

# The SMEs Performance: Mediation of Ambitious Entrepreneur

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**Abstract:** *Research study focuses on examining Human Resources behavior with market orientation, ambitious entrepreneur, and SMEs performance. In which the final objective is evaluating SME's performance through an entrepreneur in Indonesia. Research conducted in Indonesia with the sample used is 133, namely the entrepreneur of SMEs. Data from an entrepreneur obtained through a questionnaire, and it processed by using SmartPLS with a path analysis technique. The research result emphasized through a model test of the research hypothesis. Research results known that market orientation has a positive impact on an ambitious entrepreneur. Besides that, an ambitious entrepreneur can influence the improvement of SME's performance. However, market orientation cannot truly directly good impact on the improvement of SME's performance. In evaluating SMEs performance is needed ambitious entrepreneur that is supported by the soul of market orientation. And it is not in examining the improvement of SME's performance, which does not focus on market orientation directly. Information is related to Human Resources behavior, which is market orientation and ambitious entrepreneur can be a suggestion for SMEs in determining policy on a business strategy, which involves human resources. From the government side, taking a policy for SMEs can learn an entrepreneur's behavior, and it makes that policy can improve SMEs in Indonesia. It found the mediation model of an ambitious entrepreneur in improving the relationship of market orientation to SME's performance.*

**Keywords:** *Market Orientation, Ambitious Entrepreneur, SMEs Performance.*

## I. Introduction

SMEs in Indonesia continues to grow, and it comes to the government's attention because they are more reliable in accepting economic stability (Hasibuan, 2015). SMEs are highly developed in developing countries because they help to support the economy (Akinboade & Kinfack, 2012). The establishment of SMEs in developing countries such as Indonesia continues to be driven by the government with various financial or non-financial policies (Indris & Primiana, 2015). However, SMEs itself are required to continue to survive in business competition, both with small and large companies (Najib & Kiminami, 2011). Business competition is profitable because the company will provide the best business strategy in the competition (Suh & Kim, 2014). In identical business competition with SMEs performance, where business profits assessed over the implementation of business strategies over a specified period.

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SMEs' performance is the company's performance, which assessed from various aspects, including financial benefits and non-financial benefits (Hasibuan, 2015). Many things can do by companies that related to performance; one of them is through the empowerment of human resource within it (Herrera Madueño et al., 2016) because Human Resource plays an essential role in controlling business strategy in achieving SMEs performance (Suh & Kim, 2014). In the science of human resources, it knows as the organizational behavior related to the ambitious entrepreneur soul (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). Ambitious is closely related to the entrepreneur's soul in behavior, namely, the level of aspirations owned in their work (Ammeter et al., 2002). In a previous study, it revealed that an ambitious entrepreneur has an essential role in controlling a company's performance (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). It explains the importance of an entrepreneur's behavior through an ambitious soul in controlling his company. In this study, it inevitably focuses on SMEs, which is very well-known for the entrepreneur's behavior within it. Understanding to ambitious entrepreneurs, SMEs need control over several behaviors such as the aspiration's soul owned by entrepreneur, the desired level of soul stated by entrepreneur and the hope possessed by a businessman in delivering their company to competition (Alamsyah, Othman, et al., 2020; Todericiu & Stăniț, 2015) because an entrepreneur has full power in determining business strategy and its implementation in designing SMEs performance.

In addition to the ambitious entrepreneur soul, other factors will have support for SME's performance. In the science of entrepreneurship, it knows as the entrepreneurial orientation, which often used in determining business strategies and evaluating SME's performance (K. Zhou et al., 2009). As stated in previous studies that focus on SMEs, it mentions that SMEs need market orientation in understanding the target market, with the final goal of improving SME's performance (Sutapa et al., 2017). Market orientation used by entrepreneurs that always related to business strategy, human resources in a company is controlled and given direction in implementing business strategies with market orientation (Hariyanto & Alamsyah, 2019; K. Zhou et al., 2009). Market orientation focuses on market behavior and market needs, and the efforts in controlling market intention. So, the entrepreneur works hard in the final expectation of improving SME's performance. Sometimes, there is a misperception of market orientation, where the entrepreneurs assume marketing strategies that provide opportunities to approach the market. However, market orientation is a tool in implementing business strategies with the objective is firm performance (Best, 2009). Examining the problem phenomenon of SME's performance in Indonesia and its relation to the ambitious soul of an entrepreneur and the implementation of market orientation, so this study focuses on examining the impact of market orientation on SME's performance through mediation from the ambitious soul of an entrepreneur. The research focuses on SMEs in Indonesia, so it seems clear the research focus on SME's behavior through entrepreneurs.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Market Orientation on SMEs**

Market orientation and customer orientation have the same goal, which is the understanding of customer behavior as a target market (K. Zhou et al., 2009). Competitors often control market orientation as part of a business strategy, coordinating with all of the lines across in company so that business targets are in line with company goals (Hikmawati & Alamsyah, 2018; Jogaratnam, 2017). Along the way, the implementation of market orientation has an impact on the company's performance. It means that SME's performance requires support from a strategy based on market orientation. The two essential things related to market orientation are the collaboration between human resources and companies in business strategies

(Maryam et al., 2014; Setiadi et al., 2018). Market orientation, in theory, is part of marketing management science, but it often used in human resource science that relates to entrepreneur behavior (Mare et al., 2013). Based on the fundamental theory of market orientation, it said that the purpose of market orientation is to examine customer's needs and intentions and it satisfies their needs more effectively and efficiently than competitors (K. Z. Zhou et al., 2005). So, it is evident that market orientation requires a business strategy because of the existence of market competition goals. Understanding the market orientation means SMEs carry out three orientation matters, which are customer, competitor, and inter-functional coordinator (Jogaratnam, 2017).

In the service industry, market orientation often used as a guide in achieving the company's performance (Maryam et al., 2014). It is like SMEs, where market orientation is an important part that relates to business strategy and the company's performance. However, a previous study has conducted that market orientation has the potential to develop an ambitious entrepreneur soul (Soininen et al., 2013). Because market orientation is part of the strategy, and entrepreneurs in SMEs often control it. In assessing market orientation, it can know through several indicators, particularly for SMEs, which usually assessed from risk-taking behavior, the development of innovation, proactive and aggressive actions towards competition (Gnizy et al., 2014). However, the previous studies have conducted relating to small industries which need to instill some actions in business that are independent in making decisions, it has intuition in doing business, and it conducts integration with all parts of the company (Jogaratnam, 2017).

### **Soul of Ambitious Entrepreneur**

Entrepreneurs are the company's leader in SMEs; all of the entrepreneur's policies affect to company's performance in the end (Ammeter et al., 2002). The policies made sourced from an entrepreneur's behavior, one of them known as an ambitious entrepreneur soul in conducting business (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). The ambitious entrepreneur is related to the entrepreneur's expectations in running a business in a period to gain benefits following company goals (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010). Entrepreneurs play an important role in creating innovation in companies that have an impact on the sustainability of their business (Alamsyah, Aryanto, et al., 2020; Triguero et al., 2013). In theory, ambitious entrepreneurs stated to be an entrepreneur's behavior in entrepreneurship that promotes prosperity, investment, and knowledge in achieving a higher profit (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). In its journey, the implementation of an ambitious entrepreneur has a positive impact on SME's performance. It is in line with previous studies that explain the importance of SME's performance assessed from the soul of ambitious entrepreneurs (Ammeter et al., 2002).

Entrepreneur itself needs some fundamental values to the implementation of ambitious characters to fulfilled; it includes responsibility, productivity, and based on profit (Urbano & Aparicio, 2016). It emphasizes ambitious entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship with the final goal of making a profit. Ambitious can evaluated through three main things is the level of aspirations possessed, the desired level of entrepreneurship possessed, and the level of hope to get benefits (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). Because the process of entrepreneurship itself is part of entrepreneurship begins with an initiative in developing ideas so that aspirations, desire, and hope to develop in their business (Lindman, 2013) emerge. Every entrepreneur wants his business to run longer and to take advantage of more optimally. However, all of them requires the effort both through support from

inside of SMEs and from the outside (Gomezelj & Kušce, 2013). At least, the essential thing from support can begin with ambitious entrepreneurs who have confidence in running their business. It cited from the previous studies; some factors can develop and strengthen to the ambitious soul of entrepreneurs, namely the implementation of market orientation strategies (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). Because market orientation is a study of market behavior and by understanding market behavior, entrepreneurs are more confident in developing their business strategies.

### **SMEs Performance**

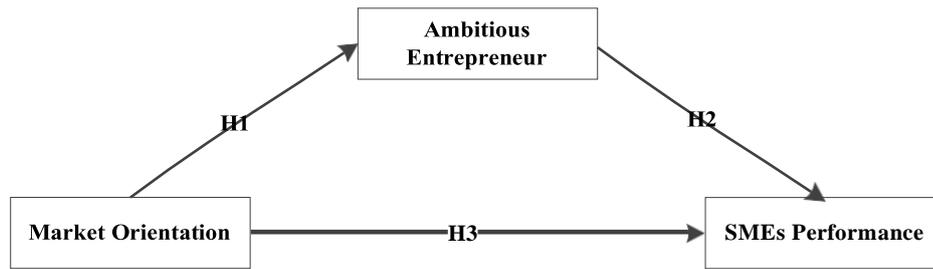
There have been many studies on SME's performance, all related to measuring tools from work results, and entrepreneurs undertake the effort in their business at specific time units, which assessed both financially and non-financially (Ndubisi & Agarwal, 2014). Performance is a description of whether all business strategies have achieved in getting business profits (Alamsyah et al., 2019; Wijk & Persoon, 2006). Many goals and objectives in business strategy, but sometimes it is not following the expectations. It is due to many factors that affect firm performance, including internal or external entrepreneurs such as competition (Parnell, 2011; Setiadi et al., 2018). Theoretically, it talks about SMEs, which is said to be a measure of success from a company in achieving its goals (K. Z. Zhou et al., 2008). This success can make asses from two main factors, namely, financial and non-financial benefits (Agha et al., 2011). The point is that SME's performance puts forward a company's profitability that will achieve. SMEs are more developed in developing countries because the level of entrepreneur's self-confidence controls the success of a business (Suh & Kim, 2014). It emphasizes that ambitious entrepreneurs provide opportunities for the success of SME's performance. Ideally, SMEs who understand their performance must carry out several activities, including entrepreneurial characteristics (Todericiu & Stăniț, 2015). Where in these activities, entrepreneurs expected to prioritize the soul of entrepreneurship, one of them is controlling to an ambitious entrepreneur. The information illustrates the close relationship between an ambitious entrepreneur and the achievement of SME's performance.

In theory, SME's performance strives to make the institutional environment run because if the internal environment does not support entrepreneurs, so the implementation of business strategies is difficult to be developed (Hasibuan, 2015). The institutional environment is closely related to rules that need to be obeyed by all the elements in SMEs. Furthermore, it has been known the indicators in assessing SME's performance, which is related to the level of profitability, the level of company benefits, and the level of market share they have (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). The last target has a relationship with the achievement level of market share; it indicates a relationship of market orientation with SME's performance (K. Z. Zhou et al., 2008).

### **Hypothesis Model**

Based on the study of the previous literature review, it knows that several related variables can develop the main variables related to SME's performance. In which it known that market orientation has an impact on increasing ambitious entrepreneurs (Verheul & Mil, 2011), besides ambitious entrepreneurs have an impact on achieving SME's performance (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). Market orientation has also directed the potential to support SME's performance (K. Zhou et al., 2009). Examining the study of the relationship between variables, so in hypothesis, the model design presented in Figure 1, with three research hypothesis designs.

*Figure 1. Model of Hypothesis*



- Hypothesis 1. Market orientation impacts positively to an ambitious entrepreneur  
Hypothesis 2. Ambitious entrepreneur impacts positively to SMEs Performance  
Hypothesis 3. Market orientation impacts positively to SMEs Performance

### **III. Methodology**

The research method used was a survey in which it conducted by entrepreneurs in Indonesia, particularly in West Java, which had many SMEs. The number of entrepreneurs was taken as many as 133 data through a questionnaire made quantitatively. The questionnaire was made with predetermined answers to make it easier to process, where the value of “1” described the level of strongly disagree, and the value of “6” described the level of strongly agree with the statement given. Different numbers determined the statements of all latent variables. In market orientation, it used seven indicators, while in the ambitious entrepreneur and SMEs, performance assesses from three of each indicator.

Data from the questionnaire tabulated and processed with SEM analysis techniques and SmartPLS analysis tools. So, the model testing through Inner and Outer Models and emphasize the results of the research hypothesis test based on Figure 1, which was about the research hypothesis model. The inner model test was done by assessing Outer Weight, while Outer Model was done by assessing several criteria, namely Convergent Validity, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted, and Discriminant Validity. The two tests needed following the criteria; after that, it was explained the model through the relationship and the impact of latent variables.

### **IV. Results and Discussions**

#### **Research Model**

Data from respondents who are SMEs entrepreneurs in West Java obtained 133; data processed through SmartPLS without explaining the characteristics of entrepreneurs. Before explaining the study results, an Inner and Outer Model test performed, where the results know that all tests were said to be valid and reliable (Good of Fit). These results are based on a Convergent Validity value > 0.3, Discriminant Validity value > 0.7, Average Variance Extracted value > 0,5, Cronbach’s Alpha value > 0,7, and Outer Weight value for t- statistical > 3,092. A summary of the test results attached in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

**Table 1.** Values of Outer Loading

	<b>Instru</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>Ambitious</b>	<b>SMEs</b>
<b>ments</b>		<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Entrepreneur</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Risk	Taking	0,661		
on	Innovati	0,776		
e	Proactiv	0,713		
ive	Aggress	0,628		
dent	Indepen	0,674		
ion	Feeling	0,625		
on	Integrat	0,621		
	Aspirati		0,850	
	Desire		0,850	
	Hope		0,812	
ility	Profitab			0,874
	Benefit			0,908
Share	Market			0,875

**Table 2.** Values of Reliability and Validity

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cro</b>	<b>Com</b>	<b>Ave</b>
	<b>nbach's</b>	<b>posite</b>	<b>rage</b>
	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Variance</b>
			<b>Extracted</b>
Market Orientation	0,64	0,711	0,79
	6		8
Ambitious	0,78	0,876	0,70
Entrepreneur	8		2



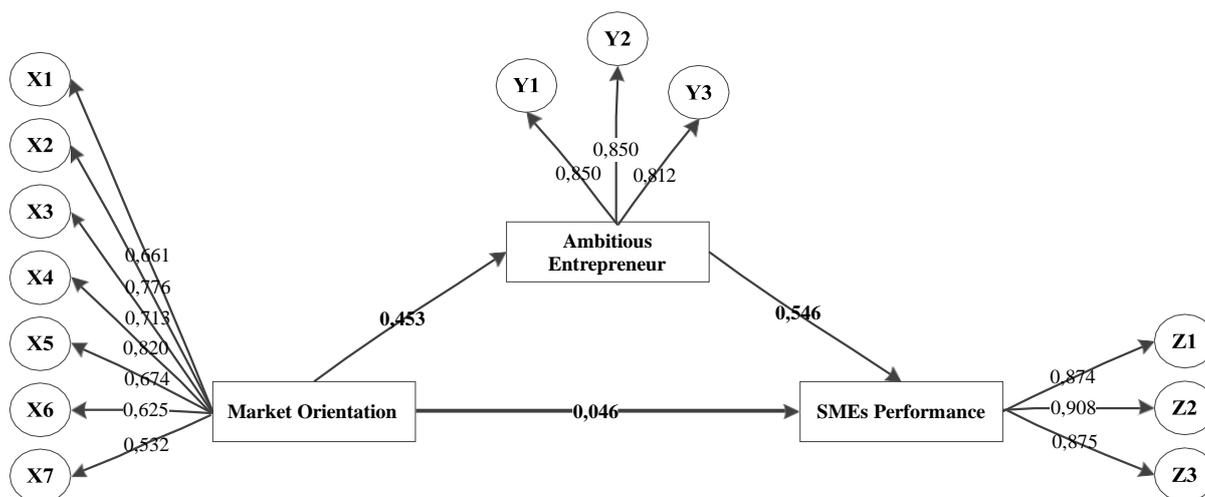
	0,86	0,916	0,78
SMEs Performance	2		4

**Table 3.** Values of Outer Weight

Instrument				O	S	St	T	
				iginal	ample	andard	Statistics	
				Sample	Mean	Deviation	( O/STDEV )	Values
				(O)	(M)	(STDEV)		
Risk Taking	←	Market		0,	0	0,	3,09	
Orientation				211	,208	024	2	<b>,000</b>
Innovation	←	Market		0,	0	0,	5,70	
Orientation				246	,330	061	4	<b>,000</b>
Proactive	←	Market		0,	0	0,	4,31	
Orientation				281	,266	065	7	<b>,000</b>
Aggressive	←	Market		0,	0	0,	3,37	
Orientation				235	,234	095	3	<b>,000</b>
Independent	←	Market		0,	0	0,	4,38	
Orientation				338	,327	077	2	<b>,000</b>
Feeling	←	Market Orientation		0,	0	0,	4,46	
				429	,418	096	7	<b>,000</b>
Integration	←	Market		0,	0	0,	3,50	
Orientation				351	,245	020	3	<b>,000</b>
Aspiration	←	Ambitious		0,	0	0,	11,5	
Entrepreneur				447	,450	039	75	<b>,000</b>
Desire	←	Ambitious		0,	0	0,	12,3	
Entrepreneur				360	,361	029	84	<b>,000</b>
Hope	←	Ambitious		0,	0	0,	13,1	
Entrepreneur				386	,382	029	88	<b>,000</b>
Profitability	←	SMEs		0,	0	0,	14,6	
Performance				373	,371	025	24	<b>,000</b>
Benefit	←	SMEs Performance		0,	0	0,	13,2	
				394	,397	030	94	<b>,000</b>
Market Share	←	SMEs		0,	0	0,	14,3	
Performance				363	,362	025	71	<b>,000</b>

The following result is a testing hypothesis based on the previous hypothesis model in Figure 2, were it known that market orientation has a significant influence on ambitious entrepreneurs, and it has a significant influence on SME's performance (Table 4). Whereas the orientation model cannot directly cannot significantly influence SME's performance (Table 4). Based on these results, it can conclude that ambitious entrepreneurs can mediate between market orientation and SME's performance.

**Figure 2.** Correlation Values and Loading Factors



**Table 4.** Hypotheses Tests

Hypotheses	t-value
Market Orientation → Ambitious Entrepreneur	5,976
Ambitious Entrepreneur → SMEs Performance	6,028
Market Orientation → SMEs Performance	0,499

**The Impact of Market Orientation to Ambitious Entrepreneur**

Research results find where a market orientation has an impact on positive changes in ambitious entrepreneurs. The information indicated that market orientation had correlation value (0.453) or a significant effect on ambitious entrepreneurs by 20.5% (Figure 2), which explains that the higher of market orientation implementation on business strategy, the better it affects to the ambitious soul of an entrepreneur. Part of this study results are actually in line with and perfecting the previous research (Verheul & Mil, 2011), where research for SMEs in the Netherlands explains that entrepreneurs on the importance of an ambitious soul through an entrepreneur’s understanding of market orientation. Because in market orientation, there are clear segments and the company’s targets for customer’s targets. An entrepreneur is required to understand and to control market intention, so market orientation becomes an important part that needs to be understood by entrepreneurs. In a market orientation, several things need to be recognized by entrepreneurs, such as risk- taking, innovation, proactivity, aggression, independence, feeling, and integration. All these elements become the entrepreneur’s tools in understanding and controlling the target market. The findings of this study emphasize the hypothesis test attached in Table 4, where a market orientation has a significant impact on

ambitious entrepreneurs. So that information is related to the entrepreneur's behavior can be valuable information for the government in understanding SME's behavior and providing the policies which can develop to SMEs in Indonesia. So the existence of SMEs can sustain the economy of the country and the economy of society, remember that SMEs are companies which are more able to survive in critical economic (Durst & Gueldenberg, 2010).

### **Mediation of Ambitious Entrepreneur**

Another finding that appears in Figure 2 is the relationship of ambitious entrepreneurs to SME's performance. It is known to have a positive relationship of 0.546, in which if it increased to be the influence, so the number of effects is 29.8%. Examining the facts of this problem explains that the higher of ambitious soul possessed by entrepreneurs, the better in building and achieving SME's performance. This part of the study provides new findings that refine the previous research (Sidiqqoh & Alamsyah, 2017). Where in the previous study that focused on SMEs in Indonesia explained that SME's performance truly depends on the entrepreneur's behavior as decision-makers, namely commitment in entrepreneurship and ambitious entrepreneur in entrepreneurship. It seems clear that ambitious entrepreneurs provide an excellent opportunity for achieving SME's performance. The following hypothesis test results in Table 4, where it stated the impact of an ambitious entrepreneur could influence SME's performance significantly. In ambitious entrepreneurs, several things need to consider, namely aspiration, desire, and hope. Aspiration is related to the level of aspirations such as suggestions and decisions which arise from entrepreneurs based on previous experience. It is needed so entrepreneurs can compete in their business. Furthermore, desire relates to an interest in entrepreneurship, which needed in facing business competition. Finally, hope always believed that his business can survive and be excellent from its competitors. All of the visible characteristics of ambitious entrepreneurs are the keys that need to be understood. This information is essential to be understood by entrepreneurs from SMEs in Indonesia, with the aim can motivate in building their business.

### **Insignificant Effect of Market Orientation**

The last finding that emerges in this study is the relationship of market orientation as one of the business strategies of SMEs, which, based on research findings, has a relationship to SME's performance of 0.046. However, it can explore that the relationship is not closed, and it can interpret that SME's performance cannot be controlled directly by implementing market orientation. In accordance with the hypothesis test results in Table 4, which mentions that market orientation cannot influence the achievement of SMEs directly. It seems clear that these findings are inconsistent, and it tends to argue the previous research (K. Zhou et al., 2009). It happens and there may be other factors that are more dominant in encouraging the achievement of SME's performance. In this research, SME's performance is very dependent on the entrepreneur's behavior, which is an ambitious entrepreneur. So, it is evident that other factors give a greater hope of achieving SME's performance. On the other side, it knows that an ambitious entrepreneur is an entrepreneur's behavior, which can be controlled by the implementation of market orientation. Based on the results of several studies, it can conclude, and it becomes the novelty of this study, namely the ability of ambitious entrepreneurs to support the relationship of market orientation on achieving SME's performance. It means that SME's performance will be

well-achieved through the implementation of market orientation if the support of ambitious entrepreneurs mediates it. Some critical information reveals in this study is genuinely able to provide input for SMEs and the government in understanding entrepreneur behavior in SMEs.

## V. Conclusions

This research focuses on the study of organizational behavior through SMEs in Indonesia with studies on market orientation, ambitious entrepreneurs, and SME's performance. SME's performance becomes an evaluation in assessing an entrepreneur's behavior in Indonesia. The research findings stated that the ambitious soul of an entrepreneur could control SME's performance. So, the higher of the ambitious soul is very beneficial in evaluating firm performance. Other findings stated that ambitious entrepreneurs could be well-supported by the implementation of market orientation. Where business strategies through market orientation provide opportunities in understanding the target market, and it has an impact on ambitious entrepreneur behavior. The essence of the research findings explains that ambitious entrepreneurs can be a mediator in increasing the impact of implementing market orientation on SME's performance.

The information found in the research of organizational behavior, which relates to SMEs, has undoubtedly a positive impact on SMEs in Indonesia, more understanding in the decision to determine business strategies through the implementation of market orientation. Besides that, this study results also provide the input for the government in determining SME's policies in Indonesia, which are more beneficial in stimulating the growth of SMEs. More profoundly, several things not examined in this study; so, the information felt to be imperfect for stakeholders to know. In this case, it seems that this study does not examine the commitment and competence of entrepreneurs, even though both behaviors determine in evaluating SME's performance. It becomes a limitation of the research, and it recommended to developed in subsequent studies.

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