A Comparative Approach to Competition Law in the Digital Economy Sector Between Australia and Indonesia

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Abstract. Indonesia is predicted to dominate the Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of the digital economy in Southeast Asia until 2030. Meanwhile, business actors faced problems competing in the digital economy due to no specific regulations available. How did the Indonesian Competition Commission (ICC/KPPU) enforce competition law in the digital economy sector? Literature and comparison study used as the methods with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as the medium. As result, internationally, both Australia and Indonesia faced similar challenges; (1) The complexity of business models increased monopolistic practices and unfair competition. (2) The large data companies have great market power and form a monopoly position. (3) Misuse of the digital platform market (4) Competition between old and new business actors. KPPU need to overcome the challenges; (1) KPPU must have the regulatory on competition in the digital market and proper definition on markets and business actors broader than Law Number 5/1999 on the Prohibition of Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition. (2) the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), used the system approach in solving problems related to the digital market is to examine the digital market and make relevant findings or recommendations to the Australian government. As consequence, the ACCC could monitor and develop institutional capabilities. As recommendation: (1) Indonesian government need to respond wisely by providing legal certainty regarding the rules of competition supervision in the digital economy sector. (2) The Indonesian Government must accelerate the role of ICC-KPPU in supervising business competition in the digital economy era.

Keywords: Competition Law, Digital Economy

1 Introduction

The digital economy has become a key focus for businesses in the era of rapid digitalization and globalization. Economic systems driven by digital technologies, such as the internet, online platforms, and digital applications, are the scope of the digital economy. The phenomenon of digitalization has changed the way businesses work, the way businesses relate to customers, and also the competition between businesses in the

L. Rini Sugiarti et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Environment Diversity (ICOSEND 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 905,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-366-5_46

digital economy market. In this context, competition in the digital economy has become a crucial and complex topic. Competition in the digital economy reflects major changes in market dynamics. When compared to the traditional economy, competition in the digital economy has many different aspects. Digital economy businesses, both large and small, compete in a highly dynamic market where the speed of innovation, new technologies, and changing consumer preferences are important. A company's ability to utilize the latest technologies, conduct big data analysis, and provide a better user experience is often the key to success in competing in the digital economy.

As a comparison, Australia outperforms Indonesia in the digital economy business competition in terms of technology infrastructure, regulations and innovation support. Indonesia, however, offers a larger market and huge growth potential. Businesses that want their businesses to succeed must understand and capitalize on local market strengths while facing current challenges as both countries have their own strengths and weaknesses.

The government has an important role in providing support to realize fair business competition. In the enforcement of business competition law, the Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU) plays a central role. In addition to creating order in business competition, KPPU plays a role in creating and maintaining a conducive business competition climate. In developing countries such as Indonesia, many business policies need to be synchronized with the Business Competition Law. The existence of law enforcement in business competition will greatly help to make the industrial sector more efficient, which in turn will also bring benefits to both competing business actors and consumers.

In Indonesia's perspective, the digital economy is expanding substantially by 2023, having successfully overcome global macroeconomic barriers. The e-Conomy SEA 2023 report by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company highlights that the gross merchandise value ("GMV") of Indonesia's digital economy is projected to grow 8% to US$82 billion by 2023 and reach US$109 billion by 2025. In addition, Southeast Asia's digital economy revenue is projected to reach US$100 billion this year, growing 1.7 times faster than the regional GMV. Indonesia's digital economy is still expected to grow in line with the regional average, and even become the main driver of digital economy growth in Southeast Asia.

The growth of the digital economy sector is believed to bring various opportunities, but also significant challenges for businesses. One of the main problems faced is the uncertainty in regulations governing business practices in the digital space. Regulatory uncertainty in regulating business practices in the digital space is one of the main challenges faced by Indonesia in the field of business competition. Although the Indonesian government has issued various regulations to regulate the digital economy, the rapid development of digital technology often results in existing regulations becoming less relevant or even obsolete[1].

For example, Law Number 11/2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law) has undergone several amendments to adjust to technological developments. However, there are still provisions that are considered unclear or do not accommodate emerging digital business models. This can create uncertainty for business actors in running their business. In addition, the overlap between various regulations governing digital aspects is also a problem. For example, Government Regulation No. 71/2019 on the Implementation of Electronic Systems and Transactions (PP PSTE) and Minister of

Communication and Informatics Regulation No. 5/2020 on Private Scope Electronic System Operators both regulate the implementation of electronic systems but with different focuses. This can confuse business actors in understanding and complying with the obligations that apply in the digital economy market.

Regulatory uncertainty in the digital economy in Indonesia not only affects business actors, but also has the potential to harm consumers. Without definitive regulations, consumers may not receive adequate protection in digital economy transactions. Therefore, it is important for the Indonesian government to continuously evaluate and improve regulations related to the digital economy. The Indonesian government must also ensure that all stakeholders in the digital economy are involved in the regulation-making process. In the face of this regulatory uncertainty, business actors are advised to always be proactive in following regulatory developments and consulting with competent legal experts in the field of information and communication technology. Thus, it is hoped that digital economy business actors can ensure that the business being run remains in accordance with applicable legal provisions and avoid potential legal problems in the future.

Furthermore, the absence of specific and definitive regulations makes it difficult for businesses to compete fairly in the digital economy sector. Digital economy businesses must face challenges from unfair practices, such as monopoly and unfair pricing, which can harm small and medium enterprises[2]. In addition, unclear regulations regarding the protection of personal data, intellectual property rights, and the responsibility of digital platforms add to the complexity that companies engaged in the digital sector must face. Amidst fast-changing market dynamics, this uncertainty affects not only investment decisions, but also innovation and growth of the digital economy sector itself. In this context, it is important to explore how a lack of regulation can impact competition and what steps need to be taken to create a more fair and transparent business environment[3]. By understanding these challenges, it is hoped that constructive recommendations will emerge to build a regulatory framework that supports sustainable and inclusive growth of the digital economy[4].

KPPU was established with the intention that the implementation of the law and its implementing regulations can run effectively in accordance with its principles and objectives and can provide legal certainty[5]. The duties and authorities of the KPPU are regulated in Article 35 and Article 36 of Law No. 5 Year 1999 where the KPPU has a fairly broad authority, which is not only to supervise and assess Business Actors, but the KPPU is also authorized to conduct examinations[5], accompanied by adequate examination evidence[5].

Based on a number of descriptions in the previous section, this article aims to find out how KPPU steps to face obstacles in the implementation of competition law in the E-Commerce sector. This article will be divided into several sections, namely the introduction section to explain the background and urgency of the issues discussed. This is followed by the research method section to explain the research methods used in writing this article. The results and discussion section is the core of this article, which focuses on describing the role of KPPU in the e-commerce sector, and finally the article is closed with conclusions and recommendations.

2 Method

This research uses descriptive normative research methods. The study material is based on literature by comparing legal arrangements related to business competition in the digital world in two countries, Indonesia and Australia. Literature study is the assessment of data from various reference books and the results of previous research relevant to the research to obtain a theoretical basis for the problem to be studied. Literature study is referred to as library research or library research. The limitations of this activity only lead to the production of articles, journals and library collections without the need for field research[6]. In Comparative Studies, methods are used to compare two or more entities, such as theories, models, or phenomena. The purpose of this method is to find similarities and differences between the entities being compared, namely the legal arrangements regarding the role of the competition supervisory authority for economic actors in the digital world in Indonesia and Australia.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Digital How the Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU) Enforces Competition Law in the Digital Economy Sector

The era of digitalization in the economy is an era in which the economic sector operates with a digital system, marked by the existence of e-commerce, digital platforms, social networks that can be used for economic processes such as purchasing and advertising. The emergence of this digital era has indeed brought enormous benefits to several economic sectors that are aware of these developments, but in reality there are still many people who have not felt the benefits of digital technology. This is a challenge for business actors because of the dynamic pattern of the times, business actors must rack their brains in order to compete amid the incessant development of digitalization in the economic sector.

The current era of massive digitalization allows for discriminatory behavior such as providing certain facilities to one of the digital economy platforms. Other forms can be exploitation of different businesses, such as platforms against suppliers or exploitation between platforms. Discrimination in the digital economy market is inevitable. Furthermore, predatory pricing has become a business strategy that is considered more appropriate and rational to win the digital economy market. E-commerce and start-ups are competing to sell goods at low prices by providing discounts and the best quality and service, which has an impact on the market concentration of competition which will ultimately result in an unfair business climate[7].

The presence of Law No. 5 Year 1999 on the Prohibition of Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition has given a lot of meaning to changes in the business climate to be healthier than before the enactment of this law. Law No. 5 Year 1999 has gradually restored the confidence of business actors in the government's efforts to create a healthy and conducive business climate, which can guarantee equal business opportunities for every business actor, regardless of the size of their business scale.

Business Competition Supervisory Commission is a commission established to supervise business actors in carrying out their business activities so as not to commit monopolistic practices and or unfair business competition. Responding to the issue of unfair business competition that may occur on the digital economy platform, the Faculty of Law Service Team of the University of North Sumatra collaborated with the University of New South Wales, Sidney-Australia and the Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU) Regional Office I, holding a community service activity of the International collaboration scheme in the form of a focused discussion entitled "Competition Law Approach to Digital Economy Development: Sharing Experience in Indonesia and Australia".

The discussion revolved around the comparison of digital economy business competition issues that occur in Indonesia and Australia. The discussion began with a presentation from Prof. Ningrum Natasya Sirait as a discussion starter, stating that in anticipating the negative impact of the presence of the digital economy for SMEs, the government should play a role and be active to accommodate the interests of all parties, be it business actors, associations, communities, and others. Furthermore, the speaker mentioned that the government should also be able to take concrete steps to resolve these various problems; "The government must be careful, when there is an e-commerce platform that is told to close, then those who receive the negative impact of the closure of e-commerce are MSMEs that are in the e-commerce itself."

Professor Ningrum Natasya Sirait's statement was confirmed by Professor Deborah Healey who revealed that Australia also faces the same problems and challenges faced by Indonesia in addressing the relationship between giants in the digital world and other business actors; "The Australian government funds the ACCC (Australian competition authority) to research specific issues related to digital platforms. The results of this research will be in the form of recommendations or policy suggestions in amending the competition law in Australia," said Deborah. International Collaboration Services' Focus Group Discussion (FGD) shows that Australia faces the same challenges as Indonesia in facing business competition in today's digital world.

3.2 Digital Platform Market Abuse

The two challenges faced by Indonesia and Australia in ensuring fair competition in the digital world have been discussed, the next challenge is related to Digital Platform Market Abuse that occurs in Indonesia and Australia. Market abuse by digital platforms in Indonesia and Australia often occurs when large companies utilize their power to maintain market dominance or make it difficult for new competitors. Here are some concrete examples of this practice in both countries.

First, Self-Preferencing in E-Commerce and Digital Services. Indonesia shows that platforms such as Tokopedia and Shopee are often suspected of self-preferencing, i.e. prioritizing their own products or services in search results or promotions. For example, products produced by strategic partners or sellers with special cooperation are often displayed in the frontmost position. This makes it difficult for small sellers to get equal exposure. Meanwhile, Australia shows that, Amazon faces accusations of self-preferencing by placing their own products at the top of search results. This gives an advantage to products manufactured or sold directly by Amazon, which makes it difficult for competitors to compete on the same level.

Second, Aggressive Discount Practices and Continuous Promotions; Indonesia shows that Shopee, Lazada, and Tokopedia often offer huge discounts and cashbacks on an ongoing basis. This practice puts pressure on small businesses that are unable to compete with the low promotional prices, even making it difficult for some physical stores to compete. In addition, heavy discount programs often lead consumers to choose certain platforms exclusively. Meanwhile, Australia shows that: Uber Eats and Menu log use discount strategies and free delivery over long periods to lock consumers into their platforms. This causes local food businesses to struggle, due to the high cost of joining the platform but losing customers if they do not participate.

Third, Exploitation of User Data and Data Hoarding Practices; Indonesia shows that Gojek and Grab, which have huge data on users, are often accused of using this data to strengthen their position in the ride-hailing and food delivery industries. With highly granular user data, they can set dynamic prices that work in their favor but can leave users unaware that they may be paying more than they should. Meanwhile, Australia shows that Google and Facebook use large amounts of user data to control digital advertising, which makes it difficult for small companies or local media to earn advertising revenue. Because Google has strong control over user data on their platform, they are able to charge higher ad prices for more specific target audiences, which is difficult for other ad platforms to compete with.

Fourth, Vendor Lock-In; Indonesia shows that Gojek and Grab also practice vendor lock-in by tying up drivers or restaurant partners in exclusive contracts, thus restricting them from collaborating with other platforms. This makes it difficult for new competitors to acquire service partners. Meanwhile, Australia shows that Uber often offers exclusive incentives to drivers who only work with their platform. This limits the options for drivers to join competing platforms and weakens competitiveness in the app-based transportation market..

Fifth, Unequal Utilization of Policies and Terms to Sellers; Indonesia shows that some e-commerce platforms in Indonesia impose high requirements on third-party sellers, including substantial commission fees and very strict return rules. This puts small sellers in a difficult position, as they must follow the platform's policies or lose access to a large market share. Meanwhile, as Australia points out, Amazon has received criticism for its policies that are considered unfair to third-party sellers, such as strict return rules and high commissions. In addition, Amazon allegedly utilizes third-party sellers' sales data to launch similar products under their own brand, which are cheaper and more visible on their platform..

Sixth, Limiting Competitors in the Digital Financial Services Market; Indonesia shows that digital wallets such as OVO and GoPay tend to offer exclusive incentives for customers and partners, which makes it difficult for other financial services to compete. Many small businesses prefer to work with these platforms due to the incentives provided, which ultimately reduces consumer choice. Meanwhile, Australia shows that Buy now, pay later (BNPL) platforms such as Afterpay practice policies that prohibit retailers from offering lower prices if payment is made through other methods. This makes it difficult for other BNPL competitors and limits options for retailers..

This abuse of market power by digital platforms shows how large companies can dominate the market and limit competition. This is a challenge that requires strict regulation to ensure the digital economy environment remains fair and open to all players in the market.

With the rapid growth of the digital economy, market abuse by large companies on digital platforms is becoming an increasingly significant issue. This abuse can harm consumers, stifle innovation, and reduce competition. Large companies in the digital sector, such as social media platforms, e-commerce and streaming services, often command a huge market share. This dominance can hinder the entry of new players and limit consumer choice. When one or two companies control the market, they have the power to set prices, set policies, and determine service standards, which can harm consumers and slow innovation. Market abuse on digital platforms requires serious attention from regulators, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Effective regulatory measures and transparent policies are essential to prevent unethical practices and create a fair and competitive business environment.

It is important for regulators to update and adapt their legal frameworks to match the evolving dynamics of the digital economy, in order to protect consumers and promote fair competition in the market. By addressing market abuse, we can ensure that the digital economy works for the benefit of all parties.

3.3 KPPU's Role in Business Competition

The presence of Law No.5/1999 and its relation to the digital economy environment needs to be reviewed and improved, due to the many problems experienced in its implementation. The problems experienced in the implementation of Law No.5/1999 in the digital economy environment, among others, are related to the scope/definition of business actors, institutions that have the authority to carry out business competition law enforcement (investigation, prosecution and at the same time as a court) are currently unclear in the constitutional system and supporting systems both organization, governance and human resources. Such complex issues in the enforcement of the law prohibiting monopolistic practices and unfair business competition have implications for the ineffective implementation of the duties and authorities mandated by the law and the number of institutional decisions not implemented by the parties.

The Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU), despite the above problems, still has a good place in enforcing business competition law as evidenced by the upholding of 73 percent of KPPU cases by the Supreme Court. This is clear evidence that KPPU can be trusted in enforcing business competition law. Meanwhile, in the economic sector, KPPU has become an integral part in several sector arrangements that implement competition as a management mechanism. In some cases, KPPU has been asked for input by the Government related to the issues faced, especially those with indications of unfair business competition in the sector. This, among others, is done through the Ministry of Economic Affairs. On the other hand, KPPU has also actively issued several recommendations that are expected to encourage the improvement of economic sector performance. Some economic sector performance immediately changes for the better when the Government applies the principles of fair business competition in it, as happened in the telecommunications and aviation sectors.

In addition, KPPU is also involved in various Indonesian trade cooperation negotiations with several countries or international organizations such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, ASEAN, OPEC and so on. KPPU in negotiations often spearheads the discussion of competition policy. These recognitions provide evidence that the existence of KPPU as a competition supervisory institution has contributed greatly from both the legal and economic aspects of Indonesia.

KPPU's role as a supervisory institution for business competition will undoubtedly become heavier with the increasing integration of the Indonesian economy regionally.

One important issue that must be highlighted is Indonesia's entry into the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015. The establishment of AEC 2015 is based on three pillars, namely the ASEAN Political Security Community, AEC, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Based on the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) blueprint, every ASEAN member state, including Indonesia, must comply with and implement the AEC by 2015. The AEC blueprint will transform ASEAN into a single market and production base, a highly competitive economic region, a region with equitable economic development and a region fully integrated into the global economy[8].

One of the objectives listed in the AEC blueprint is the creation of a competitive economic region where one of the important elements is competition policy. Currently, there is no official body at the ASEAN level for cooperation in the implementation of competition law policies that serves as a network for competition agencies or related bodies to exchange experiences and institutional norms of competition law. Based on this, the AEC blueprint issued in 2009 mandates the following actions:

1. Pursue competition policies in all ASEAN countries by 2015.
2. Establish a network of competition policy authorities or bodies as a forum to discuss and coordinate competition policy.
3. Develop regional guidelines on competition policy by 2010, based on each country's experience and international best practices in order to create a competitive environment

The regional application of competition law as it will be applied in the AEC can be compared to the application of competition law among European Union member states. The European Commission (EC), which includes the Directorate General of Competition, serves as the coordinator of competition law enforcement through the mechanism of the European Competition Network (ECN). The EC, through the ECN, will manage the flow of information received from EU competition authorities and maintain coherence and an integrative system between EU member states in enforcing competition law at the EU level[9].

Based on a number of positive contributions that have been made so far by KPPU and with all its limitations and potential future challenges such as the AEC in 2015, it is necessary to establish regulations in the field of prohibition of monopolistic practices and unfair business competition that are more comprehensive and able to answer the needs of implementation in the field of antitrust practices and prohibition of unfair business competition. To respond to problems, developments, and legal needs related to the enactment of laws on the prohibition of monopolistic practices and unfair business competition, the House of Representatives together with the Government have agreed that the Bill on the Prohibition of Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition is included in the Priority National Legislation Program (Priority Prolegnas) for 2016 at number 30 of 50 Draft Laws.

3.4 The ACCC's Role in Competition in Australia

The competent authority for the supervision of business competition practices in Australia is the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC). The ACCC is an independent authority that serves the public interest, particularly in the field of competition and consumer protection[10]. The ACCC is an independent statutory authority established to oversee the implementation of the Trade Practices Act 1974 and other regulations.

The duties of the ACCC itself are law enforcement regulated in the Competition and Consumer Act (CCA) 2010, where the purpose of this law is for the welfare of Australians themselves. The ACCC's role is crucial in creating a fair and competitive business environment in Australia. By conducting supervision, education, policy-making and enforcement, the ACCC contributes to consumer protection and encourages innovation and efficiency in the market. The ACCC's primary responsibility is to ensure that businesses and the public comply with competition law. However, compared to the KPPU, the Australian public has easier access to the ACCC. This is because the ACCC has offices in all state capitals in Australia and Townsville to handle community complaints and inquiries. Since 2017, the ACCC has conducted an in-depth investigation into the impact of digital platforms, particularly in relation to media and advertising services. This investigation resulted in a report that identified anti-competitive behavior from large platforms such as Google and Facebook, including their significant market dominance in search and social media services[11].

This era of digitalization allows discriminatory behavior or the provision of certain facilities to occur more often. In addition, exploitation of other businesses, such as platforms against suppliers or exploitation between platforms is also inevitable. Predatory pricing (selling at a loss) becomes a business strategy that is considered appropriate to win the market[12]. E-commerce and start-ups are competing to sell goods at low prices by providing discounts and the best quality and service, if the actor has been outside the market, the business actor will act as a monopolist who will raise prices to a very high level to cover the previous losses.

Pre-emptive merger behavior can also be carried out by large business actors by making acquisitions of small companies or start-ups that have innovations that have the potential to become their competitors. This will result in market concentration that has an impact on competition, which will result in an unfair business climate. This is further exacerbated in the digital economy era, where there is a disruption in the understanding of the market. Therefore, a new understanding is needed in the approach to competition law in the digital economy era.

In conducting business competition supervision, KPPU (Business Competition Supervisory Commission) as the competition authority in Indonesia must first define the market structure formed. In the digital economy sector, defining the market structure becomes more complicated due to the network effect that makes the market formed more than one and interrelated. Companies conducting business on online platforms generally conduct business activities that operate on two (or multiple) sides of the market. They use the internet to enable interaction between two or more distinct but interdependent groups of users so as to generate value for at least one member of the group. Platforms involve services and activities such as marketplaces, social networks, search engines, payment systems, and video sharing.

To accelerate the role of KPPU in the digitalization era, KPPU must be able to fill the regulatory void on digital markets as well as the narrow definition of relevant markets and business actors under Law no.5 Year 1999. Proper regulation is necessary because it will better ensure a democratic state, more effective market growth and grow the national economy in the midst of the recessionary conditions we face today. Substantially, the acceleration of KPPU's role with its law enforcement instruments is to be able to impose sanctions in the form of fines on actors who commit actions that lead to unfair competition in the digital market. In addition to creating order in business competition, it also plays a role in creating a conducive business competition climate. A slightly different approach is taken by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in resolving issues related to the digital market. Over the past five years, the ACCC has conducted three main investigations related to digital platforms: DPI, DPSI, and Ad Technology Inquiry[13]. The main objective of the inquiry is to examine the digital marketplace and make relevant findings or recommendations to the federal government. The inquiry also provides an opportunity for the ACCC to proactively monitor the digital market and develop institutional capabilities in the digital market. It may also result in enforcement action. Based on the description of Australia's experience in regulating the digital economy market in its competition law, it can be seen that there are learning opportunities for Indonesia in approaching competition law in the digital economy era.

The ACCC's role in competition in the era of digitalization is critical to ensure that the market remains competitive and fair for all businesses, both large and small. With a focus on proper regulation, consumer protection, and monitoring of market practices, the ACCC seeks to create a healthy business environment amidst rapid technological developments.

4 Conclusion

The Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU) plays an important role in enforcing competition law in the digital economy sector, despite facing various challenges. The digitalization era has changed the dynamics of the economy, bringing opportunities as well as risks of discriminatory and monopolistic practices. KPPU strives to create a healthy business climate by referring to Law No. 5/1999, which provides a legal framework to prevent monopolistic practices and unfair business competition. However, the complexity of digital business and the lack of clarity of regulations require KPPU to review and improve existing regulations.

The importance of international collaborations, such as those conducted by KPPU with the University of North Sumatra and the University of New South Wales, shows a positive step in addressing similar challenges faced by other countries, such as Australia. The ACCC's approach in addressing digital market issues provides valuable lessons for Indonesia, especially in terms of consumer protection and supervision of market practices. To ensure sustainability and fairness in competition in the digital era, KPPU needs to develop regulations that are more comprehensive and responsive to market changes, and optimize its role in law enforcement. With these steps, KPPU is expected to be more effective in creating a competitive and conducive business environment for all business actors.

Acknowledgments. This study is funded by Non PNBP Universitas Sumatera Utara, in accordance with the Assignment Letter for the Implementation of Community Service, International Service Scheme Non PNBP Funding Source USU T.A.2024 Number 110/UN5.4.11.K/Contract/PPM/2024. And thank you for the support and cooperation with the Indonesian Competition Commission North Sumatra Regional Office.

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