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Reinventing Faculty Leadership and Management Styles in Kenyan Universities Through Training During the Post COVID-19 Era, A Case of Alupe University, Busia, Kenya

Dr. Sarah Bundotich [1*]   Dr. Hilary Busolo [1,2]   Dr Chebii Kiprono [1,3]

1) School of Education and social Sciences, Alupe University, P.O. Box 845-50400, Busia, Kenya
2) School of Business, Economics and Human Resource Development, Alupe University,   P.O. Box 845-50400, Busia, Kenya.
3) School of Education and social Sciences, Alupe University, P.O. Box 845-50400, Busia, Kenya
*E-mail of the corresponding author: sarahbundotich2017@mail.com

Abstract

The aim of study was to establish whether there was any influence of post COVID-19 pandemic on faculty leadership and management. Faculty leadership and management styles seemed to play a significant role towards the attainment of institutional goals and vision.A case study approach was adopted. The study purposefully sampled five Chairs of Departments (CoDs) from the School of Education and Social Sciences (SESS), at Alupe University. The results indicated that a majority of the CoDs in the school were male (4) compared to their female counterparts (1). Results were a strong positive relationship between leadership and training ($r=0.589$, $\rho<0.01$), while trainings undertaken by the CoDs and their members of department plays a significant role their adjustment in to new norm. ICT compliance is ($r=0.496$, $\rho<0.01$) while Conflict of interest on the blended or hybrid approach to running of daily businesses recorded ($r=0.585$, $\rho<0.01$). The study concluded that the pandemic has impacted negatively on the old leadership and management approaches. That the sample experience unprecedented challenges associated with the new norm way of running their daily tasks mostly because the new norm demands for the new ways of handling matters leadership. Based on these the study made recommendations leadership approaches that embrace innovation, manage change and lead strategically for university attainment of its goals and vision.The study recommends that there is an increasing need for academic leaders (CoDs) who can identify new market opportunities, innovate, manage change and lead strategically for the university to attain its goals and vision in the post pandemic era. That digital knowledge is crucial in the new norm dispensation. As a result, periodical trainings on leadership and management is necessary for CoDs and other leaders with university settings.

Key words: Faculty leadership and management, Hybrid approach compliance

1. Introduction

The leadership concept keeps evolving. For this reason, leadership definitions are innumerable. For this article, leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2021, p. 5). This means leadership include the acts, procedures, engagements or interactions carried out by leaders to achievegoals and the skills employed in these engagements. Contemporary Leadership approaches are critical for navigating through crisis like the most recent global pandemic COVID-19. On the other hand, reinventing means modifying or changing something so much that it appears to be entirely new to achieve the intended purpose goal. In sum, it implies modifying or restyling leadership to suite the post- COVID-19 era.

Education has been valued and understood since time immemorial as a tool that shapes lives both at individual and societal levels socially and economically. Based on this premise, education remains to be a critical field of concern where governments both developed and developing pump many resources globally. Conversely, every learning institution has a leadership and management styles that influence their day-to-day running of activities or events. Furthermore, the leadership and management approaches styles adapted by an organization directly determines its ultimate output. As a result, different institutions of higher learning have employed leadership

and management approach both at the senior and junior management levels. The differences in approaches have informed enormous competition therein. Conversely, transformations may be necessary within the organizational structure, teams, operational processes, marketing plans, product packages so as to enable quality market tailored output. From this standing point, there have been significant changes in the teaching and learning process in the twenty-first century and in particular, the post- COVID-19 era with the aim of improving the education sector globally after the hard struck of the pandemic and the Kenyan government is not an exception. In fact, the Ministry of Education was been leading in terms huge budgetary allocation standing at 473.4 billion shilling compared to other ministries in the financial period 2019/20. (https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001329730/quick-facts-about-the-2019-2020-budget).This big investment in the education sector was shattered when global analysis of COVID-19 (2020) listed learning environments as high-risk areas of the virus transmission. As a result, it necessitated their closure as measures to protect public health. This measure brought into sharp focus not only the critical role that leadership and management have to play in taking charge of their organizations and employees, but also the complexity of that leadership role as well. Against this backdrop, leaders were confronted with mirage of leadership challenges informed by the pre-pandemic leadership styles that needed transformation into the new norm approaches. Conversely, hybrid modes of teaching and learning brought with them conflict of interest among leaders themselves and those under their dockets. Conflict here refers to the competitive or opposing action of incompatibles. This implies an antagonistic state or action. In fact, conflict of interest is an inevitable part of life and occurs naturally during our daily activities due to the wide range of differences among people. On the contrary, the lack of conflict may signal the absence of effective interaction among people. As a result, conflict should not be considered good or bad, rather it may be viewed as a necessity to help build meaningful relationships between people, groups and organizations. The means and how the conflict is handled will determine whether it is productive or devastating. Conflict has a potential to create positive opportunities and advancement towards a common goal, however, conflict can devastate relationships and lead to negative outcomes (Kazimoto, 2013). For conflict to result in a positive outcome, leaders must recognize that conflict not only exists but also a necessity. Understanding conflict allows leaders to manage it more effectively and provide a path to accomplishing positive outcomes. Additionally, conflict management can be an active force that will allow leaders grow healthy relationships within their organizations which can ultimately result in effective productivity. It is part of a leader's toolbox and be deployed when conflict arises within a team or organization based on change.

1.1.Statement of the problem

The emergence of COVID-19 in the Wuhan region of China in late 2019 and its spread to the whole world thus becoming global health crisis caught many leaders unaware. Globally, majority leaders both political and institutional were caught unaware and forced to make unprecedented decisions to mitigate the adverse effects of the disease. Although the virus was a global problem, world leaders showed significant differences in their reactions. In Kenya, for instance, face-to face form of learning and working were suspended in institutions of learning while schools were closed as mitigation measures on the spread of the virus. The new order called for new approaches in running the different sectors of economy education included in order to avoid future crisis like the one brought about by COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is very scares if any information or studies tailored to University leadership known to the researcher yet this is the epitome of learning for any society globally. Thus the knowledge gap that the study aims to address.

1.2 General objective

To reinvent leadership and management styles in the Kenyan universities through trainings during the post pandemic era.

1.3 The objectives of this project are to:

1. Determine the influence of training on faculty leadership and management styles in the Kenyan Universities during post the COVID-19 era
2. Determine the teaching staff Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) compliance.
3. Influence of conflict of interest on hybrid approach to curriculum delivery in post the COVID-19 era among the aged staff in the universities in Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the study

It is aimed that the findings of this study will shed light on the necessary changes on leadership and management styles which will provide for informed policy making in post the COVID-19 period at the universities in Kenya.

2. Literature review

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID -19 a pandemic in March 2020 and devised drastic containment steps and protocols to mitigate its spread as well as minimizing its impact on the social and economic spheres. As a result of this pandemic, almost everything came to a standstill. For instance, the entire education system, both basic and tertiary education institutions, were severely impacted by the lockdowns and the school closures since teaching and learning depend on social contact or face-to-face communication (Sintema, 2020; UNICEF, 2020). Conversely, approximately 1.2 billion children and youth became victims worldwide (David et al., 2020; Sintema, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). With the near resumption of normalcy, Universities had to abandoned traditional face-to-face learning in favor of remote e- learning in ensuring continuity of learning while avoiding human traffic. This transition created a crisis that affected leaders, faculty, staff, students and the university programs at large (Kruse, Hackmann & Lindle, 2020).Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020, lecturers would prepare and attend all the classes assigned to them for teaching during the semester. They were also a common practice to engage the students in learning activities in class throughout the lecture sessions. Among these activities were Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) and quizzes. These are formative forms of assessment whose ultimate purpose is to improving learning outcomes. On the other hand, students were expected to attend all the classes physically and all do the assignments provided by their lecturers. Further, all the students who attended the classes were required to sign the class attendance forms as the lecturer also counter signed the same form.

Much as the University has sufficient quantitative data on class attendance and other professional records, there is little information on the actual activities undertaken by lecturers and students alike during an online class. For instance, there is hardly any information on what actually happens. The changes also demanded the retooling of the teaching university staff to fit the new approach of discharging their mandates. As a result, it has created an impetus towards a new human age by moving the teaching staff, section heads and students, in other words, the whole university, away from known approaches of running their day-to-day activities. How this new age will take shape, relates directly to the decisions of leaders (Dirani, et. al., 2020). Globally, COVID-19 pandemic, posed multiple challenges for leaders university leadership included. Accordingly, leadership is about providing invaluable endorsements, right from leading the employees by encouraging and persuading them and effectively exploiting the resources towards the common goal of the organization. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a sharp reminder that large scale, unpredictable events always bring about profound changes with significant consequences on many levels. In light of lockdown measures taken in many countries across the world to control the spread of the virus, academics were "forced" to adapt and move to online settings all teaching, mentoring, research, and support activities. Academic leaders in higher education had to make decisions and to act quickly on how they were to manage large educational communities while addressing students', teachers' and staff's needs as well as society's needs (Daniela and Alexandra, 2021). These involved designing and implementation of flexible solutions in order to adapt to the new reality. Conversely, the pandemic crisis had a strong and deep impact on higher education at all levels. The complexity of higher education institutions and their multi-faceted mission of teaching, conducting research and contributing to society, managing change in academia during COVID-19 and thereafter became a profound challenge for leaders. In light of the urgent and dramatic shifts and needs which arose as a result of the pandemic, universities leadership have been confronted with various new issues and obligations toward students, staff and academic audiences.

In fact, the pandemic period can be perceived at the restart button that higher education needs. True leadership implies the ability to influence people to achieve a better result for an organization or group even during crisis. Based in this, it might be an opportunity for universities to recalibrate their organizations and to build a more efficient, skilled and adapted set of leaders who are knowledgeable in the post-pandemic era. Fundamentally, the main goal universities should assume is to be ready to increase their community impact in a competitive environment. This is because faculty members expect guidance, hope and accurate information from faculty leadership. As leaders, they must identify emerging problems due to rapidly changing situation. Further, leaders detect and understand underlying threat with limited information, make critical decisions in response to it and coordinate the process (Roberts, 2020).This implies that naturally employees follow their leaders and are influenced by their decisions. This has significantly different consequences in terms discharge of mandate among the employees and the general attainment of organizational goal. As such, faculty leadership was confronted with various new issues and obligations toward students, staff and academic audiences at large.

According to Ramsden (1998) model of university leadership, leaders in higher education have complex and diverse of roles. For instance, there is a leadership dimension related to teaching which postulates that an effective leader should inspire his colleagues to feel excited about their work and make good decisions about the educational process. Secondly, there is leadership related to the research dimension of a university, emphasizing the role of producing relevant knowledge assumed by higher education institutions. The next dimension in the model is related to strategy, vision and networking and focuses on setting a direction and advocating for it. Thus, an effective leader needs to formulate a clear vision on how to achieve institutional goal, which will provide a set of expectations as well as intrinsic motivation for colleagues (the latter being the main driving factor of academics). Additionally, this vision needs to be advocated eloquently to the rest of the university in order to obtain the resources needed to implement it. The model further focuses on other three aspects of leadership: the motivational dimension, recognition and interpersonal skills and notes that a good leader needs to lead both from the front (by example) as well as from the back (by recognition and support).

3.Research methodology

This subsection presents the research design, the sampling procedures as well as the data collection and analysis methods that were used in the study. Methods are the nuts and bolts of a research project. The actions of the researcher and participants in a research project constitute the methods of that project. A case study approach was adopted. This was premised within the broad mixed-methods research design. There are two major advantages for employing multi-methods in the same study. First, different methods can be used for different purposes (Saunders et al., 2003). The second advantage of using multi-methods is that it enables triangulation to take place. Triangulation refers to the use of different data collection methods within one study in order to ensure that the data are reliable. Also underpinning multi-method usage is the enhancement of the credibility of the research findings (Saunders at el., 2003) A Purposive sampling approach was adopted given this was a case study. As a result, the participant were Chair of Departments (CoDs) drawn from School of Education and Social Sciences (SESS), Alupe University (AU). Conversely, the CoDs in the school were a representative of the face of Kenya give that the university management had not only based on the academic qualifications but had also considered ethnic balancing on the appointments of CoDs. This meant that CoDs had been drawn from virtually all the regions across the country. Also, their views were regarded to be more or less representative of those of the entire CODs in the University. Their selection was also deemed appropriate on the premise that they had 'experienced the 'two worlds': of leadership. These involved: leadership before Corona and after the epidemic. They also belonged to the Regular group of lecturers. As a matter of fact, these group of leaders were mainly used to only face- to -face mode of leadership and management before Corona struck.

3.1: Piloting
Apilot study was conducted to test both the instruments, and data collection procedures; and
ascertain whether the whole study would take off. Two CoDs, all from the School of Science and Technology (SST), Alupe University were used in the piloting. Feedback was used to review and adjust the research instruments accordingly. Experts and colleagues opinions were also sort to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

3.2: Sampling

Five CoDs were purposefully sampled all from the School of Education and Social Sciences (SESS), at Alupe University. They were willing to respond to the questionnaires as well as interview questions, were duly informed about the study objectives through the creation of sensitization session that had earlier been conducted in the school. One CoD who had 'accepted' to participate in the study failed to turn up for the Interview during the scheduled interview meeting due to administrative related duties though questions had been sent to them two weeks before the interview. Consequently, one senior member of staff (regular lecturer) from the same department was contacted just before the interview session. This replacement lecturer aptly replaced the CoD. The identities of the Chair of Department, departments as well as the school where they belonged were coded as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

S.no	Chair of Department	Department	School
1.	CoD1	Dpt 1	Sch4
2.	CoD2	Dpt 2	Sch4
3.	CoD3	Dpt 3	Sch4
4.	CoD4	Dpt 4	Sch4
5.	CoD5	Dpt 5	Sch4

3.4: Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

According to Saunders et al. (2003) questionnaire works best with standardized questions where all respondents will interpret the same way. Further, they enable the research to examine and explain relationships between variables, in particular cause and effect relationships. Based on these, a structured questionnaire used to obtain quantitative data. The questionnaire had three parts with the first part seeking demographic information about the participants. The second part was on had nine (9) questions concerning leadership and management conflict related challenges on quality of leadership while the third part had eight (8) questions sorting to solicit information on ICT compliance and periodical trainings for efficiency and effectiveness in the service delivery at the respective departments. The questions, in Part B and C had responses based on Linkert Scale. Likert type of questions were adapted and constructed based on the research variables. These questions related to the two objectives of the study. This was designed to enable meaningful correlation during data analysis.

Focused group interview or group interview and participant observation were use in the generation of qualitative data since this allowed the study to bridge the gap that exists when one relies on published accounts (Saunders et al., 2003). It was on this basis that the researcher interviewed participants so as to unearth, what could not be found in written materials. In addition to monitoring information, published materials also offer a one – sided interpretation or version of information but the voices from CoDs captured all lived experiences. Interviews also provided for re-interpretation of meanings, disappointments or betrayal heard from voices but not seen in text. Also within the same breath, facial expressions as well as gesture added to meaning since it was a face – to – face interview. Interviewing was the researcher's way of probing deeply into the minds of informants. The interview served to help the informant describe experiences in their own words (Hanley-Maxwell, Al Hano, & Skivington, 2007; Coyle, 2006)

4.Data presentation analysis and interpretations

This chapter reports the results of data analysis and their interpretation on reinventing leadership and management styles in Kenyan universities through training during the post pandemic era. The data was collected from Alupe University, Busia county, Kenya. The first step included data cleaning. This was crucial in making sure high-quality data was attained. For quantitative data, questionnaire data was coded and entered into the computer using excel spreadsheet. The data was then exported to (SPSS version 23) statistical software. All statistics were then done by invoking the relevant commands at the prompt. Descriptive statistics such minimum, maximum, means, frequencies and standard deviations were computed for presenting and analyzing data. Descriptive statistics allowed for the description of data in numerical terms. The analysis of the data collected represents the results of this study based on the objectives. First presentation is the demographic profile of respondents. This information was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages, means, and standard deviations. Further, inferential statistics such as Pearson moment correlation. The statics of mean, standard deviation and Pearson- mark correlation were computed. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used to evaluate the significance of the mean scores obtained. The Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compute these measures.

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic profile of the respondents (CoDs) included characteristics such as their gender referring to whether they are male or female, name of department and number of lecturers in the department, referring to whether they were regular or part time lecturers as well as their approximate age brackets This information was

analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages, means, and standard deviations. The demographic description on gender of all the participants included in this study is presented in table 2.

Table 2. CoDs Demographic Information on Gender

		Sex Type		
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	cumulative Percent
MALE	4	80.0	80.0	80.0
FEMALE	1	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	5	100.0	100.0	

Source: **Survey Data (2023)**

The results indicated that a majority of the CoDs in the school were male (4) compared to their female counterparts (1). The findings further indicated that males had a higher percentage of 80% compared to their females counterparts of 20% respondents. As for male CoDs, this could be attributed to the fact that from a total of 16 CoDs in Alupe Universty, only 4 are female (Alupe University Human Resource Records, 2022) consulted. Further, 5 out of 5 CoDs questionnaires were filled and returned translating to 100% response rate. This high response rates can be attributed to respondent's willingness to support the study following the sensitization as well as solving challenges surrounding leadership and management during this post COVID-19 era in Kenyan Universities. It can further be attributed to the structured nature of the questionnaire hence easy to fill in by simply ticking the preferred options by the respondents. Demographic information on approximate age brackets of the CoDs in terms of years in the faculty is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Information on approximate age brackets

Approx Years	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
40-49	2	40.0	40.0	40.0
50-59	2	40.0	20.0	60.0
60- 69	1	20.0		100.0
70 and above	0	.0		
Total	5	100.0		

Source: Survey Data (2023)

Investigation into the age brackets of the CODs indicate that a higher percentage 80% of the Chair of Departments were between 40-59 years of age. Those with 60-69 years 20% percent. This implies that a majority of the CoDs were not very conversant with the new norm or hybrid approach to work based on their age factor, they were not digital compliant. It also implies that with the emergence of the pandemic hence the disruption of the old style of leadership and management as well as teaching was a challenge to them. As a matter of fact, they had to shift from the known face-to- face approach of leadership and management to purely digital or remote to current blended or hybrid approach. Embracing of the new norm has been quite challenging demanding periodical ICT trainings and sensitizations that the University is offering to the teaching staff in order to bring them up to speed with ICT compliance thus well equipped with the knowledge and skills required on the same. As such, ICT compliance is crucial given that this may be the way of doing things going forward.

Qualitative data was obtained from the interview session. Eight open ended questions, eachrelating to the study's objectives were asked to the participants during the Google Meet interview session. The narrative approach analysis was used to analyze and present the study findings for from the qualitative data. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), different sub-fields have adopted various types of narrative research. The quotations presented here were specifically selected to illustrate themes that emerged from the qualitative data and these themes were, in turn, identified on the basis of their recurrence in the data. All CoDs are referred to using their individual 'C' identifiers (e.g.C2).

> C3: With the emergence and disturbance of the pandemic globally, things that really were difficult for us to cope up with daily work routines. For instance, we were supposed to hold departmental and attend Senate meetings online. Initially a majority of us were incapable because

of lack of knowhow and internet connectivity challenges. These difficulties made some of our colleagues not to hold their routine departmental and Senate meetings making our execution of leadership and management tasks a hurdle for a majority for us. In fact, management routines were difficult to execute. There were numerous complaints across board concerning the new way of doing things, digital approach, from colleagues.

These findings suggests why CoDs had to request the Senior Management for ICT trainings for themselves as well as members of their departments. Probably with such trainings and retooling the teaching staff would have known how to cope up with changes that come along with the new norm. As a result Organizations such as Kenya Education Network (KENET), Open, Distance and E-Learning (ODEL) and Common Wealth of Learning (COL) came in to offer ICT trainings and retooling. Table 4 is descriptive of training, ICT compliance and conflict of Interest.

Table 4. Descriptive of training, ICT Compliance and Conflict of Interest

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Training Influence	2.53	4.62	3.6776	.46962	-.432	.202	.386	.401
ICT Compliance	3.06	4.38	3.7338	.38884	-.035	.202	-1.213	.401
Conflict of interest	2.63	4.64	3.6443	.57518	-.058	.202	-.267	.401
N=5								

Source: Survey Data (2023)

The means and standard deviations for the variables were computed as shown in table 4.3 above. The mean score of Training influence, ICT compliance and Conflict of interest on hybrid approach were established as 3.67, 3.73 and 3.64 and the standard deviation of 0.46, 0.38 and 0.57 respectively. Given that the standard deviations are small compared to mean values, it is true that the computed means highly represent the observed data. In effect, the calculated averages are a good replica of reality (Field, 2006; Saunders *et al.,* 2007).

Table 5. Correlations between factors influencing faculty leadership and management styles

		1	2	3	4
Reinventing Faculty Leadership and Management Styles	Pearson Correlation	1			
Training	Pearson Correlation	.589**	1		
ICT Compliance	Pearson Correlation	.496**	.598**	1	
Conflict of interest	Pearson Correlation	.585**	.584**	.631**	1

Source: Survey Data (2023)

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was tested in order to check the actual strength of the relationship between variables. Correlation Analysis indicates a significant relationship between Training, ICT compliance and Conflict of interest among CoDs and the The results indicated that Training and ICT compliance were positively related to Faculty leadership and Management. Correlation results presented in Table above indicate that Training, ICT compliance and Conflict of interest among CoDs influence have a substantive and significant relationship on Faculty leadership and Management. as stated. Reinventing of leadership and management styles exhibited a significantly positive relationship with training influence (r=0.589, ρ<0.01), Therefore, it can be concluded that the numerous trainings undertaken by the CoDs and their members of department plays a significant role in his or her adjustment in to new norm. ICT compliance (r=0.496, ρ<0.01). It is concluded that ICT compliance influence the CoDs ability to execute their daily mandate/ routines during the new era. Conflict of interest on the blended or hybrid approach to running of daily businesses recorded (r=0.585, ρ<0.01), therefore, the Conflict of interest among the CoDs on the blended or hybrid approach is a major determinant in adjusting and embracing the new norm of doing things. It can be concluded that the variables interacted among themselves exhibiting above moderate correlation relationship. These results indicated a positive correlation among interacting variables.

5.Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study indicated a strong positive significance relationship between Training, ICT compliance and Conflict of interest among CoDs and the Reinventing of leadership and management styles. Therefore, the study concludes that University there is hardly any training for CoDs upon appointment. This means that there is need for the University Senior Management to organize induction and trainings for CoDs upon appointment. Further, periodical retooling is necessary in order to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness given the dynamic nature of leadership. In fact, today's institutions of higher education operate within a rapidly changing competitive global environment that is increasingly more complicated and complex. These changing competitive conditions require administrators with the capacity to think outside the box and formulate new organizational strategies with the growth of their institutions in mind. In addition, more importantly, develop and embrace leadership culture necessary to execute the new business strategies that are client friendly. The proposed self-funding approach to Universities by the Kenyan government, calls for totally business minded approaches to leadership and management styles. This will attract more student to universities as well as make the environment conducive for both teaching staff and the students. Concerning ICT compliance, this calls for investment on the periodical workshops and seminars for the CoD and the teaching staff at large in order to increase their efficiency and productivity within the university settings. This is necessitated by the rapid globally shift to digitalization. Therefore, digital knowledge and skills are very crucial during the new norm era. With digital knowledge and skills, the negative attitude among some CoDs and members of the department will definitely be outdated. For University growth, customer attraction and retention through satisfaction must be attained. Therefore, the an increasing need for academic leaders (CoDs) who can identify new market opportunities, innovate, manage change and lead strategically.

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