies with academic rules and guidelines	4.00	Very High
5. Reflects on mistakes and improves performance	4.00	Very High
6. Prepares in advance for quizzes and exams	4.00	Very High
7. Reviews and studies lessons regularly	4.00	Very High
8. Submits assignments with accuracy and completeness	4.00	Very High

9. Asks questions when topic is unclear	4.00	Very High
10. Maintains minimal absences and tardiness	4.00	Very High
Composite Mean	4.00	Very High

Legend (4) 3.50- 4.00 Very High

Table 2
Level of Worthwhile Traits in terms of Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal Relationships		
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Cooperates with classmates in group activities	4.00	Very High
2. Respects teachers and classmates	4.00	Very High
3. Expresses empathy when classmates are struggling	4.00	Very High
4. Resolves conflicts peacefully	4.00	Very High
5. Communicates clearly with peers and teachers	4.00	Very High
6. Listen attentively when others are speaking	4.00	Very High
7. Values the opinions of others in discussions	4.00	Very High
8. Shows kindness to classmates regardless of differences	4.00	Very High
9. Expresses appreciation when others help	4.00	Very High
10. Support classmates in achieving group goals	4.00	Very High
Composite Mean	4.00	Very High

Legend (4) 3.50- 4.00 Very High

Table 3
Level of Worthwhile Traits in terms of Self- Discipline

Self-Discipline		
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Manages time effectively for school and personal tasks	4.00	Very High
2. Avoids procrastination when doing assignments	4.00	Very High
3. Handles difficult tasks without unnecessary complaints	4.00	Very High
4. Resists peer pressure when making decisions	4.00	Very High
5. Takes responsibility for my own actions	4.00	Very High
6. Controls emotions when provoked	4.00	Very High
7. Remains focused on despite distractions	4.00	Very High
8. Keeps track of priorities and deadlines	4.00	Very High
9. Practices self-control in using gadgets or social media	4.00	Very High
10.Reviews work carefully before submission	4.00	Very High
Composite Mean	4.00	Very High

Legend (4) 3.50- 4.00 Very High

Table 4
Effectiveness of Values-Based Learning in terms of Leadership Skills

Leadership Skills			
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. It promotes honesty and transparency in leading others	3.58	Very Effective	2
2. It helps to lead group activities	3.51	Very Effective	8

3. It improves ability to motivate classmates	3.53	Very Effective	5.5
4. It develops stronger sense of responsibility when leading projects	3.69	Very Effective	1
5. It helps to become a leader who values diversity and inclusion	3.54	Very Effective	4
6. It develops ability to influence classmates	3.50	Very Effective	9
7. It develops skills in organizing tasks and resources	3.53	Very Effective	5.5
8. It helps to become a role model to others	3.49	Effective	10
9. It teaches to be fair and just as a leader	3.57	Very Effective	3
10. It prepares to accept accountability for group outcomes	3.52	Very Effective	7
Composite Mean	3.53	Very Effective	

Legend (4) 3.50- 4.00 Very Effective, (3) 2.50- 3.49 Effective

Table 5
Effectiveness of Values-Based Learning in terms of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence			
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. It helps me grow in emotional maturity and resilience	3.62	Very Effective	1
2. It allows to control negative reactions during challenges	3.49	Effective	9
3. It develops ability to empathize with others	3.54	Very Effective	5
4. It nurtures sense of belongingness in the community	3.48	Effective	10
5. It improves patience in dealing with peers	3.55	Very Effective	4
6. It enables to express feelings in appropriate ways	3.51	Very Effective	8

7. It helps to avoid conflicts through understanding	3.52	Very Effective	7
8. It encourages to respect different perspectives	3.61	Very Effective	2
9. It trains to stay calm in pressure-filled situations	3.53	Very Effective	6
10. It encourages to solve conflict, forgive and move forward	3.59	Very Effective	3
Composite Mean	3.54	Very Effective	

Legend (4) 3.50-4.00 Very Effective, (3) 2.50- 3.49 Effective

Table 6
Effectiveness of Values-Based Learning in terms of Decision-making Ability

Decision-making Ability			
Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. It guides to make decisions that support my long-term goal	3.59	Very Effective	1
2. It helps to stay true to integrity	3.53	Very Effective	8
3. It encourages to reflect on how my decision will affect others	3.56	Very Effective	2
4. It helps to accept the outcome of my decisions	3.54	Very Effective	6
5. It encourages to seek advice when needed	3.55	Very Effective	3.5
6. It builds confidence in making some decisions	3.46	Effective	10
7. It develops fairness in making group choices	3.55	Very Effective	3.5
8. It helps to prioritize tasks wisely	3.54	Very Effective	6
9. It enables to solve academic problems independently	3.49	Effective	9
10. It trains to evaluate different options before making a final choice	3.54	Very Effective	6
Composite Mean	3.53	Very Effective	

Legend (4) 3.50-4.00 Very Effective, (3) 2.50- 3.49 Effective

Table 7
Demonstration of the Worthwhile Traits Development

Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I begin or end my day with a prayer for guidance	3.52	Very Great Extent	6.5
2. I demonstrate honesty in my academic and personal life	3.51	Very Great Extent	8.5
3. I show respect in my actions toward others	3.59	Very Great Extent	1
4. I practice self-discipline in doing my tasks	3.53	Very Great Extent	5
5. I take initiative to help others when needed	3.58	Very Great Extent	2.5
6. I cooperate with classmates to achieve common goals	3.56	Very Great Extent	4
7. I participate in school activities that promotes environmental sustainability	3.52	Very Great Extent	6.5
8. I use resources wisely in doing academic tasks	3.48	A Great Extent	10
9. I value Filipino culture in school discussions	3.58	Very Great Extent	2.5
10. I stay updated on national issues discussed in school subjects	3.51	Very Great Extent	8.5
Composite Mean	3.54	Very Great Extent	

Legend (4) 3.50-4.00 Very Great Extent, (3) 2.50- 3.49 A Great Extent

Table 8
Challenges in applying Values-based Learning

Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Apply school values in daily life	3.38	Moderately Challenging	1.5
2. Practice good values even when influenced by peers	3.30	Moderately Challenging	7
3. Manage school work and personal tasks effectively	3.37	Moderately Challenging	3
4. Maintain patience and self control on various situations	3.38	Moderately Challenging	1.5
5. Leading classmates during academic tasks	3.32	Moderately Challenging	6
6. Handle conflict with peers while practicing values	3.29	Moderately Challenging	8
7. Reflect on my behavior regularly	3.25	Moderately Challenging	10
8. Practice values with limited guidance	3.26	Moderately Challenging	9
9. Maintain self-discipline despite of social media distractions	3.34	Moderately Challenging	4
10. Make ethical decisions under pressure	3.33	Moderately Challenging	5
Composite Mean	3.32	Moderately Challenging	

Legend (4) 3.50-4.00 Very Challenging, (3) 2.50- 3.49 Moderately Challenging

Table 9
Summary of Student Responses on Values-Based Enhancement Activities

Proposed Activities	Sample Student Responses	Core Values Strengthened
1. Community Service and Outreach Programs	Helping others through feeding programs/ Participating in clean up drives and donation drives	Compassion, empathy, social responsibility
2. Reflection and Journaling Activities	Writing my thoughts and feelings helps me understand my values/ Keeping a journal improves my discipline	Self-awareness, discipline, honesty
3. Teamwork and Collaboration	Group activities help me learn to respect others' opinions. / Working together teaches cooperation	Cooperation, respect, patience
4. Cultural Programs	Programs about Filipino Values and traditions remind us to respect our culture.	Respect for culture

Discussion

The findings indicate that values-based learning significantly contributes to the development of students' worthwhile traits. The very high levels of academic behavior, interpersonal relationships, and self-discipline suggest that students have internalized positive values. This supports the findings of Moreira (2020) and Zhu (2025), which highlight the importance of structured learning and social interaction in student development.

The effectiveness of values-based learning in enhancing leadership, emotional intelligence, and decision-making aligns with studies by Guerrero and Estera (2025) and

MacCann et al. (2020), emphasizing the role of values education in holistic development.

Despite these positive outcomes, the presence of moderate challenges indicates that students still struggle to consistently apply values in real-life situations, particularly under peer pressure. This supports Okeke (2021), who noted that translating values into behavior requires continuous guidance and experiential learning.

The study implies that schools should integrate structured and experiential values-based activities such as community service, reflective journaling, and leadership training. However, the study is limited to Grade 12 students in one school and focuses only on short-term outcomes, which may affect generalizability and long-term interpretation.

Conclusion

1. The study found that Grade 12 students of Taysan San Jose Integrated National High School demonstrated a very high level of worthwhile traits in terms of academic behavior, interpersonal relationships, and self-discipline, with overall composite means of 4.00. These results confirmed that students possess well-developed values that positively influence their academic and personal values.
2. Findings revealed that values-based learning was very effective in developing students' leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and decision-making ability, with composite means ranging from 3.53 to 3.54. This implies that values-based learning activities effectively develop both cognitive and affective domains, equipping students with essential life skills and values formation needed for academic success and social responsibility.
3. The demonstration of worthwhile traits showed that students applied learned values to real-life situations to a very great extent. This indicates that values-based learning is successfully internalize the learned values into practical behaviors that reflect ethical and social responsibility.
4. Although values-based learning had many positive effects, students experienced moderate challenges in consistently applying these values in daily life with a composite mean of 3.32. These challenges suggest the need for continuous guidance and supportive learning environment to fully internalize these behaviors.
5. Based on the results of the study, several values-based enhancement activities are recommended to strengthen students' worthwhile traits. These include reflective journaling, community service and leadership simulation. Sustained implementation of these programs can fully develop the worthwhile traits necessary for personal excellence, social engagement, and lifelong moral growth of the students.

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of values-based learning among Grade 12 students:

1. Integration of Structured Values-Based Activities: Teachers may implement

experiential learning activities such as reflective journal, role-play, and community outreach programs, to help students to apply core values in real-life settings.

2. **Teacher Training and Capacity Building:** The Department of Education and school administrators may provide regular seminars and workshops focusing on effective strategies on implementing values-based learning.

3. **Incorporation of Values Assessment Tools:** The use of validated instruments to measure students' core values may help monitor progress and provide feedback for both teachers and learners. This assessment tool promotes accountability and continuous improvement.

4. **Strengthening of Home-School Collaboration:** Parents and guardians may be actively involved in strengthening values education at home. Family support can complement school-based programs and ensure consistency in values development.

5. **Development of School-Wide Values Campaigns:** The school may initiate advocacy programs, such as Values Month and leadership workshops that promote shared responsibility, empathy, and accountability among students.

6. **Further Research:** Future studies may explore the long-term impact of values-based learning on students' academic and behavioral outcomes. The findings and information from this study can be used as a reference for future research to be conducted that are related to the strengthening of students' worthwhile traits.

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