

## Internalizing Local Wisdom Through Live-In Program and History Learning

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### Keywords:

Experiential learning,  
History learning,  
Local wisdom,

*Received:* May 2026

*Accepted:* June 2026

*Published:* June 2026

### Abstract

This study examines the internalization of local wisdom values through a live-in program and the reinforcement of these values through history learning. The study was motivated by concerns that globalization has increasingly displaced locally grounded value systems among younger generations. This study uses a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, the research involved 10th grade students of SMA Santo Aloysius Bandung who participated in a live-in program in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through participant observation, interviews, reflective journals, and field notes, and analyzed using Wolcott's stages of ethnographic analysis: description, analysis, and interpretation, with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory serving as the interpretive framework. The findings indicate that direct immersion in the Cigugur Community enabled students to experience tolerance and gotong royong (mutual cooperation) as lived social practices. Post live-in history learning further strengthened the internalization process by connecting students' experiences with the historical and cultural context of the community. The integration of community immersion and reflective history learning offers a meaningful approach to strengthening local wisdom values among younger generations in the era of globalization..



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DOI: <https://10.24114/paedagogi.v12i1.73968>

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought fundamental changes to the ways younger generations construct identity, socialize, and interpret values. On one hand, globalization opens opportunities for cross-border knowledge exchange, but on the other hand, it threatens local wisdom values that have long served as the foundation of community life. Saud et al. (2023) found that digital spaces actively mediate youth cultural orientation, with norms circulating in virtual spheres reshaping how young people understand themselves and their communities, a process that progressively displaces locally grounded value systems. Wulandari et al. (2024) further demonstrate that this phenomenon has tangible educational consequences: globalization has eroded students' awareness of core local values such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), integrity, and responsibility, which are increasingly supplanted by individualistic lifestyles. These two pressures create a genuine urgency to strengthen value internalization through more contextual and experiential approaches to learning. These two pressures create a genuine urgency to strengthen value internalization through more contextual and experiential approaches to learning. This tendency is reflected in recent empirical findings showing a declining interest in local culture among adolescents. A study by Dewi et al. (2024) found that 60.6% of adolescents expressed greater interest in foreign cultures than in local cultural traditions, indicating the increasing influence of global cultural trends on young people's preferences and lifestyles. This trend raises concerns about the weakening transmissions of local wisdom values and cultural identity among younger generations. However, while previous studies have documented the influence of globalization on the erosion of local wisdom values, limited research has examined how local wisdom can be systematically integrated into history learning to promote students' values internalization and cultural awareness. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how history education can serve as a meaningful medium for preserving and transmitting local wisdom in contemporary society.

Local wisdom has become an important value to be inherited as a cultural resource relevant to addressing the complexities of contemporary life. Khusna & Adji (2024) emphasized that local wisdom encompasses various aspects of life that develop across generations within a community, including social values, moral principles, and cultural practices. Therefore, transmitting local wisdom to younger generations constitutes a long-term investment in shaping a strong national character and identity amid the pressures of globalization. A number of studies have demonstrated the important role of local wisdom when integrated into educational curricula. Beyond cultural preservation efforts, the integration of local wisdom enriches the learning process by providing more contextual learning experiences closely related to students' lives (Agus et al., 2021). Furthermore, Rahman (2021) explained that as globalization tends to erode local identity, education based on local wisdom becomes increasingly important as a means of shaping generations who not only understand their cultural roots but are also capable of adapting and competing in a globalized world. Similarly, Simanungkalit et al. (2024) argued that local wisdom-based learning can enrich students' learning experiences by presenting materials that are tangible and relevant to their daily lives.

The transmission of local wisdom to younger generations can be conducted through formal education, particularly through history learning. History education plays a strategic role in the process of internalizing local wisdom values among younger generations in the era of globalization. Prasetyo & Kumalasari (2021) emphasized that history learning can foster students' understanding of themselves, society, and the process of the formation of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, teachers have opportunities to develop learning materials based on the local wisdom of their respective regions. In the Merdeka Curriculum, history learning is directed toward realizing the eight dimensions of the graduate profile as stipulated in the regulation of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Number 10 of 2025, particularly the dimensions of citizenship and collaboration (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2025). The fundamental issue lies not in curriculum content itself but in the methods. One of the solutions offered is to develop thematic teaching materials (Jannah & Ramadan, 2021). History learning in schools remains largely dominated by cognitive transmission and factual memorization, approaches that are increasingly viewed as ineffective (Burgos-Videla et al., 2025). Tirado-Olivares et al. (2024) assert that history teaching has traditionally assessed students' ability to memorize historical content rather than their capacity to think historically. As a result, local wisdom values encountered through history learning tend to be understood normatively rather than experientially.

One possible approach to internalizing local wisdom values is by introducing students to these values through experiential learning. Kolb (1984) explained that learning becomes effective when students are fully engaged in cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and the application of new experiences. Furthermore, Dianita (2023) stated that experiential learning interventions approaches have proven effective in improving students' creative and critical thinking skills compared to conventional learning methods. Likewise, Immaniar et al. (2019) found that learning interventions involving direct engagement with the environment can foster students' awareness of their surroundings. One relevant approach is through a live-in program, in which students live and participate directly within a community, experience the practice of values in everyday life, and build affective engagement with social environments different from their own backgrounds. Through such experiences, students have opportunities to encounter, reflect upon, and internalize local wisdom values in authentic social context. Despite the growing recognition of experiential learning and local wisdom-based education, limited research has examined how the values acquired through community immersion are subsequently reinforced through formal history learning in schools.

Research on local wisdom in education has developed significantly. However, studies examining the internalization of local wisdom values using ethnographic methods and their reinforcement through history learning remain limited, particularly concerning the transformation of field experiences through school live-in programs. Previous research conducted by Selawati et al. (2019) focused on the development of students' empathy through a live-in program at SMP Kolase Kanisius Jakarta. While the study demonstrated the contribution of live-in activities to students' social sensitivity and empathy, it did not specifically examine the internalization of local wisdom values nor how students' field experiences were subsequently connected to classroom learning. Similarly, Yuniatiningtyas et al. (2023) examined the implementation of live-in program in character as a means of strengthening character education. However, their study primarily focused on character formation outcomes and did not investigate the cultural meanings constructed by students through direct interaction with local communities. Furthermore, neither study employed an ethnographic approach to explore students' lived experiences in depth, nor did they analyze how experiential encounters were transformed into reflective learning through history education. Both studies concentrated on the role of live-in programs in character development but did not explore in depth how the internalization of local wisdom values is transformed into meaningful classroom learning. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature by employing an ethnographic approach to examine students' lived experiences

during a live-in program and by analyzing how these experiences are reinforced through history learning to facilitate the internalization of local wisdom values.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to examine the outcomes of the live-in program and how the process of internalizing local wisdom values is reinforced through history learning. The research questions are as follows: (1) How does the process of internalizing local wisdom values occur through the live-in program in Cigugur? (2) How does history learning reinforce the process of internalizing local wisdom values after the live-in program.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning Theory serves as the foundation of a learning model that was developed by David Kolb in the early 1980s. This approach places students at the center of the learning process through process-based activities, and views knowledge as something that emerges through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning model places emphasis on the process that occurs during learning by incorporating students' direct real-life experiences. Through this approach, students are encouraged to both act and think, ultimately enabling them to construct new understanding (Hariri & Yayuk, 2018). Kolb (1984) outlined that the experiential learning process consists of four stages, namely: (1) the concrete experience stage, (2) the reflective observation stage, (3) the abstract conceptualization stage, and (4) the active experiment stage. These four stages are represented in a cyclical model that illustrates their interconnected and continuous nature, as proposed by Kolb (1984):

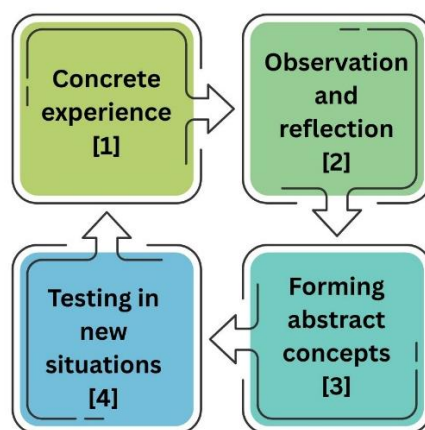


Figure 1. Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle

The following describes each stage of the experiential learning cycle as illustrated in the previous figure:

- 1) Concrete experience stage (feeling): At this stage, students are encouraged to engage in activities they have previously encountered, whether in formal or informal settings. Teachers may also decide whether these activities take place inside or outside the classroom, and they can be carried out either individually or in groups.
- 2) Observation and reflection stage (watching): This stage is where students begin to observe their experiences through their senses and learning tools. They then reflect on those experiences and draw lessons from them. A reflective process emerges at this point, during which teachers can encourage students to share their experiences, discuss them openly, and learn meaningfully from what they have gone through.
- 3) Forming abstract concepts stage (thinking): At this stage, abstract conceptualization begins to take place, as students start to explore the relationship between their experiences and the underlying reasons behind them. Students then begin to construct concepts or models based on their experiences and integrate them with prior knowledge they have already acquired. During this abstract conceptualization stage, teachers are able to observe whether or not their students are undergoing a process of developing new understanding.

- 4) Testing in new situations stage (doing): At this stage, students attempt to consider how they can test the strength of theories and models in order to explain new experiences they have gained. This is where significant learning begins to occur, as students' previous experiences can be transferred and applied to entirely new situations.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using ethnographic methods. Ethnography is a qualitative research approach that aims to understand and interpret the meanings, values, and social practices shared within a particular cultural group through direct engagement in their everyday lives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Ethnography was chosen because it enables researchers to capture meanings, social practices, and students' live experiences in depth within the cultural context of the Cigugur community, Kuningan, West Jawa, Indonesia. In this study, ethnographic design was applied to analyze how cultural experiences were reconstructed within pedagogical practices in the classroom.

This research was conducted in two interconnected contexts: (1) the Cigugur community environment as the field of live-in program, and (2) the classroom as the field of meaning-making. The live-in program lasted four days, during which students resided with local host families and participated directly in daily activities such as farming, gardening, social interaction, and observing the diversity practices that characterize the Cigugur community. Following these field activities, history learning was designed reflectively to deepen the internalization of values acquired through direct experience. Participants consisted of 134 tenth-grade students from SMA Santo Aloysius Bandung who participated in both the live-in program and the integrated history learning process. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely their participation in the Cigugur live-in program and their involvement in history learning focused on the local history of the Cigugur community. SMA Santo Aloysius was selected because the school regularly implements a live-in program that provides students with direct experiences of local community life and cultural practices. Tenth-grade students were chosen because they participated in the program and subsequently received history instruction on the local history of the Cigugur community, enabling the researcher to examine the internalization of local wisdom values through the combination of experiential and classroom-based learning. The researcher acted as a participant observer, directly involved both as teacher-companion during the live-in program and as history teacher. As Creswell (2013) notes, ethnographic studies involve participant observation in which researchers engage directly in the daily lives of group members while conducting observations. To minimize potential researcher bias arising from this dual role, data were collected from multiple sources, including participant observations, interviews, students' reflective journals, and field notes. Source and technique triangulation were employed to cross-check findings across different data sources and methods. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming interpretations and emerging findings with participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives. These procedures helped enhance the credibility of the findings and reduce the influence of researcher subjectivity during data collection and analysis.

Data were collected through participant observation during both the live-in program and classroom sessions, interviews, students' written reflective journals, and field notes. Students' reflective journals served as the primary data source, as they represented the process of personal meaning-making and contextualized the journal data. Data analysis followed the three stages of ethnographic analysis proposed by Wolcott (1990) description, analysis, and interpretation. The description stage involved detailed rendering of observational, interviews, and students' reflective journal data. During the description stage, data from participant observations, interviews, reflective journal, and field notes were organized and reviewed to construct a detailed account of students' experiences during the live-in program and subsequent history learning activities. Particular attention was given to descriptions of students' interactions with host families, participation in community activities, and reflections on local wisdom values. The analysis stage focused on identifying patterns, categories, and relationships across data sources. At this stage, the researcher recurring patterns, similarities, and differences across observations, interviews, and students' reflective journals to understand how students experienced and interpreted local wisdom values in the Cigugur

community. The data interpretation stage aimed at inferring cultural meanings and drawing theoretical conclusions from the findings. During the interpretation stage, these patterns were situated within the cultural context of the Cigugur community and interpreted through Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. Importantly, the interpretive stage was theoretically informed by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning framework, which served as an analytical lens for understanding the mechanisms of value internalization observed in the data, particularly the relationship between students' direct experience in Cigugur and their subsequent meaning-making in the classroom. This approach reflects the use of theoretically informed ethnography, in which analytic frameworks guide interpretation while preserving the emergent and contextual character of ethnographic data (Creswell, 2013).

Trustworthiness was established through both source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing and cross-checking information obtained from participant observations, interviews, students' reflective journals, and field notes. Patterns identified in one data source were verified against evidence from other source to ensure consistency and credibility. For example, students' reflections on local wisdom values recorded in their journals were compared with observational data gathered during the live-in program and with interview responses collected during classroom sessions. Technique triangulation was achieved by examining the same research focus through multiple data collection methods, including observation, interviews, and students' reflective journals. This process enabled the researcher to validate emerging interpretations across different forms of evidence and strengthen the credibility of the findings. Through this integrated approach, the study aimed to provide both a thick description of students' lived experiences and a theoretically grounded understanding of how local wisdom values are internalized through the integration of cultural immersion and reflective history learning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Internalization of Tolerance and Gotong Royong Values Through Live-In Program

One of the most consistent findings in the data was the way students characterized tolerance within the Cigugur community. Unlike the concept of tolerance they had previously understood as normative, the tolerance they described was organic and embedded in everyday social life. Tolerance was perceived not as a rule to be obeyed but as something genuinely experienced, as one student wrote in a reflective journal, "My foster parents asked about our religion backgrounds. Even though all of us were Catholic, she explained that she had previously welcomed and hosted Muslim students." Students described tolerance as naturally present in the way foster parents communicated with them, ensuring that they could worship comfortably despite religious differences, cooperating regardless of religious backgrounds, and even through simple gestures such as greeting one another on the streets.

One particularly notable experience was recounted by a Muslim student who stayed with a Catholic host family. The students explained that the host family proactively showed the direction of the qibla and provided a special space for prayer, the student wrote, "I am Muslim, and my foster parents are Catholic, they kindly showed me the direction of the qibla and supported me in performing my daily prayers during my stay." Furthermore, the students stated that in Cigugur, they were able to worship without fear because the community highly respected differences. The student contrasted this experience with conditions in other places familiar to them. This experience illustrates what Mezirow (as cited in DeAngelis, 2022) referred to as a disorienting dilemma, a situation in which previously accepted frameworks of thought and habitus with new socio-cultural realities, thereby encouraging critical reflection on one's assumptions. It was through this encounter that internalization began to operate: tolerance was no longer merely a concept to be understood cognitively but became a lived social reality personally experienced by the student.

Another major finding concerned the value of gotong royong (mutual cooperation). In this case, the internalization of gotong royong not only through observation but also through physical participation in collective activities. During the live-in program, students participated in the daily activities of their foster families, most of whom worked as farmers. Students helped harvest crops, prepare land for planting, plant rice in the fields, and prepare traditional foods together with community members. These experiences taught them that work was not conducted solely for personal interests but for collective well-being. The most striking finding was the way students distinguished the gotong royong (mutual cooperation) practiced in Cigugur from the forms of cooperation they had

previously known in schools, homes, or other social environments. In their previous experiences, cooperation was associated with obligation and formal coordination, whereas in Cigugur, it emerged from internal awareness without requiring external instructions, as one student wrote in a reflective journal, "Unlike the mutual cooperation (gotong royong) I have seen at school, where activities are planned and tasks are assigned in advance, the people of Cigugur practice gotong royong spontaneously." They described feeling surprised, confused, and amazed when during household activities with the host family, a passing neighbor spontaneously entered the house and helped without being asked. Bourdieu explained this phenomenon as the distinction between practices arising from habitus and those arising from formal rules (Maton, 2014). Gotong royong in Cigugur occurred spontaneously because the disposition to participate had become a second nature embedded within community life. The students' confusion signaled that something new was entering their consciousness, and it was precisely at this moment that the process of internalization became most possible.

### **Strengthening Value Internalization through History Learning**

After students completed the four-day live-in activities in Cigugur, the process of value internalization continued in the classroom. Through history learning, students were provided with reinforcement regarding the values they had experienced during the live-in program. Post live-in history learning was facilitated through a dialogical approach with minimal intervention, allowing students' meaning-making processes to develop organically by connecting students' empirical experiences with the historical context of the Cigugur community, perspectives through historical insights, including the historical dynamics of the Cigugur community as adherents of Sunda Wiwitan throughout Indonesian history. The clearest pattern observed was a shift in students' perspectives from mere "admiration" toward "respect", as reflected in several statements within their reflection journals after learning about the history of the Cigugur community. This sense of respect emerged from an appreciation of how the Cigugur community had succeeded in maintaining its local wisdom values despite systemic pressures.

In addition to learning about the history of the Cigugur community, students were also introduced to the local wisdom values embodied in Pikukuh Tilu. Pikukuh Tilu is a traditional value system that regulates the relationship between humans and God, fellow humans, and the environment. This concept consists of three principal teachings: (1) ngaji badan, (2) tuju/mikukuh kana tanah, and (3) madep ka ratu-raja 3-2-4-5 lilima 6 (Febriansyah et al., 2018). Findings related to Pikukuh Tilu appeared in students' descriptions of their experiences waking up in the mornings in Cigugur. In their reflective journals, students described the breeze they felt, the beauty of the natural scenery, and how these main dimensions of Pikukuh Tilu were present within the students' lived experiences. This finding aligns with Manen (2015) concept of the lived body, in which the body serves as a medium for meaning-making. It demonstrates that the local wisdom values introduced in the classroom were not merely normative concepts but values students had already experienced directly.

Based on these findings, history learning functioned as an interpretative space that enabled students to connect personal experiences with broader local wisdom values. Their real-life experiences were enriched and reinterpreted through classroom learning. The integration of live-in experiences with conceptual learning strengthened the process of values internalization because students did not merely "know" but also "feel" and "understand" the value more holistically. This finding suggests that contextual and reflective history learning possesses significant potential to bridge students' concrete experiences with the abstract values embedded within local wisdom, making these values more meaningful and deeply internalized.

### **Transforming Experience into Understanding Through Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory**

The following represents a theoretical analysis of the empirical data gathered from the live-in program and its reinforcement through post live-in history learning, examined through the lens of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. The application of experiential learning in this study serves as a theoretical framework to interpret how students internalized local wisdom values, particularly tolerance and gotong royong (mutual cooperation) through direct community immersion in Cigugur and subsequent reflective history learning in the classroom. The four stages of Kolb's theory can be identified and traced across the entire learning process as follows:

The first stage, concrete experience (feeling) was realized through the live-in program, where students were directly immersed in the daily life of the Cigugur community, positioned not as passive recipients of information but as active participants embedded within the social fabric of the Cigugur community. Students participated in harvesting crops, preparing land, planting rice, and preparing traditional foods alongside community members. Beyond physical activities, students also experienced organic social interactions, such as observing neighbors spontaneously helping one another without being asked, and being treated respectfully by foster families despite religious differences. The significance of this stage lies not merely in the physical activities students engaged in, but also in the affective dimensions those activities produced. These firsthand encounters served as the affective foundation of the entire learning process.

Following their direct experiences, students entered the second stage, that is reflective observation (watching). In this study, the reflective observation stage was mediated through students' reflection journals. In these journals, students described sensory and emotional impressions, such as feeling the morning breeze, admiring the natural scenery, and experiencing a sense of gratitude toward God. More significantly, students began comparing what they witnessed in Cigugur with their prior experiences. They noted that tolerance in Cigugur felt natural and lived rather than normative, and that gotong royong emerged from internal awareness rather than external obligation. Students did not simply describe what they saw but they also engaged in comparative reflection, contrasting the tolerance and gotong royong they encountered in Cigugur with their prior social experiences. This comparative and reflective process marks the core characteristic of this stage, where students observed their experiences through their senses and began drawing early lessons from them.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization (thinking) was facilitated through post live-in history learning in the classroom, which functioned as what this study identifies as a hermeneutic bridge between students' lived experiences and broader conceptual frameworks. Teachers connected students' empirical experiences with the broader historical and cultural context of the Cigugur community, including its history as adherents of Sunda Wiwitan and the local wisdom values embedded in Pikukuh Tilu. Through this dialogical and facilitative approach, students began constructing deeper conceptual understanding. Their perspective shifted from mere admiration toward genuine respect, as they came to understand the historical struggles and resilience of the Cigugur community. The three dimensions of Pikukuh Tilu were no longer abstract concepts but frameworks that students could connect to their lived experiences, transforming personal impressions into reflective, contextual, and critical understanding. This is consistent with Kolb's (1984) assertion that abstract conceptualization involves the integration of observation with existing theoretical knowledge, enabling learners to construct generalizable understanding rather than isolated insights. The shift in students' perspectives from admiration to respect is analytically telling in this regard, as it signals not simply an emotional response but a cognitively informed reappraisal of then Cigugur community's values and historical significance.

The fourth and final stage, active experimentation (doing) was reflected in early but observable signs of behavioral transformation among students. They began responding to everyday situations with greater gratitude and a heightened appreciation for simplicity and independence, values they had not initially anticipated learning. These values repeatedly surfaced in their reflections as among their most meaningful experiences, suggesting that internalization had begun to influence their dispositions and behaviors. The depth of this transformation was notably proportional to the intensity of students' engagement with their foster families, indicating that the more actively students participated in community life, the more their new understanding translated into practical behavioral change.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined how local wisdom values were internalized through a live-in program in the Cigugur community and how this process was subsequently reinforced through history learning. The findings demonstrate that direct immersion in community life enabled students to experience local wisdom values, particularly tolerance and gotong royong, as lived social practices rather than as abstract or normative concepts. Through interactions with foster families and participation in everyday community activities, students encountered forms of tolerance and

mutual cooperation that challenged their prior assumptions and encouraged deeper reflection. These experiences provided the foundation for the internalization of values through meaningful engagement with the social and cultural realities of the Cigugur community.

The study also found that history learning played an important role in strengthening the internalization process by providing an interpretative space through which students could connect their lived experiences with broader historical and cultural understandings. Through reflection on the history of the Cigugur community and the local wisdom values embodied in Pikukuh Tilu, students moved beyond admiration toward a deeper sense of respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and local traditions. Analysis using Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory further demonstrates that value internalization occurred through a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and experimentation. The integration of live-in experiences with reflective history learning therefore contributed to a more holistic and meaningful learning process.

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted within a single school context, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational settings. Second, the four-day duration of the lie-in program did not allow for the examination of the long-term sustainability of students' values internalization. Third, the study focused on a specific cultural setting, namely the Cigugur community, and therefore may not capture the diversity of local wisdom practices found in other regions. Despite these limitations, the findings offer important implications for educational practice. Schools and curriculum developers may consider integrating community-based experiential learning with history education as a strategy for fostering students' understanding and internalization of local wisdom values. Future research is recommended to investigate the long-term impact of such programs, compare their implementation across different cultural contexts and explore other experiential learning models that support the preservation and transmission of local wisdom among young generations.

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