

EFFECT OF DIVERSITY ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: A STUDY OF OGUN STATE CIVIL SERVICE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores how workforce diversity—across dimensions like gender, ethnicity, age, and background—affects organizational culture, particularly in areas such as communication, decision-making, employee satisfaction, and innovation. It also examines how organizations manage the benefits and challenges of a diverse workforce and the implications for their overall performance. Several key literatures on diversity were reviewed to answer the question that is being focused on. Qualitative method has been deployed to gather the relevant information. The result of the study shows that workplace diversity has significant effect on organisational culture and growth. It also shows that an organisation must effectively manage its diverse workforce to foster inclusion and excellence. The findings further shows that workplace diversity contributed largely to organisational performance and growth. Based on these findings, the study recommended that for organizations to harness the full benefits of diversity and promote inclusiveness and excellence it must demonstrate a strong leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion, develop a comprehensive strategy that intentionally promotes diversity and inclusion practices across all aspects of the organization and showcase a clear and visible commitment to diversity and inclusion in the implementation of inclusive hiring practices to attract and retain diverse talent.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly globalized and interconnected world, organizations are recognizing the importance of diversity in shaping their culture and driving success. As workplaces become more diverse, organizations are presented with both opportunities and challenges thus necessitating the need to understand the concept which has many meanings, applications, and implications. According to Jourbet (2017) the concept of diversity has evolved to encompass strategic targets to improve organizational performance and effectiveness. Thus, diversity and organizational culture are two distinct concepts whose interplay and/or mix shape the limits or boundaries of going concerns. Therefore, organizations promote workforce diversity to bolster organizational performance, however, many studies suggest that diversity exists in different forms with different intensities and if not well managed, it has the potential to harm morale, intensify turnover and result in substantial communication problems.

It is against this background that this paper explores the effects of diversity not only on the organizational culture and how it impacts communication, collaboration, creativity, and productivity but also bring to the fore different strategies that can help create a culture of inclusion and excellence.

Statement of Problem

Many organizations struggle to manage and leverage on diversity in enhancing their organizational culture, despite the importance inherent in diversity on workplace culture. If the effect of diversity on organizational culture are not well understood, it may hinder inclusivity which will lead to poor employee engagement and retention, lack of innovation and creativity, conflicts and biases among employees. Therefore, it is important to investigate the effects of diversity on organizational culture in order to develop strategies that will promote culture of inclusion and excellence within the organization.

Research Questions

Having an empirically verifiable understanding on the effects of diversity on organizational culture is the driving force for this treatise, thus, upon completion, the research questions enumerated hereinafter would have been answered;

- i. What are the different level of diversity in a work place?

- ii. What are the benefits or limitations of workplace diversity and how did both interact or counteract to shape organization culture?
- iii. What are the required tools for managing workplace diversity?
- iv. What are the various considerations that shape the views of various organizations regarding the choice and implementation of workplace diversity?
- v. What are the different dimensions of organizational culture and the effects on diversity management?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the paper is to examine the Effect of Diversity on Organization Culture. To achieve this, the paper specific objectives will be to;

- i. identify the different level of diversity in a workplace;
- ii. present an overview on the benefits and limitations of workplace diversity and how both affect organizational culture;
- iii. identify the different tools required for managing workplace diversity;
- iv. review the various considerations that guides organization trajectory on diversity and
- v. Draw a valid Conclusion and Recommendation, based on literature review, on effect of Diversity on Organization Culture.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: Diversity does not have any significant effect on organizational culture.

H₁: Diversity has a significant effect on organizational culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity

Diversity in the workplace is a divisive, dynamic, and political phenomenon (Janssens & Steyaert 2003). Researchers from different points of view have conceptualized it. Some looked at it in a narrow light and others in a broader context (Nkomo, 1995). In particular, the main problems of diversity are those emerging when cultural groups are discriminated against and removed from conventional organizations (Cross, Katz, Miller & Seashore, 1994). Scholars in support of a narrow definition contend that the idea of diversity should be confined to cultural categories, including ethnicity and sex (Cross, Katz, Miller & Seashore 1994). Some claim that race-, racial-

and gender-related diversity cannot be interpreted in the same manner as diversity based on organizational abilities, functions, or cognitive orientations (Nkomo, 1995). Other researchers suggest that different forms of teams and organizational complexity often contribute to more disputes, fewer collective stability and more attrition among workers (Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt 2003; Webber & Donahue, 2001). Today's job populations are highly complex, as a result of the worldwide movement towards expanded diversity and the globalization of industries (Yaprak, 2002).

Demographic trend such as ageing, women's and minority participation at work and the increasing amount of young people residing in emerging countries had altered the recent homogeneous job situation (Mor-Barak, 2005). Thus, organizations face the complexities of handling a diverse work environment successfully, taking into account these dynamics and operational patterns. Furthermore, contemporary demographic shifts, the globalization of the economies, greater competitiveness and regulation to encourage inclusion in recruiting practice undeniably hasten diversity within today's work teams (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Furthermore, members of different workgroups demonstrate less loyalty to each other in comparison to their homogeneous groups (Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998), fewer interactions between them (Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993), miss work regularly (Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992), more confrontation encounters (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999), more time decision-making (Hambrick, Cho & Chen, 1996).

Gender Diversity

In organizations, Leonard and Levine (2003) asserted that gender diversity is reinforced and validated by assumptions and biases, which are favorable and thereby improve male status. Some organizations tend to recruit and promote men as opposed to women, as they believe men are more equipped to handle their work and perform well. Moreover, according to Emiki and Eunmi (2009), substantial integration of workers tends to be unsuccessful when gender issues are first understood and controlled. Most companies, thus, tend to recruit males as opposed to women, as males are viewed as having greater results, and their professional abilities, whereas women in these qualities are stereotyped (Leonard & Levine, 2003). Brown (2008) and Carr-Ruffino (2003) asserted that a significant degree of workplace diversity is often unsuccessful because gender problems are not understood first, then addressed in turn. First of all, the goal is to conquer the illusion that women

should not suit men. However, Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Joshi & Jehn, 2002) asserted that it is vital to provide women equal opportunities to improve the performance of employees within an organization (Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Joshi & Jehn, 2002).

Age Diversity

A few studies have found that age-like similarity raises the contact intensity among working team leaders, whereas age difference is sometimes believed to have a detrimental effect on team success (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989; Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992). Most companies are facing a growing array of ages (Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, 2011). Nearly all groups, such as families, colleges, athletic teams, and project activities experience age diversity (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2013). Where age discrimination is exercised, advantages can accrue to both the company and staff. Getting a different age group promotes and builds stronger working partnerships which improve mutual stability for everyone.

For high-level teams, several studies have shown that young managers are more inclined to follow offensive tactics, whereas older managers have needed more knowledge to determine the situation and have taken longer to respond (Hambrick, 1994; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Younger managers are more diversified and firmer internationally than their senior managers

(Tihanyi, Ellstrand, Daily & Dalton, 2000). While evidence suggests that the variation between age diversity and team cohesion is adversely related, some scholars suggest that the range of viewpoints and perceptions that are provided by aged members enhance the consistency of team decision making (Cox & Blake, 1991; Pelled, 1996).

Education Diversity

Depending on the level of education, an individual is more productive (Daniel, 2009). Tracy and David (2011) asserted that companies are increasingly refusing to use workers whose education, experience or training is not considered sufficient. Daniel (2009) noted that different stages and forms of education had varying mobility rates. He argued that those with work experience but without a valid tertiary credential can differ in professions from those educated in that class. Jehn and Bezrukov (2004) indicated that the heterogeneity of expertise, such as education and responsibilities, has a beneficial relation to the performance of the individual working in a group, even if the correlation is affected by the conflict of obligations. Eduard (2010) has found out that

less qualified workers are likely to perceive inferiority, which can have a huge effect on their performance.

Ethnicity Diversity

The development of a multi-cultural workforce in the 1990s has gained traction in the new century (Zgourides, Johnson & Watson, 2002). It has a strong sense of historical roots and also creates a similar sense of destiny. Pitts, Hicklin, Hawes and Melton (2011) agreed that the way diverse groups communicate in their work will benefit from a greater emphasis, as organizations increasingly break along ethnic lines. Opstal (2009) reported that there are potential benefits and drawbacks to the ethnic diversity of the organization. Continual avoidance of ethnic conflict would lead to psychological and mental challenges for managers, leading to undermining business morale, employee productivity, and a drastic decline in corporate results. Kiglai (2006) believed that ethnic conflict affects an organization's consistency, competitiveness and productivity. Dahlin, Weingart and Hinds (2005) claimed that high-level ethnicity can be detrimental because of their social categorization because they can trigger tensions and clashes.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the basic pattern of attitudes, principles and mutual beliefs that form the manner in which the company thinks, tackles and manages conflicts and decides significant and non-significant behaviors (Lok & Crawford, 2004). "Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another" (Hofstede, 2001). It is a system of basic ideas which are formed, exposed or generated by other groups, who consider solutions to solve their problems as they have to respond to external situations and incorporate them in an interior that is well adapted to teach new participants how to act, perceive and appreciate these problems (Shein, 1990). Organization must clearly articulate its fundamental assumptions and take the external and inner stakeholders into account in shaping those assumptions. Culture is deemed a significant factor in all organizations for social stability where the prevailing culture inside the company draws the general context for the actions of the individual workers and establishes specifically appropriate and unlawful limits and therefore has a behavioral value that brings power and harm to the relationship of individuals within the organization.

Theoretical Framework

In order to explain the subject of this study-workplace diversity and organizational culture in the Ogun State Civil Service, this study followed similarity/attraction theory.

Similarity-Attraction Theory

Byrne (1971) proposed Similarity-attraction theory and aimed to describe the formation of a group. This theory is based on the ability of individuals to engage with others who exchange thoughts, desires and experiences. Another explanation for this preference is that having common experience allows one to foresee other people's potential behavior. This theory suggests that individuals prefer to identify with others whom, based on social factors such as age, gender, ethnicity etc, they perceive to be equal. This attraction is intended to encourage cohesion, teamwork and cooperation of team members (Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, 2011). For example, during lunch break, peers of the same age group will be seen conducting joint social activities. Such form of attractions and personal relations helps to encourage cooperation and

Interaction between them as they have similar life and working experiences and as such establish common beliefs and attitudes.

Nonetheless, workers, who are elderly, middle-aged, or younger than a cohesive group may feel that their age is the cause for their lack of inclusion or involvement in such a group and that they then continue to create behaviors that have a prejudicial nature (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2011). Similarity-attraction theory also indicates that individuals tend to create varying beliefs and attitudes about their peers (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2011). Stereotypes and partialities based on gender, race, and age are also the categorization tool for a distinction between the similarities and difference. Nonetheless, those who are either larger, medium-sized, or younger than such a cohesive group may feel that their age is the cause for their lack of inclusion or involvement in such a group and that they then continue to create behaviors that have a prejudicial nature (Healey, Stepnick, & O'Brien, 2018). Therefore, Similarity-attraction theory shows that people tend to view their peers poorly and behaviorally differently. Stereotypes and biases, focusing on the class, ethnicity/race, and age, are often the categorization mechanism for the distinction between similarity and disparity (Harrison, Price, Gavin & Florey, 2002).

Similarity-attraction theory explains how the benefits a set of variables offers for a particular individual can be considerations such as the cultural and educational background. The professional interactions and positive social with other employees can fulfil these requirements (Aswathappa,

2007). Employees can be motivated to perform effectively and efficiently through good interactions with their peers (Koontz & Weihrich, 2010). Similar requirements are conditions under which individuals can interact physically, support and rank social-emotionally. Employees will feel comfortable and therefore improve their enthusiasm for work by becoming a part of this community (Singh, 2015).

This theory explores the need for workers to be embraced by others, to find common consensus on issues that are important to them and to have a certain effect over others they interact within the company on a regular basis (Acquinas, 2006). The similarity-attraction theory can lead to improved interaction between staff, improve social participation and improve a willingness to sustain a group relationship (O'Flynn, Ricciotti, Nicholas, Lau, San Marino & Fisher, 2001).

Empirical Review of the Literature

Subhash and Kundu (2017) examined the relationship between employee perceptions of diversity and perceived organizational performance. It also sought to explore how the understanding of diversity in the Indian IT industry differs among workers from diverse backgrounds, across gender and categories. The key results of the analysis found that females had a large positive significant attitude towards gender diversity activities relative to males. As a consequence, male and female workers vary in their views of supporting gender diversity, so there has been little proof of cooperation for staff within various groups in their views of supporting gender diversity.

Rizwan, Khan, Nadeem and Abbas (2016) study focused on the effect of workforce diversifies towards employee performance in the banking industry of Pakistan. There are various factors that influences employee's performance, however, this research included only the most important variables above all others such as gender, ethnicity, age, and educational background of the employees as a predictor of employee performance. The independent variables were shown to be strongly significant at a 5% level of significance and the regression coefficients were compatible with previous research. The results have indicated that there is a large impact on the performance of workers in the workplace was due to the diversity of employment in the banking sector.

Alghazo and Al Shaiban (2016) study investigated the relationship between workplace diversity (educational, gender, and age background) and employee performance. The study found that age and gender have a direct relationship with employee performance. They indicated that the organization's human resources staff should focus on empowering diversity and include it in

development strategies to be competitive globally and locally because the modern environment demands that each business should develop its workers to be more problem solvers, innovative, and creative.

Selvaraj (2015) study focused on the effect of the workplace diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and age in Singapore organizations. The empirical relationship of gender, ethnicity and age of the employees with the performance was computed using Software Package for Social Science (SPSS). The study revealed that the three factors do not have a statistically significant effect on the performance of workers. It is therefore inferred that Singapore workers neither appreciate the diversity of the workforce as a compliment for them, nor condemn it as a white elephant, and have provided a balanced view of the diversity of the workforce.

Elsaid (2012) evaluated the impact of age, gender, and education background on employee performance in the Egyptian Pharmaceutical industry which is renowned to employ highly diversified workplace. The objective was to analyze the effect of workplace diversity on the performance of employees in pharmaceutical organizations. The research instrument used was a self-administered questionnaire that allowed respondents to take responsibility for reading and answering questions. The result indicated that the gender, education background, and age group have a significant relationship with employee performance.

Oman Khanlen and Ogaga-Oghene (2011) study sought to examine the impact of workplace diversity on organizational effectiveness using a Nigerian bank for the study. Data were obtained both from primary and secondary sources. The main findings from the study showed that gender is negatively related to both performance bonus and employee productivity, but significantly related to employee productivity. Age is positively related to employee productivity, and it is significantly positive in its correlation to performance bonus. Ethnicity is non-significantly and negatively related to both performance bonus and employee productivity.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a quantitative approach. According to Neuman (2000), the quantitative method focuses on the analysis of surveys and populations and relies heavily on empirical and statistical evidence. A sample was drawn from the population to provide insight into the problem under investigation, and the research findings were used to make generalisations.

In order to elicit useful information from the target group, 200 staff members of the Ogun State Civil Service in Abeokuta, Ogun State (both senior and junior) were interviewed on the effect of diversity on organizational culture. The target population for this study comprised staff from ten selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) within the Ogun State Civil Service. The actual number of staff in the Ogun State Civil Service in Abeokuta could not be ascertained at the time due to the unavailability of such data. According to Mouton, a sample size refers to elements selected with the intention of drawing conclusions about the total population from which they are taken. A convenient sample of 200 respondents was selected from the population to achieve the aims and objectives of this study. In selecting the samples, the simple random sampling technique was employed, allowing all members of the total population an equal chance of being selected. Available respondents were included in the study until the sample size of 200 was reached.

Table 1: Sampling Procedures for the Research Study

S/n	Personal Interview/MDAs	Ogun State Civil Service			
		No.	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	Bureau of Service Matters	20	28	10.1	10.1
2	Bureau of Political Affairs & Administration	20	27	9.7	19.8
3	Bureau of Electrical Engineering Services	20	30	10.8	30.6
4	Civil Service Commission	20	30	10.8	41.4
5	Hospitals Management Board	20	26	9.4	50.8
6	Ministry of Special Duties	20	27	9.7	60.5
7	Ministry of Works & Infrastructure	20	30	10.8	71.3
8	Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development	20	28	10.1	81.4
9	Bureau of Establishments & Training	20	27	9.7	91.1
10	Teaching Service Commission	20	24	8.7	100
	Total Distributed	200	277		

Source: Research's survey, 2025

Data for this research were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data collection instrument was the personal interview. The interviews were structured: one set was directed at senior management officers, while the second was aimed at middle-cadre officers. Secondary data included documents such as the organizational structure. At the end of the data

collection exercise, 193 participants responded to the questions, while seven were unable to provide adequate responses.

The research instrument was reviewed and corrected by experts; the suggested revisions were implemented, and the instrument was therefore validated. The data collected were presented and analysed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistical techniques such as percentages and statistical tables were applied. Additionally, inferential analytical techniques were employed: Chi-square (χ^2) was used to examine the effect of diversity on organizational culture, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied to assess its direct impact.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Analyses of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency (93)	Percent (100.0)
Male	93	48.2
Female	100	51.8
Age (Years)		
21 to 30	77	39.9
31 to 40	83	43.0
41 to 50	24	12.4
51 and Above	9	4.7
Religion Affiliation		
Christianity	92	47.7
Muslim	94	48.7
Traditional	5	2.6
Others	2	1.0
Marital Status		
Single	90	46.6
Married	92	47.7
Divorced	3	1.6
Separated	3	1.6
Widowed	5	2.6
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	95	49.2
Igbo	63	32.6
Hausa	30	15.5
Others	5	2.6
Highest Educational Qualification		

OND/NCE	14	7.3
HND/Bachelor's Degree	123	63.7
Master's Degree	56	29.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Pattern of Data Presentation for Each Question or Hypothesis

The table 2 presents the analysis of the demography of the respondents. It shows that 48.2% of respondents were males and the remaining (51.8%) were females. Over 80% of them ranged between the ages of 21 and 40 years. 47.7% of the participants were married. A large portion (92.7%) had their first degrees and a considerable number (56 persons) possessed additional qualifications. Almost half of the respondents are of the Yoruba ethnic group, 32.6% are of the Igbo ethnic group and 15.5% are of the Hausa ethnic group.

Hypothesis one states that there will be a significant relationship between diversity and organizational culture was tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The result indicated a positive and significant relationship between both variables ($r = 0.472$; $P < 0.01$). This implies diversity will equally result to increase in organizational culture and vice versa. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis two states that there will be a significant relationship between diversity and organizational culture was tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The result indicated a positive and significant relationship between both variables ($r = 0.315$; $P < 0.01$). This implies an increase in diversity will equally result to increase in organizational culture and vice versa. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to examine the influence of diversity on organizational culture, with particular attention to its implications for communication, innovation, decision-making, and employee engagement within public institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The analysis was based on data gathered through structured personal interviews with 200 staff members from ten selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in the state government secretariat in Abeokuta. The findings from the descriptive analysis reveal several important insights about how workforce diversity shapes organizational performance and dynamics.

Firstly, the study underscores the moderating role of educational attainment in mitigating the

negative effects of diversity in language, religion, and value systems on organizational performance. Employees with higher educational qualifications appeared more capable of navigating cultural and linguistic complexities, which in turn fostered smoother workplace interactions and better overall outcomes. This aligns with existing literature that suggests education enhances intercultural competence and empathy, both of which are critical for functioning effectively in a diverse team.

Secondly, diversity was found to serve as a significant source of strength by bringing together individuals with varied talents, experiences, and perspectives. These differences enriched problem-solving processes and decision-making capabilities, as teams drew from a broader reservoir of knowledge and cognitive resources. The study observed that collaboration among culturally diverse employees facilitated the breakdown of cultural barriers and promoted mutual understanding, especially when shared goals and team-based activities were emphasised.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted that diverse organizational cultures (DOC) positively influence innovative work behaviours (IWB). The presence of shared beliefs and inclusive practices within such environments contributed to a culture of innovation and collective growth. When employees perceive that they are respected and their unique backgrounds valued, they tend to demonstrate greater commitment and involvement in their work, which directly supports organizational effectiveness.

In addition, diversity within the organization was found to be a driver of creativity and innovation. Teams composed of individuals with diverse viewpoints were more inclined to challenge conventional thinking and explore novel approaches. This diversity of thought was instrumental in fostering an environment where creativity thrived and continuous improvement was possible. The findings support the view that inclusion enhances team performance, not merely by virtue of demographic variety but through the meaningful integration of differing perspectives and experiences.

However, the study also revealed challenges inherent in managing a diverse workforce. Cultural differences, if left unmanaged, can give rise to prejudice, stereotyping, communication gaps, and interpersonal conflict. For instance, language barriers were identified as a significant source of miscommunication, which impeded the effective transfer of knowledge and undermined workplace cohesion. Employees who lacked the skills to engage across cultural lines found it

difficult to collaborate with peers from different backgrounds, often resulting in tensions or inefficiencies.

Moreover, conflicting cultural values and belief systems occasionally led to resistance to organizational change, especially when such change was perceived as threatening to long-held norms or practices. This resistance, unless appropriately addressed, could hinder the implementation of diversity initiatives and negatively affect organizational harmony. The study, therefore, highlights the need for deliberate and structured diversity management strategies that not only celebrate differences but also anticipate and mitigate potential areas of conflict.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has examined the effects of diversity on organizational culture, highlighting the benefits and challenges of diversity in the workplace. The literature review has shown that diversity has a significant impact on organizational culture, influencing communication, decision-making processes, employee satisfaction, and innovation. Effective management of diversity is crucial to harnessing its benefits and minimizing its drawbacks. The paper has also highlighted the importance of inclusive leadership and organizational practices in creating a culture of inclusion and excellence. Organizations must prioritize diversity and inclusion to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce and stay competitive in today's world.

From the foregoing and in line with the methodology of this paper, which relies on comprehensive review of literature, we can safely accept the alternative hypothesis that diversity has a significant effect on organizational culture. This conclusion is supported by findings from body of literature reviewed.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

- i. The Ogun State Civil Service should develop and enforce clear diversity and inclusion policies that promote equal opportunity, respect for cultural differences, and fair representation of all demographic groups in decision-making processes. These policies should be accompanied by implementation frameworks and regular evaluations to ensure compliance and effectiveness.
- ii. To reduce the negative impact of cultural and language differences, civil servants across all levels should participate in structured training programmes aimed at enhancing cultural

competence, communication skills, and emotional intelligence. These trainings will help build mutual respect, reduce stereotypes, and improve collaborative work among diverse teams.

- iii. A specialised unit should be created to oversee the implementation of diversity-related initiatives, manage conflict resolution arising from cultural differences, and monitor the impact of diversity on organizational performance. This unit should also be tasked with promoting inclusive practices and advising departments on best approaches to manage workforce diversity effectively.

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