

A STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ITS IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN QUANTITY SURVEYING CONSULTANT FIRMS

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ABSTRACT

Organizational culture is the integration of principles, beliefs and ideologies in a workplace that affects employees' performance and behaviour in or even outside of the organization. A workplace with suitable and effective organizational culture plays an important role in employees' working performance especially for today's society that focuses more on quality of life rather than just the outcome of their daily lives. A nationwide questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the current organizational culture, leadership styles and organization axiology in the construction organizations of Malaysia. The findings of this study have shown that the "monkey culture", which epitomises cooperation and commitment is considered to be the most applicable type of organisation culture in Malaysia (Wang and Abdul-Rahman, 2020). However, there are over 50% of Quantity Surveying "QS" consultancy firms which are still not able to determine the applicable organizational culture for their organizations in order for them to achieve satisfactory employees' performance that integrates with clients' satisfaction (Wang and Abdul-Rahman, 2020). The findings from this study will provide the direction of applicable, suitable and effective organizational culture for QS consultancy firms. This study was carried out among working employers and employees in QS consultancy firms in Klang Valley. It is envisaged that this study will help to explore the improvements or innovations of organizational culture that can influence employees' perceptions towards their working environment. This study will also give both employers and employees of QS consultancy firms a better understanding of suitable organizational culture for their organizations where it can enhance efficiency in delivery of work achieved via cohesive teamwork within an organization.

Key words: organizational culture, employees' performance, workplace, clients' satisfaction, Quantity Surveying firms

INTRODUCTION

Quantity Surveyors "QS" are construction cost professionals who take on the primary role in construction field to calculate and estimate the cost of resources and budget for construction projects. The functions of the QS have evolved over the years and have they now have broader duties across all phases of the construction life cycle through from inception, design, procurement, project completion and even upto subsequent retrofitting of buildings during the usage process (Mbachu, J, 2015). Consultant QS conduct a broad spectrum of pre-contract, contract and post-contract survey activities for a wider variety of advanced quantity surveying services. Construction is regarded as a risky and highly competitive sector in Malaysia (Adnan and Jusoff, 2009). Thus, quantity

surveying firms should continuously monitor and compare their past and current business performance to keep improving for better competitiveness. Organizational performance can be translated as the level of motivation among the employees when number of employees is an indicator of the firm's performance (Abidin et al., 2020). Clients are the most critical and important asset of quantity surveying firms. Thus, employees' performance of quantity surveying firms which is determined by organizational culture is also the determinants to maintain or win more clients for the firms.

Organizational culture is an elementary aspect of the unification of participants in the community. It is also the integration of principles, beliefs and ideologies in a workplace that affects employees' performance and behavior in or even outside of the organization. Organizational culture helps to guide and steer us in the pursuit of our everyday tasks and objectives. In order for individuals to work under any given context, they must have a continuous sense of what truth is all about in order to behave accordingly. Organizational culture provides the context for everything that an organization does. Since sectors and circumstances differ greatly, there is no one-size-fits-all culture blueprint that serves the needs of all organisations. Organizational culture is a representation of the basic assumptions held by the members of an organisation, which determines the organisation's understanding of itself and its society as well as its method of carrying out everyday activities (Schein, 1992).

Malaysian construction industry sector includes the aspects of the planning, architecture, conservation, renovation and reconstruction aspects of different types of buildings and all types of mechanical and civil engineering activities and other field work (Ofori, 1990). It plays critical roles in generating wealth and improving the quality of life for Malaysians and used as the means of translating the government's socioeconomic policies into social and economic infrastructure and buildings. The focus of this study is narrowed down to one specific group of professional contributors in the construction industry ie. Quantity Surveying consultant firms whose role is as cost consultant and cost managers in the industry.

The multi-racial composition of people in Malaysia which comprise of three main races, Malay, Chinese and Indian, as well a minority of the indigenous people of the land affects the capital of culture in Malaysia. Capital of culture in Malaysia is one of the factors influencing organizational culture as well. It has been found that organizational culture has a significant relationship with firms' performance. It has also been observed that the organization's innovation has contributed positively as a moderator between organizational culture and firms' performance. (Hogan and Coote, 2014) have proposed a set of organizational culture that supports innovation, where the qualities in organizational culture and organizational innovation were combined. An organizational culture which successfully influences employee behaviour can be constructed by placing an emphasis on particular values, while reinforcing the corresponding norms for the desired behaviour (Tellis et al., 2009).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

After the advent of the pandemic this year, Malaysia's economy has and will be largely affected and most organizations will be facing a very tough period in returning to their normal pace of stable economic situation of the company. This will inadvertently cause stress to every employed member of the organization as well as all those involved in the construction industry. Thus, organizational culture becomes more crucial during this period. Without a suitable and effective organizational culture, the quantity surveying consultant firms may face crisis of employees wanting to leave due to the uncertainty of their job security and each employee will only be looking out for themselves and become individualistic.

The culture of a corporation, especially in its early years, is inherently related to the personality, history and beliefs of its creators or founders, as well as their vision for the future of the organization. It is also one of the difficulties in deciding the necessary and successful corporate culture that can keep up with the flow of information. Management and identity-related problems confront the predictive nature of work that consultants do and endanger the longevity, development and performance of companies.

Implementation and reinforcement of organizational culture is a long process and require cooperation from all parties in an organization. Employee attitude plays a vital role in determining organizational performance in the long run because it could lead to the desired employees' behaviour and attitude that are needed in order to achieve the objective, mission and vision of the organization (Moorhead & Griffin, 1992). It must be emphasised that organizational culture exists in every organisation, including quantity surveying consultant firms, whether noticed or not, desired or not, articulated or not (Pandey 2014; Ng & Kee 2013; Line 1999).

Quality of working lifestyle is an important criteria of the new generation of working employees nowadays. The high-tech industry needs mobility, fast action and a low degree of concern for law and authority so that it will build a comparatively more creative society. Studies of (Bearfield, 2003) have used 16 questions to analyse the quality of working life and to differentiate between causes of discontent among professionals, and other types of employees, suggesting that various issues would have to be answered with different classes. This is recommended to be applied in quantity surveying consultant firms as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Organizational culture mapping analysis through Organizational Culture Assessment (OCA)

Dimension	OCA research variable of cultural dimension		Amount of question
	Positive	Negative	
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language used by people in the organization reflects respect for other person at all levels in the organization. There is a story about a figure in the organization who acts as an example who perform innovative problem solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ideas / ideas rejected with negative comments, such as "the idea will not succeed in this organization". Conversations within the organization show the lack of enthusiasm and in activities. 	4
Artifact and symbol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of closed door in organizations but allow high interaction between Members. The leader has a workplace but close relations with other members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader strictly monitors the time of arrival and return of members. Work performance in organizations is based on punishment/ avoiding punishment. 	4
Behavioural pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members in organizations can actively develop their knowledge in order to be able to perform their activities better. Members care about the problems faced by the organization and propose solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward is the strongest motivation that encourage members to be diligent in their activities. Too many trivial things that are considered as problem in the organization. 	4
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration is recognized as a formal value in the organization. Innovation is recognized as a formal value in the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In performance evaluation there are many discussion about unfair and inaccurate process People in organizations tend to transfer their responsibilities to others to solve problems. 	4
Basic assumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader makes its members feel that they are important assets for the organization. Based on his actions, the leader considers members responsible, capable, and reliable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders perceive their members as an engine. Leaders considered themselves as thinkers while their members are workers. 	4

Figure 3.1 retrieved from Organizational culture mapping analysis through Organizational Culture Assessment (OCA).

According to the study of (Tama, 2019), Organizational culture mapping analysis through Organizational Culture Assessment (OCA), the dimension of organizational culture is broken down into a few variables known as OCA research variable. The language used reflects respect for others at all levels in the organization. As for the behavioural pattern of members, they can actively develop their knowledge in order to be able to perform their daily work tasks better. The last variable which is basic assumption where leader makes its members feel that they are important assets for the organization.

2. Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture Based on the Competing Values Framework

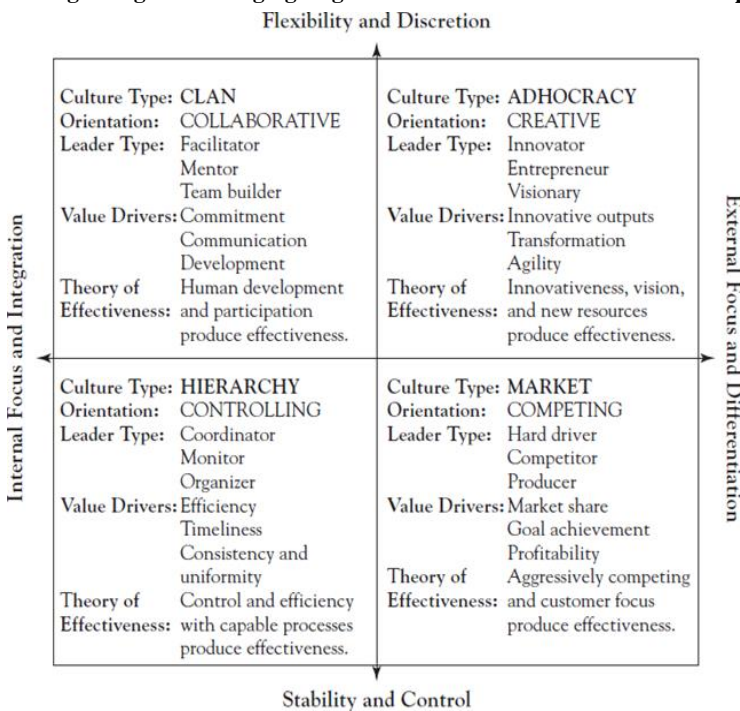


Figure 3.2 retrieved from Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture Based on the Competing Values Framework.

According to (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), they discovered that attributes, values of organizational culture and organizational forms are characterized by one or more of the types of organizational culture as identified in the Competing Values Framework. The four dominant cultural types including Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy and Market. Their findings are supportive to this study as it forms a clearer picture of the various types of organizational culture.

3. Organizational Size: A Key Element In The Development Of Private Enterprises In The Less Developed Countries: The Case Of Ecuador

3.1 Organizational Size

According to (Theodore, 2011), denotation of the number of employees and managers employed in organizations is determined by organizational size. It is defined in terms of volume of space and sales, the number of employees and net assets of the organization. Organizational size is a crucial element in implementing organizational culture. Thus, quantity surveying consultant firms with different organizational size, will be suited with different types of organizational culture. Based on the study of (Robins & Coulter, 2005), compared to small organizations, large organizations have more rules and regulations, departmentalization, centralization and specialization.

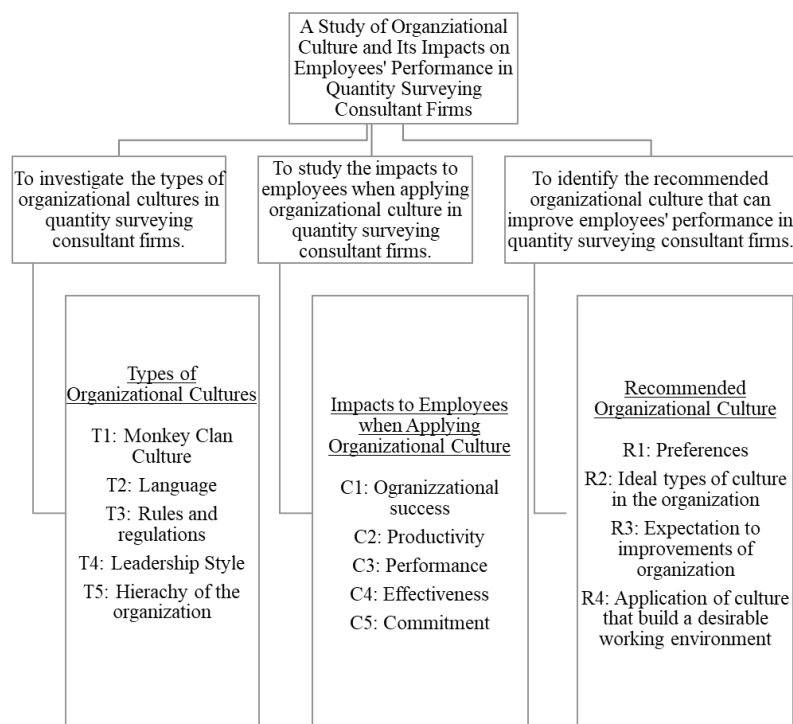
3.2 Organizational Structure

The mission, goals and objectives of an organization form the organizational structure (Theodore, 2011). It is a stable framework that depicts how to arrange and group the human and non-human elements. The structure and design of an organization are decided by the number, diversity and complexity of the goals of the organization (Hodge, Anthony & Gales, 2003). Duties, positions, formal pattern of activities, relationships and lines of authority connect the constituent parts of the organizational structure as human elements. The activities performed on a continuous basis specifically within the divisions and departments within the organizational structure.

3.3 Organizational Levels

According to the study of (Theodore, 2011), levels in the organizational hierarchy are broken down into three levels known as top, middle and lower/operational. The executives whose duties are to direct the strategic elements are at the top level of the organization. The leadership level is highlighted in the top level as the executives monitor the external environment while considering the environmental factors. Middle level of the organization are those who perform these strategic functions such as short-term purposes and tactical functions. These managers in the middle level of the organization direct the delegated strategies from executives in top level and turn them into tactical actions. They translate the strategies into specific goals and apply the organizational culture. The operational level is where the application of practical activities performed by supervisory level. The image of the organization is represented by these operational levels and how the organization operates as performed by the respective levels of employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Research Framework

Figure 4.1 shows the conceptual framework for this research study.

Qualitative Research Method

This study applied qualitative method in the targeted respondents to answer questions from their standpoint. For instance, experience, opinions and meaning towards the questions of the organizational culture of quantity surveying consultant firms in Malaysia. Qualitative approaches have been used to recognize, for example, possible issues in the execution of the proposed elective single embryo transfer trial, where small-group meetings have allowed workers to explain their own opposition, leading to a changed solution (Porter and Bhattacharya, 2005). This method is semi-structured such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observations which answer the questions in this study in open-ended questions forms.

Target Population and Sampling Frame

The scope of this research paper is limited to Quantity Surveying consultant firms in Klang Valley only. The target population is the Consultant Quantity Surveyors from large, medium and small sized consultant firms. The interviews carried out to the targeted population was done online by getting feedback from questionnaires sent to the respondents by email rather than a more effective face to face interview due to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic.

Purposive sampling is one of the common sampling strategies applied in qualitative research. After establishing research questions of the study, the respondents were grouped according to relevant preselected criteria. Sample size may be fixed prior to data collection or may not depending on the objectives of the study, resources and time available. In applying purposive sampling in a research, the sample size is determined on the basis of theoretical saturation. The effectiveness of this sampling method will be increased when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection. ("Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide Module 1 Qualitative Research Methods Overview", 2020)

Quota sampling was used in this study as well. The respondents were categorized by characteristics when designing the research questions. The characteristics include age, gender, class, profession etc. It was then proceeded into the community by using recruitment strategies appropriate to the location, culture and study population to meet the prescribed quota ("Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide Module 1 Qualitative Research Methods Overview", 2020).

FINDINGS

Types of Organizational Culture in Quantity Surveying Consultant Firms

Table 5.1 shows the types of organizational culture based on the data collected in relation to objective 1 of the study.

Types of Organizational Culture
Clan
Adhocracy
Hierarchy
Work-life Balance Culture

The respondents from each different size of quantity surveying consultant firms which are small, medium and large size of organization applied different organizational culture. Based on Table 5.1, the findings of this study on the types of organizational culture are similar to what have stated by (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) in their study such as clan, adhocracy and hierarchy culture. A new finding has been found from this study on the types of organizational culture which is work-life balance culture that is concern by the current generation that emphasize on quality of lifestyle. Thus, the findings showed that if there is a set of values and beliefs in the organization that are supportive of work-life balance, people are going to feel more positive toward their organization.

Variables of Organizational Culture

Table 5.2 shows the variables of organizational culture based on the data collected in relation to objective 1 and objective 2 of the study.

Variables of Organizational Culture
Style of working
Interaction within the members
Rules and regulations
Leadership style

The variables or determinants that derive into organizational culture are collected from respondents’ data. The variables established based on the findings of this study, are then correlated to the study of (Tama, 2019) on Organizational culture mapping analysis through Organizational Culture Assessment (OCA). The main variables listed in (Tama, 2019) include language, behavioural pattern, values and basic assumption.

The behavioural pattern in relation to style of working found that members in organizations can actively develop their knowledge in order to be able to perform their activities better. The language used by members in the organization reflects respect for others at all levels in the organization. The findings of this study which is interaction between the members, proved this statement, as formal language is used during meetings between the employees and employer. This encourages collaboration and innovation amongst the employees where the basic assumption is the leader is able to make its members feel that they are important assets for the organization. Leadership style is the new finding collected from the respondents’ data. The findings showed that leadership style is an influential determinant of organizational culture as well thus detailed description of leadership style was given by the respondents.

Impact of Organizational Culture on Employees' Performance

Table 5.3 shows the findings collected based on objective 2 of the study.

Category	Group	Theme	Sub theme	Code	Coding Group	
C. Objective 2: To study the impact to employees' performance when applying organizational culture in quantity surveying consultant firms.	1. Application of vision, mission and core values of company	a. Vision, mission and core values of company applied in the working environment	-	C-1-a	6	
		b. Group tasks accomplished with enhanced team-orientated working environment	-	C-1-b		
		c. Company approaches	-	C-1-c		
		d. Trust and respect is emphasized in the working environment	-	C-1-d		
		e. Improve quality of life with successful delivery of projects as main motto	-	C-1-e		
	2. Motivation of employees from existing organizational culture	a. Yes		i) Friendly employees	2-a-i	7
				ii) Helpful and sharing among employees	2-a-ii	
				iii) Team-orientated working environment	2-a-iii	
				iv) Acts as foundation to success	2-a-iv	
				v) Common goal setting as mission	2-a-v	
		b. No		i) Lack of organizational structure and guidance	2-b-i	
	3. Performance of employees influenced by their organizational culture	a. Good		i) Improved communication in dealing with other construction personnel	3-a-i	8
				ii) Well organized work and improved ability in advising client	3-a-ii	
				iii) Clear direction formed to approach challenges	3-a-iii	
				iv) Existing platform opened for suggestions and feedback	3-a-iv	
				v) Rewards	3-a-v	
				vi) Concern about health and safety	3-a-vi	
		b. Average		i) Poor structure of organization	3-b-i	
ii) Demotivated by reprimands of employer				3-b-ii		

			iii) Comfortable with current working environment	3-b-iii	
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By using content analysis, impacts of organizational culture are obviously observed from how employees are motivated in performing their work based on findings collected from the respondents' data. The information collected from the interviewees by emails are coded and broken down into manageable categories on a variety level. Based on the objectives, the interview questions included the assessment of respondents towards their work performance with the current organizational culture in their workplace. The findings collected include the descriptive data on performance, motivation in performing their work and impacts of application of vision, mission of the organization which are found to be relatively consistent with the literature review as well.

According to Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), a good organizational culture maintains variety and develops organization's employees' performance by motivating them toward a shared objective and goal. This also helps shape and channel employees' behavior to this specific focus which must be preferred for functional and operational plan (Daft & Weick, 1984). Overall, the findings showed that the respondents found themselves to perform above average due to motivation supported by organizational culture which is implemented in their organization.

Recommended Organizational Culture that Improves Employees' Performance

2. Ideal type of effective organizational culture from perception of employees	a) Growth of employees	D-2-a	3. Ideal type of organizational culture from perception of employer	a) Better quality of physical working environment	D-3-a
	b) Structured work assignment to employees	D-2-b		b) Team-orientated	D-3-b
	c) Regular feedback session on work performances	D-2-c		c) Growth opportunities given to employees	D-3-c
	d) Adhocracy culture	D-2-d		d) Regular feedback session for employees to voice up opinions	D-3-d
	e) Creativity	D-2-e		e) Motivating aura among all in increasing sense of ownership of work	D-3-e
	f) Team-orientated	D-2-f		f) Rewards	D-3-f
	g) Innovation	D-2-g			
	h) Risk-taking	D-2-h			
	i) Integrity	D-2-i			
	j) Clan culture	D-2-j			

Figure 5.1 shows the findings on ideal type of organizational culture from the perceptions of employees and employer which is in relation to objective 3 of the study.

The respondents have recommended the type of organizational culture which in their view is most effective and ideal by "wearing the shoes" of both employees and employers respectively. Under this section, the gap of the study can be reflected as well since there is no previous research which support the findings of an ideal type of organizational culture from the perception of both employees and employers.

In summary, the type of organizational culture that employees prefer in quantity surveying consultant firms varies widely depending on the organization size. However, clan culture seemed to be preferred by the current generation of employees in quantity surveying consultant firms as team-orientated work is frequently mentioned by the respondents.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There were two major limitations encountered when carrying out this study. Firstly, it was the difficulties faced in collecting data as the whole country is severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Movement Control Order was imposed. Every industry faced difficulties in continuing with the regular schedule of works and the usual activities have been disrupted including the construction industry. Thus, the respondents were all impacted by this major uncertainty which confronted everyone and thus may have also affected their responses.

Secondly, face-to-face interviews were not possible as we are encouraged to stay home instead of going out to meet people. Hence, online platforms were used to interview the targeted population of this study to collect insightful responses. Although on the surface online platforms seemed convenient, there were issues of slow responses and many vague or unclear responses which needed

further clarifications from the targeted respondents. Thus, compared to face-to-face interview, it is clearly not as efficient where in a face-to-face interview, the researcher can collect data directly from the respondents and at the same time can get better in-depth responses through follow up questions as well as clarifications on the vague initial responses. Phone interview is not as efficient as face-to-face interview session on the spot as well as the call may take too long and respondents may not be as cooperative as expected. Despite some clarifications received, the responses collected may not be precise or comprehensive enough to the main objectives of the study as in some instances, the researcher had to interpret some of the vague responses. This is due to the way the respondents presented their personal opinions and experience on the questionnaires varied in grammar and structure of sentences. Thus, the researcher found difficulties in interpreting the vague responses while carrying out data analyses process.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Based on the shortcomings faced in the previous sub-sections, it is recommended that future researchers target more Quantity Surveyors working in the different sized and types of quantity surveying firms. With a better representation of the types of the QS organizations, scope of research findings will be wider with more in-depth information that can be collected. Moreover, other than using single data analysis method, mix method is recommended to increase the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Apart from that, the future researchers are recommended to include other cities in Malaysia other than Klang Valley to conduct this study. This will contribute in giving a more representative response from a wider geographical perspective and conducting a more insightful study that will benefit the QS firms as well as Quantity Surveyors specifically and the construction industry generally.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, organizational culture does play a crucial role in quantity surveying consultant firms in influencing how the firms can perform well through the performance and productivity of their employees. The variety of organizational culture is relatively wide in quantity surveying consultant firms. From this research, it can be said that there are several foreseeable and unforeseeable limitations to the effectiveness in implementing organizational culture in quantity surveying consultant firms. Thus, constant effort shall be made not only by the employers but employees in order to promote the organization to achieve better performance in the industry. This paper may contribute to the construction industry as guidelines to seek improvements in achieving good work performance by implementing effective organizational culture in the quantity surveying consultant firms.

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