

## **The Relationship of the Learning of Tourism Marketing, Hard Skills, Soft Skills and Working Quality of the Graduates of Tourism Academy in Medan**

Sumihar Sebastiana Sitompul<sup>1</sup> & Djoko Kustono<sup>2</sup> & Syarif Suhartadi<sup>3</sup> & Rita Margaretha Setyaningsih<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>State University of Malang, Indonesia, Vocational Program, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>State University of Malang, Faculty of Technique, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>State University of Malang, Faculty of Technique, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Medan Tourism Academy, Tourism Marketing and Planning Management, Indonesia

Correspondence: State University of Malang, Indonesia, Vocational Program, Indonesia.

Email:sumiharsebastiana@gmail.com

Received: January 31, 2017

Accepted: April 3, 2017

Online Published: June 1, 2017

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v3i4p124

**Abstract:** The quality of human resources originated from the field of education, especially the graduates should be able to compete with other nations. Research design uses Partial Least Square (PLS) with smart PLS 2.0 program. The subjects were the graduates of tourism academy who have been working at tourism offices in North Sumatera namely Medan, Samosir, Dairi, Humbang Hasundutan, North Tapanuli, Toba Samosir, Karo, Serdang Bedagai, Deli Serdang. Respondents are 97 officers. Data collected by using instrument of questionnaire and analyzed by statistic with significant  $\leq 0,05$ . The result of the research demonstrated that (1) the learning of tourism marketing significantly affected the hard skills. (2) The learning of tourism marketing significantly affected the soft skills (3) Hard skills significantly affected working quality of the graduates (4) Soft skills significantly affected working quality of the graduates (5) The learning of tourism marketing significantly affected working quality of the graduates.

**Keywords:** The Learning of Tourism Marketing, Hard Skills, Soft Skills, Working Quality Of The Graduates

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism vocational school belongs to professional education in which the category of education implementation is based on the fieldwork in tourism. Qualified human resources begins with the education, especially the graduates have to be able to compete with others from another nation.

There are some adjustments required to solve the problems on reducing the curriculum demands and balancing the aspects of cognition and emotion, life skills development, education, values, relation to the work environment, and graduate competence. Those factors strongly support the needs of significant adjustments and changes of curriculum. Luthans (2005) states that the quality of human resources could directly determine the tourism products and services since each tourism spot (destination) is demanded to be able to improve the quality of the human resources. Swarbrooke (1996) states that the soft skills

were less concerned in most design of the higher education curriculum. Generally, the higher education curriculum more focused on the ability to master knowledge and hard skill.

### **1.1 The Learning of Tourism Marketing**

Learning as a system consists of components which are interacted, interrelated, and independent to one another to achieve learning objectives. General condition stipulated the conditions related to tourism. Tourism is the form of various tour activities and is supported by the facilities and services provided by the society, entrepreneurs, government, and local government.

Tourism matter is all of activities related to tourism and is multidimensional and multidiscipline which appear as a form of needs from each individual and the country. Moreover, it is also related to interaction between the tourists and the local people, among the tourists, government, local government, and the entrepreneurs. Gunn (1993) states that temporary displacement of people to a destination outside of the environment where they live and work, all activities running in the place they live in and on-site destinations available to serve their needs. The learning of tourism marketing is a form of interaction between the teacher and the students in a process of learning which concerns on how to promote a tourism place. Edward (1991) states that learning is a communication between the students, teacher, and the learning materials.

### **1.2 Hard Skill**

Spencer (1993) states Hard skill is technical and academic ability based on the background of the knowledge. It is technical, specific, definable, and countable. Furthermore, hard skill results responsive and implementation degree, discusses its technique in a long time. Hawkins (1999) states Hard skills are the technical capabilities specific job-related domains such as engineering, marketing, finance, or construction. They are called hard skills because they are special, real, and often observed.

### **1.3 Soft Skill**

Soft skills which includes character, attitude and values of life, social and interpersonal skill, is an important factor in almost all aspects of life, especially in the work field and selects the employees by considering the character and work attitude in the initial selection process. Klaus (2007) states that in the interview test, this stage is highly related to soft skills. The soft skills would play an important role when a graduate works in a company. Working as a civil servant or in a private sector requires a person to possess strong character, such as having high integrity, honest, responsible to their jobs, and excellent spirit.

The learning of soft skills is really essential for the students as their weapon to compete in the work field and industry. Ram Phani (2013) states that Soft skills education is a conscious and organized effort to influence the development of the desired attitude. Dewa (2013) states that Soft skills education is a part of the school organization which is supposed to appear in each part of the curriculum, from the written curriculum, hidden curriculum, co curriculum, and extra-curricular activities, and comprehensive school-based approach which are utilized to develop the morality of the students.

## 1.4 Working Quality of the Graduates

The quality of the graduates could be identified from the working quantity, working quality, knowledge about the job, creativity, cooperation, dependability, initiative, and personal quality when they work in the field. Brien (1997) states that the quality of the graduates could be identified by the assessment given by the customer of the work towards the result of the work which is demonstrated by the graduates; the higher the score, the higher the quality of the graduates. Spanbauer (1992) states that Human resources is an important aspect to develop the nations and improve the competitiveness. In order to achieve it, we need education institution which could create the graduates that are accepted by the work field and industry.

## 2. Methodology

Quantitative approach was utilized in this research to identify the quality of the graduates of Tourism Academy in Medan who had worked in the fields. In this case, the research was conducted in the offices of Local Tourism Department in some districts/cities in the province of North Sumatera. This was aimed to identify the competence of the graduates of Tourism Academy in Medan to be a marketer of tourism places from both hard skills and soft skills. It is expected that the result of this research would offer broad description of the graduate competence of Tourism Academy in Medan. Emzir (2013) states that Path analysis was conducted to determine the path which connected one variable to another variable. The quantitative data obtained in this research was analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Since the numbers of the sample was less than 100, Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) approach was utilized.

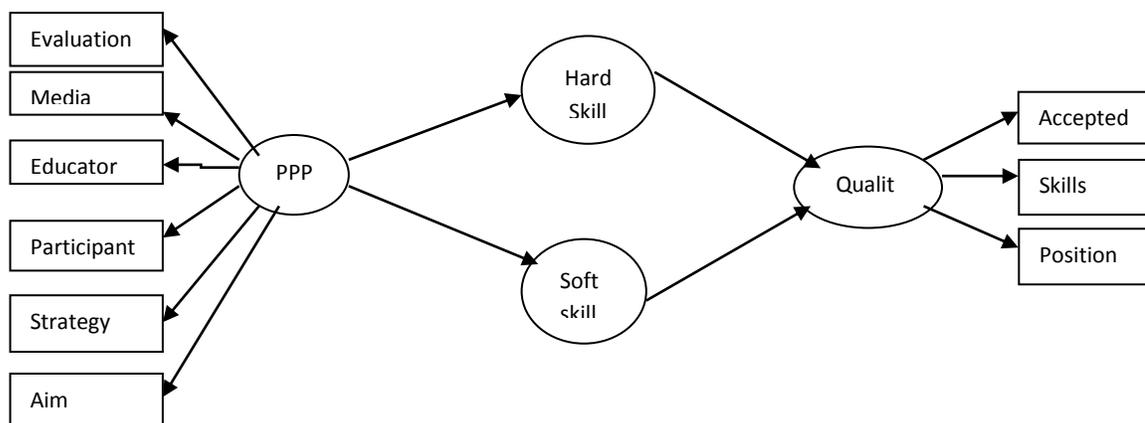


Figure 1: The Diagram of Measurement Model

## 4. Descriptive Analysis

The successful implementation of the learning strategies effectively supported soft skills alongside direct learning so that the students directly experienced the real world and the situation. Another effective strategy was using example or model. In this case, the role of the teacher was really important. By witnessing the teacher who possesses good soft skills, the students would follow it. The process of

learning by giving examples was faster than learning only by delivering theories. Hard skill is technical and academic ability based on the background of the knowledge. It is technical, specific, definable, and countable. It offered the description that technical and academic ability were really important for the graduates to master and develop their hard skills. There were two indicators of soft skills among the graduates of tourism academy which were lower than another indicator: emotion and empathy. The management of the emotion was a part of soft skills which was related to awareness, ability to work under pressure, having common sense, and ability to think critically. In terms of empathy, the graduates were expected to have better empathy by demonstrating high awareness of how to work in their business, able not to talk about what they heard, and able to work optimally according to the working hours.

A quality was a description and characteristics of a good or service, which demonstrated the ability to satisfy the desired needs. In the context of vocational education, the quality referred to the quality of the graduates in terms of academic and non-academic. It was influenced by the readiness of the input and the process of learning. Moreover, the quality of the graduates could be identified by working quantity, working quality, knowledge on the job, creativity, cooperation, dependability, initiative, and personal quality when the graduates worked in the fields.

## 5. Inferential Analysis

### 5.1 Single Factor Model Analysis

#### 5.1.1 Latent Variable of the Learning of Tourism Marketing

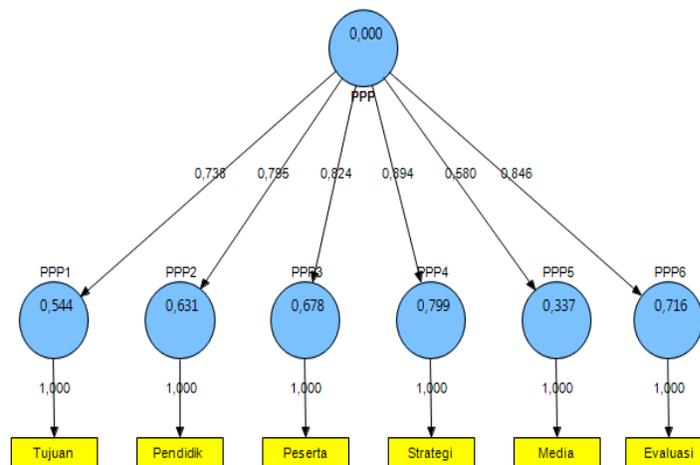


Figure 2: Unidimensional Model of the Learning of Tourism Marketing

Figure 2 was the result of the analysis on unidimensional of the learning of tourism marketing. As a single factor model which was constructed of six indicators, the feasibility of the model was measured based on feasibility indexes which were summarized in the following table: This analysis explained that single factor feasibility of the learning of tourism marketing was accepted. All of the indicators possessed high validity and reliability in measuring the learning of tourism marketing. The next step was that the whole indicators were included in the calculation of full model.

### 5.1.2 Latent Variable Hard skills

Latent variable hard skill consisted of two indicators which had reflective relationship.

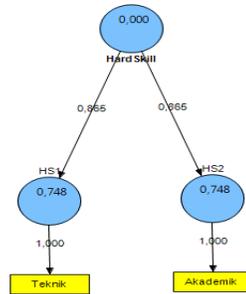


Figure 3: Unidimension Model of Hard skills

As a single factor constructed by two indicators, this analysis explained that the feasibility of single factor model of the hard skills was accepted. All of the indicators demonstrated high validity and reliability in measuring hard skills. The next step was that the whole indicators were included in the calculation of full model.

### 5.1.3 Latent Variable Soft skills

Latent variable soft skills consisted of five indicators with reflective relationship.

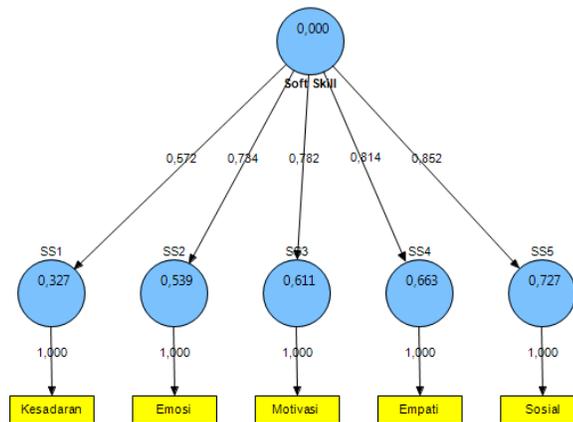


Figure 4: Unidimension Model of Soft Skills

As a single factor constructed by two indicators, this analysis explained that the feasibility of single factor model of the hard skills was accepted. All of the indicators demonstrated high validity and reliability in measuring hard skills. The next step was that the whole indicators were included in the calculation of full model.

### 5.1.4 Latent Variable Working Quality of the Graduates

Latent variable working quality of the graduates consisted of five indicators with reflective relationship.

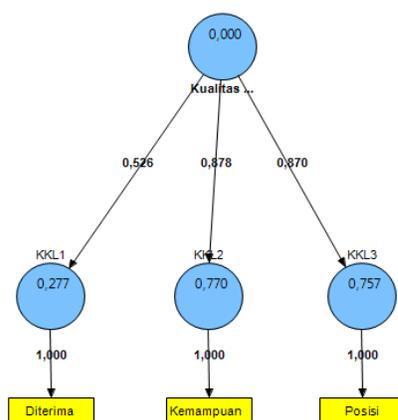


Figure 5: Unidimension Model of Working Quality of the Graduates

As a single factor constructed by three indicators, this analysis explained that the feasibility of single factor model of the hard skills was accepted. All of the indicators demonstrated high validity and reliability in measuring hard skills. The next step was that the whole indicators were included in the calculation of full model.

### 5.1.5 Linearity Test

Linearity assumption in the PLS model was only related to the model of structural equation and was not related to the hypothesis test, in which explained the relationship between variables in the structural model was linear. It described that the raising or reduction of the variation in the criteria was consistently followed by the raising or reduction in the predictor so that the relationship would form a linier. The result of linearity test explained that all of the paths fulfilled linearity assumption in which the result of F test in linearity was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) in the result of deviation test from linearity. This analysis concluded that the requirement of linearity was fulfilled in the three paths of path diagram.

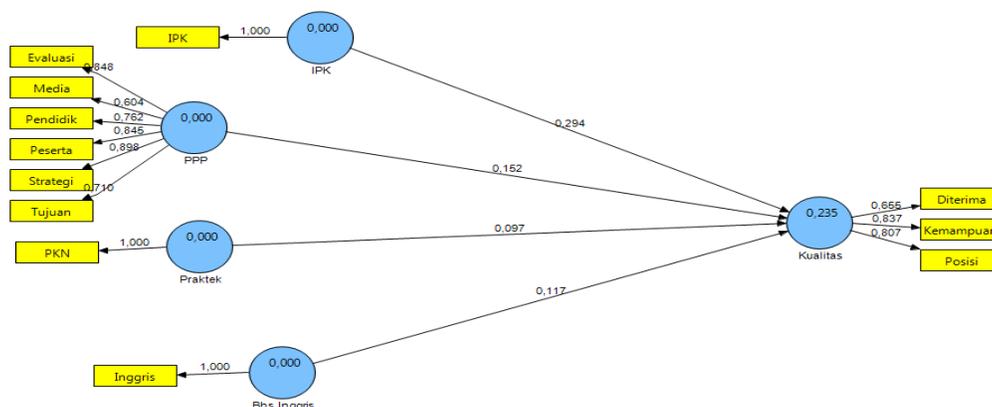


Figure 6: Model without Hard Skills and Soft Skills Mediation

### 5.1.6 Model with Hard Skills and Soft Skills Mediation

Modeling with the mediation of hard skills and soft skills demonstrated a big changing on the direct influence coefficient of the learning of tourism marketing towards working quality of the graduates. In this model, new information was obtained. First, path coefficient of the learning of tourism marketing towards the variables of hard skills and soft skills was high enough. Second, the coefficient of hard skills and soft skills towards working quality of the graduates was high as well.

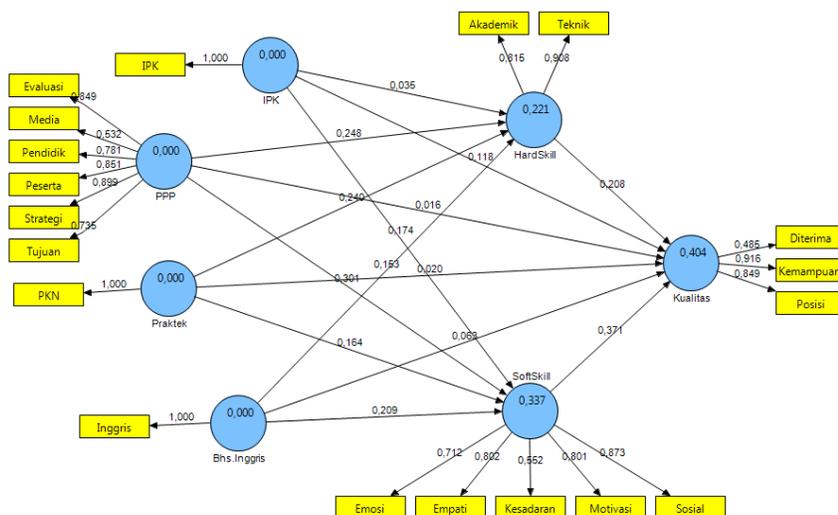


Figure 7: Model with Hard Skills and Soft Skills Mediation

### 5.1.7 Inner Model Analysis

Path coefficient 0.702 ( $t=17.409$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) from the learning of tourism marketing towards the soft skills was not significant. The grade of the soft skills could be explained by the learning of tourism marketing. Good soft skills were formed by the mastery of the learning of tourism marketing. The contribution of the learning of tourism marketing, hard skills, and soft skills to explain the variety of working quality of the graduates was 22.1%. Path coefficient 0.702 ( $t=17.409$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) from the learning of tourism marketing towards working quality of the graduates was not significant. Path coefficient 0.702 ( $t=17.409$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) from the hard skills towards working quality of the graduates was significant. Path coefficient 0.702 ( $t=17.409$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) from the soft skills towards working quality of the graduates was significant. The grade of the working quality of the graduates could be directly explained by the learning of tourism marketing. The good working quality happened form the mastery of the learning of tourism marketing.

### 5.1.8 Outer Model Analysis

The measurement of the learning of tourism marketing substantively located in the indicators of strategy, participant, and evaluation. These indicators possessed high loading values 0.899, 0.851, and 0.849. The

reliability of these six indicators was described by AVE value = 0.615 (bigger than 0.50), composite reliability = 0.903 (bigger than 0.70) and Cronbach Alpha coefficient 0.872 (bigger than 0.70) were accepted. Therefore, to measure the learning of tourism marketing, the main indicators was the success of the alumni or graduates to comprehend the strategy, participants, and evaluation.

The measurement of hard skills substantively relied on the indicator of technique. This indicator had loading factor value 0.908. The reliability of this indicator was in the form of AVE value = 0.744 (bigger than 0.50), composite reliability = 0.853 (bigger than 0.70) and Cronbach Alpha coefficient 0.662 (bigger than 0.70) were accepted. Consequently, the main indicator to measure the hard skills was technical ability.

The measurement of soft skills substantively based on the social indicator. These indicators demonstrated loading factor value 0.873. The reliability of the five indicators was in the form of AVE value = 0.572 (bigger than 0.50), composite reliability = 0.867 (bigger than 0.70) and Cronbach Alpha coefficient 0.809 (bigger than 0.70) were accepted. The main indicator to measure the soft skills was social indicator.

The measurement of working quality of the graduates substantively relied on the indicator of working ability. This indicator had loading factor value 0.916. The reliability of this indicator was in the form of AVE value = 0.598 (bigger than 0.50), composite reliability = 0.808 (bigger than 0.70) and Cronbach alpha coefficient 0.649 (bigger than 0.60) were accepted. Consequently, the main indicator to measure working quality was working ability.

## 6. Hypothesis

**Hypothesis H1:** The learning of tourism marketing affected the hard skills

The direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards hard skills was obtained that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or  $p$  was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected the hard skills. Therefore, H1 was accepted.

**Hypothesis H2:** The learning of tourism marketing influenced the soft skills

The direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards hard skills was obtained that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or  $p$  was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected the hard skills. Therefore, H2 was accepted.

**Hypothesis H3:** Hard skills affected the working quality

The direct effect of hard skills towards working quality was obtained that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or  $p$  was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the hard skills positively and significantly affected working quality. Therefore, H3 was accepted.

**Hypothesis H4:** Soft skills affected the working quality

The direct effect of the soft skills towards working quality was obtained that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that soft skills positively and significantly affected working quality. Therefore, H4 was accepted.

**Hypothesis H5:** The learning of tourism marketing affected the working quality

The direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards working quality was obtained that path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected working quality. Therefore, 5 was accepted.

## 7. Findings and Results

1. The result of the analysis on the direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards the hard skills showed that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected the hard skills. Han (2011) states Hard skills are skills where the rules stay the same regardless of which company, circumstance or people you work with. In contrast, soft skills are skills where the rules changes depending on the company culture and people you work with. It was in line with Ajir Chaturvedi et al (2011) states that our education put more emphasize on the technical ability in terms of hard skills. Several hard skills obtained by the graduates of tourism academy knew the concept of tourism marketing and market segmentation.
2. The result of the analysis on the direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards the soft skills showed that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected the soft skills. Soft skills materials that should be internalized to the students were honesty, ability to communicate, and commitment. To develop soft skills materials in the process of learning, the organized planning that included the lecturers, alumni, and the work field was required to the development of relevant soft skills.
3. The result of the analysis on the direct effect of the hard skills towards the working quality showed that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that the hard skills positively and significantly affected working quality of the graduates of tourism academy in Medan.
4. The result of the analysis on the direct effect of soft skills towards working quality of the graduates demonstrated that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller than 0.05, it could be concluded that soft skills positively and significantly affected working quality.
5. The result of the analysis on the direct effect of the learning of tourism marketing towards working quality of the graduates of Tourism Academy in Medan showed that the path coefficient was 0.702 with  $t = 17.409$  and  $p = 0.000$ . Since the value of statistic T was bigger than 1.96 or p was smaller

than 0.05, it could be concluded that the learning of tourism marketing positively and significantly affected working quality.

## 8. Conclusion

The quality in the context of vocational education is the quality of school graduates who have academic and nonacademic quality. To equip of the Tourism Marketing study, Hard Skills, Soft Skills content is given in Tourism Academy in Medan.

Quality of Medan Tourism Academy graduate in tourism marketing study, competence or ability to things that are objectively perceived by each individual, is expected to provide a broad overview of the description of student competence to become a tourism marketing personnel when it completed his education at Tourism Academy in Medan. So that the Quality of Tourism Academy in Medan graduate is superior in producing graduates who is better prepared to adapt and work in the field, then context of Hard Skills. Soft Skills need to propagated back to the lectures teaching materials that is taught by lecturer who teaches at tourism marketing management courses.

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