



Influence of Minimalist and Streetwear Clothing Design Styles on Generation Z Purchase Intention: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract:

This study examined the influence of minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles on Generation Z purchase intention. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior and Marketing Aesthetics Theory, the research analyzed how visual appeal and symbolic meaning affect consumers' purchasing decisions. The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental cross-sectional survey design involving 362 Generation Z students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated and reliable structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and one-sample t-tests. Findings revealed that both minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles significantly influence Generation Z purchase intention, with minimalist fashion yielding a slightly higher grand mean. For minimalist clothing, age and purchase frequency produced significant differences, whereas for streetwear, college affiliation and purchase frequency were significant factors. Results highlighted sustainability as the primary motivator for minimalist fashion and identity expression as the key driver for streetwear. The study concludes that both clothing design styles effectively shape Generation Z consumer behavior when aligned with aesthetic and symbolic preferences. It is recommended that marketers and retailers emphasize sustainability in minimalist fashion and identity expression in streetwear to strengthen consumer engagement. Future research may explore other fashion styles and extend the scope to different demographic groups.

Keywords: Generation Z, minimalist fashion, purchase intention, streetwear, symbolic meaning, visual appeal.

1. Introduction

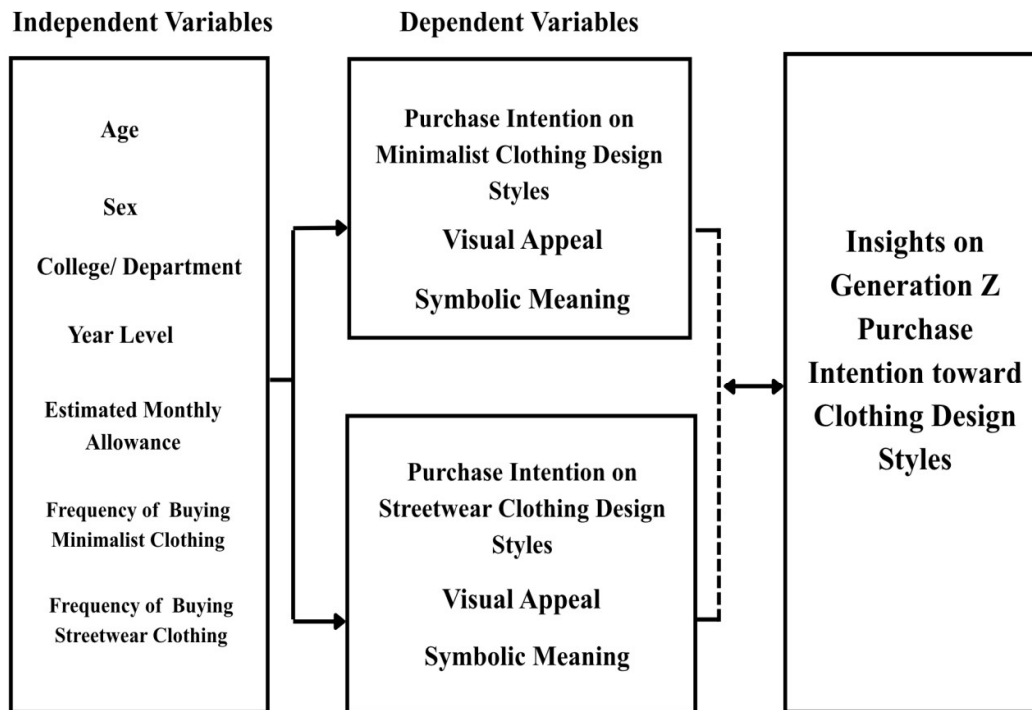
Generation Z consists of individuals born from 1997 to 2012 and is currently a dominant force in global consumption, shaping what is fashionable around the world. According to a report by Pew Research Center (2020), digital natives from this generation exhibit unique purchasing patterns, value preferences, and aesthetics distinct from those observed in Millennials and Generation X. For Generation Z, clothing serves as an important tool for expressing their identity and establishing their social standing, aligning with the concept of extended self — that consumers use possessions to communicate personal identity (Devi, 2020).

In recent years, two main fashion design styles have created a growing trend dispute: minimalist and streetwear. Minimalist fashion uses basic design elements, including clean lines, neutral color palettes, and high-quality materials, following the principle of “less is more” (Vogue Business, 2023). Streetwear, which emerged from urban subcultures including skateboarding, hip-hop, and graffiti, combines bold graphic designs with oversized clothing and exclusive product drops (Courtney Fashion Ista, 2025). These two different fashion styles illustrate how consumers select their preferred designs by matching values and aesthetics.

The popularity of minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles continues to rise; however, empirical studies comparing their effects on Generation Z purchasing behavior remain limited. This gap underscores the need for a comparative study examining how these two distinct clothing design styles influence Generation Z's purchase

intentions. Therefore, this study aimed to examine and compare the influence of minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers at Capiz State University – Main Campus.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



2. Literature Review

2.1 Minimalist Clothing Design Style

Minimalist clothing design emphasizes simplicity, utility, neutral colors, and timeless styles. Rooted in the principle of “less is more,” it encourages consumers to buy fewer but longer-lasting garments, which aligns with sustainable consumption (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Recent studies demonstrate that Generation Z favors minimalist fashion design, as it aligns with environmentalist values and practicality. Liu et al. (2023) found that consumers prefer apparel that aligns with environmentalist values and the concept of simplicity, while Nguyen et al. (2022) observed that eco-friendly apparel aligns with the lifestyles of Generation Z consumers.

2.2 Streetwear Clothing Design Style

The streetwear clothing design style originated in subcultures such as skateboarding, hip-hop, and graffiti (Martinez, 2025). It developed into a worldwide trend combining large graphic designs, baggy clothing, and visible brand trademarks (Courtney Fashion Ista, 2025). Generation Z uses streetwear to demonstrate personal identity, reflecting their commitment to authentic self-expression and social communities (Luthra et al., 2024). Research by Luthra et al. (2023) showed that young consumers purchase streetwear to represent personal uniqueness and a sense of belonging.

2.3 Visual Appeal

Visual appeal is a product’s attractiveness, influenced by its design elements, such as color, shape, and aesthetic quality. In fashion products, visual appeal attracts consumers’ attention and creates fashion preferences. Choi and Lee (2024) found that appearance significantly impacts consumers’ assessment of fashion products. Liu and Brock (2022) confirmed that visual appeal increases both consumer engagement and the desire to purchase products.

2.4 Symbolic Meaning

Symbolic meaning refers to the social and individual meanings attributed to the consumption of goods beyond functional meaning. In fashion consumption, clothing becomes a tool to demonstrate consumers' identity, values, and group membership. Liu et al. (2023) found that consumers tend to purchase products that align with their values. Hwang and Hyun (2022) revealed that perceived symbolic value positively affects emotional attachment and purchase intention in fashion consumption.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

This study was anchored on two theoretical frameworks. The Marketing Aesthetics Theory (Hagtvedt, 2023) demonstrates how design elements, through their visual style and symbolic meanings, shape consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020) asserts that people form intent to act based on their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Together, these frameworks clarify how aesthetic perceptions and symbolic interpretations shape Generation Z's purchase intention toward minimalist and streetwear clothing styles.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. A quantitative method was adopted to gather measurable data on Generation Z's purchase intention toward minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles. The cross-sectional survey design enabled data collection at a single point in time, making it suitable for describing respondents' current perceptions and purchase intentions.

3.2 Locale and Participants

This study was conducted at Capiz State University Main Campus, Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines. The participants were 362 Generation Z students enrolled during the Second Semester of Academic Year 2025–2026, aged 18 to 26 years. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation from four colleges: College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (CEAT) – 101; College of Education (COED) – 47; Bachelor of Industrial Technology (BIT) – 169; and College of Management (CM) – 45.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants

College / Department	Population	Percent	Sample Size
College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (CEAT)	1,748	27.9%	101
College of Education (COED)	820	13.0%	47
Bachelor of Industrial Technology (BIT)	2,930	46.7%	169
College of Management (CM)	784	12.4%	45

Total	6,282	100%	362
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Source: Data from the researchers

3.3 Research Instrument

This study used a researcher-developed structured survey questionnaire as the primary instrument. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: (1) Screening Questions, to determine eligibility; (2) Respondents' Profile, collecting demographic data; and (3) Survey Proper, with statements measuring visual appeal and symbolic meaning for both minimalist and streetwear clothing design styles using a five-point Likert scale. Five statements were used per variable, yielding ten items per clothing style.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire underwent content validation by the research adviser and experts in marketing management and consumer behavior. A pilot test was conducted with 30 students not included in the actual sample. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.907, indicating excellent reliability, with item-level alphas ranging from 0.897 to 0.912.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to determine the level of purchase intention. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze grouping variables (age, college affiliation, year level, estimated monthly allowance, frequency of purchase). At the same time, an independent-samples t-test was used to assess sex differences. A one-sample t-test with a test value of zero was used to compare overall purchase intention between the two clothing styles. All tests were set at a 0.05 significance level.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Level of Purchase Intention on Minimalist Clothing Design Styles

Table 2 presents the level of purchase intention for minimalist clothing design styles. The grand mean of 3.99, interpreted as "High," indicates that Generation Z respondents demonstrated a consistently favorable and strong level of purchase intention toward minimalist clothing. In terms of visual appeal (average mean = 4.03), the highest-rated item was "I find minimalist clothing visually attractive" (M = 4.19, SD = 0.56). The symbolic meaning dimension also yielded a "High" average mean of 3.95, with "I feel that wearing minimalist clothing reflects my values and lifestyle" as the top item (M = 4.01, SD = 0.69).

These findings are theoretically grounded in Marketing Aesthetics Theory (Hagtvedt, 2023), affirming that minimalist fashion possesses visual attributes that effectively capture and sustain consumer attention. Choi and Lee (2024) found that visual appearance significantly affects consumers' assessments of fashion products. Liu et al. (2023) showed that Generation Z consumers prefer minimalist fashion as a lifestyle, demonstrating environmental responsibility and self-discipline.

Table 2

Level of Purchase Intention on Minimalist Clothing Design Styles in Terms of Visual Appeal and Symbolic Meaning

Statements	SD	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
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Visual Appeal			
1. I find minimalist clothing visually attractive.	0.56	4.19	High
2. I find neutral and earth-tone colors appealing in minimalist clothing.	0.75	3.95	High
3. I find minimalist clothing stylish and timeless.	0.72	4.06	High
4. I notice simple designs more than trendy styles.	0.69	3.98	High
5. I prefer minimalist fashion because of its neat appearance.	0.67	3.97	High
Average Mean – Visual Appeal		4.03	High
Symbolic Meaning			
1. I feel that wearing minimalist clothing reflects my values and lifestyle.	0.69	4.01	High
2. I believe minimalist fashion represents sustainability and self-discipline.	0.72	3.96	High
3. I feel that minimalist clothing helps me express a simple and intentional identity.	0.72	3.96	High
4. I find that minimalist fashion reflects practicality and self-discipline.	0.68	3.93	High
5. I believe minimalist clothing symbolizes responsibility toward the environment.	0.68	3.91	High
Average Mean – Symbolic Meaning		3.95	High
Grand Mean		3.99	High

Legend: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low

Source: Data from the researchers

4.2 Level of Purchase Intention on Streetwear Clothing Design Styles

Table 3 presents the level of purchase intention on streetwear clothing design styles, yielding a grand mean of 3.91, interpreted as “High.” The visual appeal dimension averaged 3.92, with “I find streetwear clothing visually attractive” as the highest-rated item ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.59$). The symbolic meaning dimension averaged 3.90, with “I believe streetwear fashion represents individuality and self-expression” as the top indicator ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.67$). The lowest-rated item was “I feel that wearing streetwear reflects my cultural identity and social connections” ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.87$), indicating more variability in cultural identity association.

These results align with those of Luthra et al. (2023), who found that Generation Z consumers use streetwear deliberately to develop and share unique fashion identities. The findings confirm the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020), as positive attitudes toward streetwear’s symbolic attributes positively predict purchase intention.

Table 3

Level of Purchase Intention on Streetwear Clothing Design Styles in Terms of Visual Appeal and Symbolic Meaning

Statements	SD	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Visual Appeal			
1. I find streetwear clothing visually attractive.	0.59	4.08	High
2. I find bold graphics and oversized silhouettes appealing in streetwear.	0.71	3.91	High
3. I find streetwear clothing trendy and eye-catching.	0.80	3.79	High
4. I find streetwear clothing stylish and attention-grabbing.	0.73	3.91	High
5. I prefer streetwear clothing because of its casual and comfortable look.	0.66	3.94	High
Average Mean – Visual Appeal		3.92	High
Symbolic Meaning			
1. I feel that wearing streetwear reflects my cultural identity and social connections.	0.87	3.80	High
2. I believe streetwear fashion represents individuality and self-expression.	0.67	3.96	High
3. I feel that streetwear clothing helps me gain social visibility among peers.	0.69	3.88	High

4. I find that streetwear fashion shows exclusivity and a sense of belonging.	0.68	3.91	High
5. I use streetwear clothing to express my personal identity.	0.66	3.94	High
Average Mean – Symbolic Meaning		3.90	High
Grand Mean		3.91	High

Legend: 4.21–5.00 = Very High; 3.41–4.20 = High; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 1.00–1.80 = Very Low

Source: Data from the researchers

4.3 Significant Differences in Minimalist Purchase Intention by Profile

Table 4 presents the results of ANOVA and t-test analyses for minimalist clothing. A significant difference was found for age ($F = 4.042$, $p = .018$), with younger respondents aged 18–20 reporting the highest purchase intention ($M = 4.03$), followed by 21–23-year-olds ($M = 4.00$) and 24–26-year-olds ($M = 3.84$). Frequency of purchase was also significant ($F = 9.482$, $p = .000$), with those who always purchase minimalist clothing reporting the highest intention ($M = 4.21$). No significant differences were found for college affiliation ($p = .283$), year level ($p = .940$), estimated monthly allowance ($p = .192$), or sex ($p = .228$).

Table 4

Significant Difference in Purchase Intention on Minimalist Clothing Design Styles When Grouped According to Profile

Source of Variation	Group	N	Mean	SD	F / t	p-value	Remarks
Age	18–20	162	4.03	0.38	4.042	.018	s
	21–23	156	4.00	0.39			
	24–26	44	3.84	0.44			
College	COED	47	4.08	0.47	1.275	.283	ns
	CM	101	4.00	0.43			
	CEAT	169	3.98	0.37			
	BIT						
Year Level	1st	66	4.00	0.47	0.134	.940	ns
	2nd	120	4.00	0.35			
	3rd	113	3.97	0.41			
	4th	63	4.00	0.38			

Est. Monthly Allowance	< ₱3,000	151	3.94	4.04	0.45	0.33	1.589	.192	ns
	₱3,001-5,000	116	4.01	4.04	0.36	0.44			
	₱5,001-7,000	80	15						
	₱7,001+								
Sex	Male	161	4.02	3.97	0.39	0.40	1.207	.228	ns
	Female	201							
Frequency of Purchase	Always	41	4.21	4.06	0.36	0.33	9.482	.000	s
	Often	133	3.90	3.89	0.42	0.40			
	Sometimes	160							
	Rarely	28							

Legend: $p > 0.05 = ns$ (not significant); $p < 0.05 = s$ (significant)

4.4 Significant Differences in Streetwear Purchase Intention by Profile

Table 5 presents the results for streetwear clothing. College affiliation showed a significant difference ($F = 3.122$, $p = .026$), with College of Management recording the highest mean ($M = 4.02$) and College of Education the lowest ($M = 3.75$). Frequency of purchase was the strongest predictor ($F = 32.638$, $p = .000$), with always-purchasers scoring highest ($M = 4.38$). No significant differences were found for age ($p = .585$), year level ($p = .074$), estimated monthly allowance ($p = .146$), or sex ($p = .300$).

Table 5

Significant Difference in Purchase Intention on Streetwear Clothing Design Styles When Grouped According to Profile

Source of Variation	Group	N	Mean	SD	F / t	p-value	Remarks
Age	18–20	162	3.91	3.93	0.537	.585	ns
	21–23	156	3.85	0.48			
	24–26	44					
College	COED	47	4.02	0.48	3.122	.026	s
	CM	101	3.94	0.44			
	CEAT	169					
	BIT						
Year Level	1st	66	3.80	3.94	2.336	.074	ns
	2nd	120	3.89	4.00			
	3rd	113					
	4th	63					

Est. Monthly Allowance	< ₱3,000	151	3.85	3.96	0.45	0.33	1.803	.146	ns	
	₱3,001–5,000	116	3.93	4.05	0.36	0.44				
	₱5,001–7,000	80	15							
	₱7,001+									
Sex	Male	161	3.94	3.89	0.43	0.46	1.038	.300	ns	
	Female	201								
Frequency of Purchase	Always	35	87	4.38	4.11	0.33	0.35	32.638	.000	s
	Often	179		3.76	3.80	0.44	0.39			
	Sometimes	61								
	Rarely									

Legend: $p > 0.05 = ns$ (not significant); $p < 0.05 = s$ (significant)

Source: Data from the researchers

4.5 Significant Difference Between Minimalist and Streetwear Purchase Intention

Table 6 presents the one-sample t-test results comparing overall purchase intention between the two styles. Both minimalist ($M = 3.99$, $t = 191.420$, $p = .000$) and streetwear ($M = 3.91$, $t = 165.144$, $p = .000$) clothing design styles yielded statistically significant and “High” purchase intentions. The minimalist clothing design style recorded a marginally higher mean across both dimensions of visual appeal and symbolic meaning. The 0.08 mean difference, while modest, was consistent across all sub-dimensions, confirming that minimalist clothing holds a marginally but consistently stronger position in Generation Z’s purchase intention at Capiz State University.

Table 6

Significant Difference Between Generation Z’s Purchase Intention Toward Minimalist and Streetwear Clothing Design Styles

Clothing Design Style		N	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Remarks
Minimalist Design	Clothing	362	3.99	0.40	191.420	.000	s
Streetwear Design	Clothing	362	3.91	0.45	165.144	.000	s

Note: One-sample t-test conducted against test value = 0. $p > 0.05 = ns$; $p < 0.05 = s$

Source: Data from the researchers

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study found that Generation Z students at Capiz State University had a high level of purchase intention for minimalist clothing designs. It was noted that minimalist fashion appeals to this generation not just for its look, but for what it stands for: simplicity, practicality, and a lifestyle that feels more deliberate and responsible. Students

recognized the clean, timeless appearance of minimalist clothing and, at the same time, saw it as reflecting their values and how they wanted to carry themselves. This suggests that their interest in minimalism goes beyond aesthetics and connects to something more personal.

In the same way, Generation Z students also showed a high level of purchase intention for streetwear clothing designs. The bold, eye-catching look of streetwear drew them in at first, but what kept their interest was how the style allowed them to express who they are and feel a sense of belonging with others. The researchers also noticed that while most respondents agreed on streetwear's visual appeal, their feelings about its cultural meaning varied more widely, suggesting that this layer of the style can be personal and subjective.

When the demographic and lifestyle variables were examined, purchase frequency emerged as the strongest factor shaping purchase intention for both clothing styles. Simply put, students who already bought minimalist or streetwear clothing were more likely to intend to buy again, a pattern that aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior's prediction that past behavior shapes future intentions. Age, on the other hand, only made a difference for minimalist clothing, where younger respondents aged 18 to 20 were more likely to buy, possibly because they are more exposed to fashion content on social media. For streetwear, age did not seem to matter much, as students across different age groups within Generation Z found it equally appealing.

Looking at both styles side by side, each one connects with Generation Z students differently. Minimalist clothing speaks more to those who value practicality and a quieter kind of self-expression. In contrast, streetwear speaks to those who want to be seen, feel connected to a group, and assert their individuality. What is interesting is that students did not seem to choose one over the other based on demographics alone; instead, it was more about what each style meant to them personally and how well it matched the image they had of themselves.

Overall, the study showed that what gets a student interested in buying a piece of clothing is first how it looks, and then what it means. Visual appeal serves as the first hook, while symbolic meaning makes the intention stick. Both dimensions proved relevant for understanding how Generation Z students at Capiz State University approach their clothing choices, and both the Marketing Aesthetics Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior proved useful lenses for making sense of this. Ultimately, the findings suggest that for any brand trying to reach this generation, getting the look right is only half of the work; the meaning behind the design matters as much.

Recommendations

Fashion retailers and entrepreneurs may consider carrying both minimalist and streetwear clothing lines, as both styles were found to generate strong purchase intentions among Generation Z students at Capiz State University. For minimalist lines, retailers may prioritize sustainable materials, simple, timeless designs, and product messaging that speaks to the values of practicality and intentional living. For streetwear lines, retailers may develop bold graphic pieces with product narratives centered on individuality and social belonging. Since no significant difference in purchase intention was found between male and female respondents, retailers may also adopt gender-neutral product lines and marketing approaches to reach a wider segment of Generation Z consumers. Additionally, loyalty programs and repeat-purchase engagement strategies may prove beneficial, as purchase frequency was found to be the strongest lifestyle driver of purchase intention for both clothing styles.

Marketing and branding teams may design campaigns that lead with strong visual content, since visual appeal was found to be the most immediate trigger of purchase intention for both clothing styles. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram may be prioritized for reaching younger Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 20, who have the highest purchase intent for minimalist fashion and tend to discover trends online. For streetwear specifically, brand managers may invest in campus-based activations and peer-driven content creation, as college affiliation was found to influence purchase intention for this style significantly. Campaigns for minimalist fashion may emphasize eco-friendly values and timeless appeal. In contrast, streetwear campaigns may highlight individuality and a sense of social belonging to better connect with what drives Generation Z's purchase intent.

Consumers and society may benefit from a greater awareness of how visual and symbolic dimensions of clothing design shape purchasing decisions. Understanding that both how a garment looks and what it represents influence buying behavior may help young consumers make more deliberate, value-consistent fashion choices. At a broader level, the finding that both minimalist and streetwear styles appeal equally across gender lines reinforces the growing reality of gender-inclusive fashion among Generation Z, and this awareness may encourage more open, identity-affirming conversations about youth fashion in communities, the media, and everyday social settings.

Future researchers may replicate this study in other universities, particularly in metropolitan areas, to allow for broader comparisons and greater generalizability of the findings. Qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, may be used to explore the deeper symbolic meanings and identity processes behind Generation Z's fashion decisions. Variables such as social media exposure, peer influence, brand loyalty, and sustainability consciousness may also be tested as mediating or moderating factors in future studies. Researchers may likewise explore other clothing styles or sub-styles popular among Generation Z that were not covered in this study to build a more complete picture of this generation's fashion consumption behavior.

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