

## Role of Intergenerational-interpersonal Communication in the Performance of Red Crescent Society Staff in Tehran Province

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Date of submission: 7 Jul. 2020 Date of acceptance: 17 May. 2021

### Original Article

#### Abstract

**INTRODUCTION:** The most important, useful, and cost-effective way to attain organizational goals is the improvement of intergenerational-interpersonal communication among different generations of employees in the workplace. Therefore, the present study aimed to assess the role of intergenerational-interpersonal communication in the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran (age range of 20-40 years) in 2019.

**METHODS:** This applied research was conducted based on a descriptive-survey design. The statistical population of this study includes all employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province (n=160). The participants were selected via the census method. A researcher-made questionnaire was employed to collect data, and SPSS software (version 24) was used for data analysis.

**FINDINGS:** Based on the results, the variables and dimensions of intergenerational-interpersonal communication were significantly and strongly correlated with the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province. In other words, the employees' performance will be enhanced with an improvement in the dimensions of intergenerational-interpersonal communication.

**CONCLUSION:** As evidenced by the obtained results, effective intergenerational-interpersonal communication skills training should be considered one of the goals of stakeholders. Moreover, groupism and relationship solidarity are among the effective factors influencing employee performance. This solidarity can be significantly improved by the establishment of intimate relationships, membership in groups, interaction, face-to-face communication, social status, appropriate expectations, necessary trust, participation in decision-making, and managers' acceptance of individual differences.

**Keywords:** Intergenerational-interpersonal Communication; Staff Performance; Red Crescent Society.

**How to cite this article:** Talaei Shams S, Gholamzadeh Alam K, Sharepour M, Mahdavi L. **Role of Intergenerational-interpersonal Communication in the Performance of Red Crescent Society Staff in Tehran Province.** *Sci J Rescue Relief* 2021; 13(2): 95-104.

#### Introduction

Intergenerational-interpersonal communication is crucial for individuals both in personal life and work performance, especially as a member of an organization. Intergenerational communication refers to interactions involving individuals who are from different age cohorts or age groups (1,2). These relationships can be considered at individual and organizational levels. In general, it applies to various aspects of individual and organizational relationships among

people from one generation, separating them from other generations (3).

The employees in organizations need intergenerational and interpersonal communication to flourish and improve the quality of their organizational relationships (4). Intergenerational-interpersonal communication is a key to the survival of social life. It seems that the development of effective communication skills is the secret weapon behind the success of

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employees in an organization and a fundamental solution to deal with organizational problems (5).

The author of this article, as a researcher and employee of the Red Crescent Society, believes that many employees in the relevant organization are presented with serious problems in intergenerational-interpersonal communication (6,7). It has been observed that they lack essential interpersonal communication skills or do not make the right decision and measures in this regard. Therefore, the present study aimed to assess the role of intergenerational-interpersonal communication in the performance of Red Crescent Society staff. It seems that intergenerational-interpersonal communication is an effective factor in the performance of employees.

Nicholas Pearce (2014) also believes that “generational diversity should be regarded as an asset for any organization and not a liability. If this diversity is not strengthened, it can turn into chaos and disorder”(2). The workforce is currently more age-diverse than ever before. This article examined various generations and their differences to determine diversities in employees from different decades and generations in terms of interpersonal skills and performance in the organization (7,8).

The development of intergenerational-interpersonal communication among different generations of employees is an effective way to strengthen their performance. Moreover, the most important, useful, and cost-effective way to achieve ideal organizational goals is the improvement of intergenerational-interpersonal communication among different generations of employees in the workplace. Relationship solidarity is one of the effective factors influencing employee performance. This solidarity can be significantly improved by the establishment of intimate relationships, membership in companies, interaction, face-to-face communication, social status, appropriate expectations, necessary trust, participation in decision-making, which is one of the effective factors in groupism and relationships solidarity according to existing theories (9,10,11).

Therefore, groupism and relationship solidarity should be encouraged to improve employee performance; moreover, employees should be resilient in their activities, ideas, thoughts, and feelings to strengthen flexibility. They should

accept differences and seek compatibility, agreement, cooperation, collaboration, and humor (12). The volunteer-based nature of the Red Crescent Society highlights the necessity of intergenerational-individual communication in this organization (13-15).

Moreover, the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships to promote and develop this social capital will be one of the most important strategies adopted by the Red Crescent Society (16). In light of the aforementioned issues, the present study strived to address the following question: Does intergenerational-interpersonal communication play a role in the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province?

## Methods

This applied research was conducted based on a descriptive-survey design. The performance of the Red Crescent Society staff was considered the dependent variable which was assessed using the standard job performance questionnaire developed by Patterson (1970). On the other hand, the independent variable of research was intergenerational-interpersonal communication. It was examined in the form of nine components, including flexibility; having a positive attitude towards oneself and others; listening; groupism; rooting out rumors; understanding the needs, talents, and problems of others, and trying to solve them; loving others; accepting individual differences; and creating a suitable mental health environment.

The statistical population was the Red Crescent Society staff of Tehran province. Based on the statistics reported by the administrative affairs of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran, a total of 160 employees are officially working there. Therefore, the complete census method was used (it should be noted that out of 160 questionnaires received by the researcher, 154 copies were usable). Data collection tools of the present study included library studies and questionnaires. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed using the Lawshe method as illustrated in Table 1.

$$0/62 > \frac{\frac{(ne-N)}{2}}{N} \quad \text{CVR} = \frac{4}{5} = \frac{9-\frac{10}{2}}{\frac{10}{2}}$$

1) Lawshe formula

**Table 1.** Result of Lawshe content validity

Number of experts	Minimum amount of validity
5	0.99
6	0.99
7	0.99
8	0.85
9	0.78
10	0.62
15	0.49
20	0.42
25	0.37
30	0.33
40	0.29

In the present study, to test the validity of the questionnaire, the opinions of supervisors, consultants, and other professors in the field of communication were firstly used to arrive at a

consensus on the usefulness of the questionnaire items. After the approval of the professors, the content validity ratio of the questionnaire was obtained at 0.8. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed since the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of the scale was greater than 0.62. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used (Table 2).

Data analysis was performed in SPSS software (version 24). Percentage, frequency distribution, and tables were used for descriptive statistics. The measures of central tendency and dispersion, as well as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical tests (data normality), were employed to analyze the collected data. In addition, the Pearson correlation test was used to assess the relationship among research variables.

**Table 2.** Reliability of the questions related to the studied constructs

Variables	Number of items	Alpha
Flexibility	5	0.79
Have a positive attitude towards yourself and others	6	0.85
Groupism	5	0.82
Eradication of rumors	5	0.86
Understanding the needs, talents, and problems of others and striving to solve them	5	0.84
Loving others	5	0.77
Acceptance of individual differences	5	0.88
Creating a suitable mental health environment	5	0.91
		0.92

### Findings

In terms of gender, the majority of participants (73.4%) were male. Regarding marital status, 110 (71.4%) cases were married, 41 (26.6%) subjects were single, and 2 cases were divorced. In terms of age group, the highest frequency was related to the age group of 35-39 years, while the age group of 20-24 years had the lowest frequency. Regarding education, they hold Ph.D. (n=108), master's degree and above (n=42), and associate degree (n=4). In terms of work experience, they had been working for 10- 15 years (n=77), 5-10 years (n=46), less than 5 years (n=19), and more than 15 years (n=12). Table 3 displays some demographic characteristics of participants.

As illustrated in Table 4, the level of significance is 0.000 for the relationship between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society staff of Tehran

province and intergenerational-interpersonal communication. This table demonstrates the relationship between the performance of employees of the 50th to 70th generation of the Red Crescent Society staff of Tehran province and intergenerational-interpersonal communication (0.681 \*\*), and this relationship is significant at the level of 99%.

The correlation value is positive, pointing to a direct positive relationship between the performance of 50s-70s generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and intergenerational-interpersonal communication. In other words, the results of this hypothesis test suggested that intergenerational-interpersonal communication can affect and improve the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province

In addition, as depicted in Table 4, the level of significance is less than 0.05 for the relationship

**Table 3.** Some characteristics of the respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	41	26.6
	Male	113	73.4
Marital status	Single	41	26.6
	Married	110	71.4
	Divorced	2	1.3
	No response	1	0.6
Age group	20-24	18	11.7
	25-29	24	15.6
	30-34	42	27.3
	35-39	48	31.2
	40 $\geq$	22	14.2
Education level	Associates 'degree	4	2.6
	Bachelor's degree	108	70.1
	Master's degree and higher	42	27.3
Work experience	Less than 5 years	19	12.3
	5-10 years	46	29.9
	10-15 years	77	50.0
	15 $\geq$ years	12	7.8

**Table 4.** Results of the relationship between employee performance and variables of intergenerational communication

	n	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Employee performance and flexibility	154	0.144**	0.009
Employee performance and having a positive attitude towards yourself and others	154	0.293**	0.000
Employee performance and listening skill	154	0.199**	0.003
Employee performance and groupism	154	0.391**	0.000
Employee performance and rooting out rumors	154	0.244**	0.000
Employee performance and understanding the needs, talents, and problems of others and trying to solve them	154	0.326**	0.000
Employee performance and loving others	154	0.134**	0.019
Employee performance and acceptance of individual differences	154	0.362**	0.000
Employee performance and creating a suitable environment for mental health	154	0.473**	0.000
Employee performance and intergenerational-interpersonal communication	154	0.681**	0.000

between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and all independent variables. Moreover, there is a direct positive relationship between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and all independent variables.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The test of the main hypothesis of the present

study indicated that the level of significance is 0.000 for the relationship between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and intergenerational-interpersonal communication. Moreover, it pointed to the relationship between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and interpersonal-interpersonal communication (0.681\*\*), and this relationship was significant at

the level of 99%.

Since the desired quantity has a positive correlation, it indicates a direct positive relationship between the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province and intergenerational-interpersonal communication. In other words, employee performance will improve with the promotion of intergenerational-interpersonal communication among them. According to the aforementioned issues, it can be stated that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, the statistical sample can be generalized to the community. In other words, the test results of this hypothesis showed that intergenerational-interpersonal communication can affect and improve the performance of 50s-70s-generation employees of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province. The test results of this hypothesis are in line with the studies conducted by Moradi et al. (2015), Gharayi Moghadam et al. (2017), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Nekouyi Moghaddam et al. (2017), Hassanpour Chenarestan Sofla et al. (2016) et al. (2015), Rouhani Maryan (2015), Aghili-Nejad et al. (2015), Nouchian (2015), Shokati et al. (2015), Soltani et al. (2015), Alikhani (2015), Abedini et al. (2015), Gio et al. (2018), James (2016), and Rosto et al. (2015). (3,8,9,14)

All of the abovementioned researchers believe that there is a significant negative relationship between communication skills and employee burnout, and communication skills can predict employee burnout (17,18,19). The results of their studies also demonstrated that employee burnout is significantly correlated with listening, verbal persuasion, and feedback. Moreover, they are of the belief that job performance as a dependent variable has a significant relationship with public relations, speaking, listening, interpretation and clarification, questioning, encouragement, and feedback skills. Finally, they believe that communication is effective when the communicator achieved his/her intended goal, which could be the sheer pleasure of communication or other functional purposes (20,21).

They further added that all organizations depend on communication processes, and the accomplishment of managerial tasks, such as setting and implementing goals, planning, organizing human and non-human resources,

selecting training, and developing employees, as well as leading, motivating, creating a positive atmosphere, and evaluating individuals and organizations would be impossible without effective communication (22-25).

Damghanian et al. (2017) believe that the dimensions of interpersonal and interpersonal communication competence affect each other at different levels. Moreover, changes in the quality of each dimension bring about alterations in the quality of dimensions in the same level and subsequent levels, and in turn, the quality of organizational communications. In brief, all previous studies emphasized that the job performance of employees will be enhanced with an improvement in communication skills. Therefore, effective communication increases the productivity of human resources. In interpreting the main hypothesis, we can refer to the viewpoints put forward by Rousseau et al. (2012) and Hargi et al. (2014).

According to Rousseau et al. (2012), communication is effective when the communicator achieves his/her desired goal, which can be the sheer pleasure of communication or other functional purposes. They further added that all organizations depend on communication processes, and the accomplishment of managerial tasks, such as setting and implementing goals, planning, organizing human and non-human resources, selecting training, and developing employees, as well as leading, motivating, creating a positive atmosphere, and evaluating individuals and organizations would be impossible without effective communication (26-28).

According to Hargi et al. (2014), in general, people communicate with each other at four interconnected levels: interpersonal, intrapersonal, network/organizational, and social. According to them, the level of communication at the interpersonal level refers to the communication and interaction between two people. According to Bangston and Merrill's theory, the dimensions of solidarity and shared intergenerational responsibility lie in emotional attachment and intergenerational communication. Therefore, it can be concluded that satisfactory results are attainable if the members of the organization are emotionally attached to each other according to family and kinship relationships. (29-31)

The test results of the hypothesis "flexibility is



related to employee performance" are in agreement with the findings of the studies performed by Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017) and Abedini et al. (2011) who reported that job performance will be enhanced with increased levels of communication flexibility. According to Kemper's theory of "Theoretical framework of organizational performance", it can be concluded that people who are more flexible in their social relationships and have a higher social status will feel more satisfied.

Moreover, they show deeper affection for the donors, and as a result, there will be a stronger relationship between the donor and the recipient. This will strengthen the relationships and better performance of the members. The test results of the hypothesis "The adoption of a positive attitude towards self and others is associated with employee performance" are in accordance with the studies by Moradi et al. (2015), Gharayi Moghadam et al. (2016), and Abedini et al. (2011). Based on the stated studies, employees can achieve effective productivity and organizational goals in the light of effective communication networks and improvement of human skills, including the adoption of a positive attitude towards themselves and others (32,33).

The test results of the hypothesis "Employees' listening skill is associated with their performance" are in line with the studies by Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Abedini et al. (2011), and Seddighi Arfei et al. (2015). According to Kyungo (2016), in an organization, the employees who are good at listening to colleagues, communicate well with others, build teams, expand their communication networks, exert influence, and establish meaningful relationships with others are considered socially competent and will outperform others. From the author's point of view, employees can create a sense of importance by listening to each other. This, in turn, motivates them to perform better, work harder, and demonstrate higher levels of commitment. Listening to each other reduces the psychological pressure of co-workers and employees and makes them feel valued in the workplace. Therefore, the resultant safe and comfortable workplace improves employee performance and organizational commitment. (34,35).

The test results of the hypothesis "groupism is related to employee performance" are in line with

the studies conducted by Moradi et al. (2015), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Hassanpour Chenarestan Sofla et al. (2016), Abedini et al., and Zinsirkian et al. (2015). They showed that the dependent variable of employee organizational commitment is significantly correlated with such independent variables as employee participation in incentive measures and welfare, promotion and appointment, and participatory decision-making. Moreover, they pointed to the positive linear relationship of teamwork and organizational commitment with employees' organizational performance scores.

The socialization hypothesis implies the existence of long-term generational effects. According to Turner, humans at their core as primates are individualists who rebel against organizational constraints. According to Turner's theory, humans engage in face-to-face interaction to meet their needs and seek their approval in this interaction. This face-to-face interaction which is achieved by positive emotions of the members to each other makes them inclined to be part of a group. Therefore, they will experience relationships solidarity which is a prerequisite for the success of the Red Crescent organization.

Therefore, it can be stated that individuals' inclination to be part of a group and the creation of positive emotions among members of the Red Crescent Society can help to strengthen their relationships and improve their performance. According to Durkheim's theory, deviant behavior is less common in populations with a high degree of agreement. It can be understood that the members of the Red Crescent Society will achieve more success when they have higher levels of consensus on the decisions made in the organization. (21,25)

The test results of the hypothesis "Rooting out rumors is related to employee performance" were in agreement with the studies performed by Rajabi, Farjad et al. (2017), and Abedini et al. (2011). They were of the opinion that rumors arise and spread in the organization in the absence of a friendly relationship between employees and the organization. The authoritarian environment of the organization affects the level of intraorganizational trust.

According to Luhmann, the function of trust in the social system is the reduction of social uncertainty and improvement of behavior predictability. Trust is actually a kind of social

mechanism in which people's expectations, actions, and behaviors are regulated and guided. According to Luhmann's theory, the function of trust should be examined within the social system and compared with the function of law in society. Moreover, trust increases the predictability of behaviors, where the expectations, actions, and behaviors of individuals are regulated and guided. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that trust among the members can define the behaviors and predict the subsequent behaviors of individuals (17,23).

The test results of the hypothesis "The recognition of the needs, talents, and problems of others and trying to solve them are related to employee performance" are in agreement with the studies by Moradi et al. (2015), Damghanian et al. (2017), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Abedini and et al. (2011), and Zinsirkian et al. (2015). They emphasized that organizations can pave the way for better employee performance and higher productivity by considering employees' personality traits and providing an environment in which people feel more committed to the organization (21-25)

Based on the "theory of social solidarity" proposed by Durkheim, weak social ties, in turn, undermine social trust. Durkheim offered the strengthening of emotional interpersonal bonds among the members of social groups as a solution. She believes that the existence of professional groups, which put people in a personal and close relationship with others, can lay the foundation for strengthening social ties, and as a result, mutual trust. Therefore, an increase in organic solidarity in modern societies will reinforce the tendency to volunteer activities of the Red Crescent Society. At the same time, the Red Crescent society itself can be regarded as a means to achieve this solidarity in modern societies. On the other hand, strengthening the necessary foundations to increase social cohesion will lead to the development of the Red Crescent Society and the reduction of social harms.(12,15,16)

The test results of the hypothesis "Loving others is associated with employee performance" are consistent with the studies by Gharayi Moghadam et al. (2017), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), and Abedini et al. (2011). All of these researchers believed that the dominance of appropriate and friendly human relationships in the workplace provides the ground for motivation,

growth, and development. These relationships also strengthen the desire to live and work, and finally, leads to responsibility, participation, and fruitful activity of individuals in the performance of assigned tasks and achievement of organizational goals.

In fact, human relations have assumed particular importance as social capital, along with natural, technological, and human capitals. According to Vidyawati (2016), in today's complicated world, people should learn the communication skills required for success in this century. They assigned the communication skills required in the current century to two categories, namely intrapersonal and interpersonal.

According to Carpenter (1993), interpersonal communication competence includes two dimensions of relationship initiation and promotion. Initiation refers to the beginning, control, and demand for a relationship, encompassing those competencies that are associated with such values as courage, social interest, loving others, and extraversion. On the other hand, promotion refers to the maintenance and development of relationships that lead to satisfaction and more stable relationships. It is a type of investment in relationships, providing the needs of the other party and including intimacy, trust, and sensitivity in interpersonal relationships, altruism, and attention to others' viewpoints. (16,17).

The test results of the hypothesis "Acceptance of individual differences is related to employee performance" are in line with the studies by Moradi et al. (2015), Nekouei Moghadam et al. (2017), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Abedini et al. (2011), and Sullivan (2015). The findings of the aforementioned studies showed that the efficiency of people in their jobs, their position in the workplace, and adaptation of people in all life situations is related to their personality traits. The recognition of differences in attitudes, perceptions, mental and physical abilities, as well as personality traits, will help to understand the different levels of employee performance. It is due to the fact that neglect of individual differences and personality of employees presents managers with serious problems in coordinating the activities of individuals under their supervision. (21,22)

The test results of the hypothesis "The provision of a suitable mental health environment is related to employee performance" are in line

with the studies conducted by Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Aghili Nejad et al. (2015), and Abedini et al. (2011). The referred studies stated that committed relief workers and those with neurotic personalities had the highest and lowest level of satisfaction with their jobs, respectively. In this study, there was a significant relationship between the personality traits of relief workers and their job satisfaction.

Organizations can pave the way for better employee performance and higher productivity by considering employees' personality traits and providing an environment in which people feel more committed to the organization. According to Luhmann's theory, the function of trust should be examined within the social system and compared with the function of law in society. Moreover, trust increases the predictability of behaviors, where the expectations, actions, and behaviors of individuals are regulated and guided. Based on this theory, it can be concluded that trust among the members can define the behaviors and predict the subsequent behaviors of individuals. The employees will feel mentally secure in an environment of trust which promotes their mental health and improves their organizational performance. (16,17,19)

The test results of the main hypothesis "Intergenerational-interpersonal communication is associated with employee performance" are in line with the studies conducted by Moradi et al. (2015), Gharayi Moghadam et al. (2017), Rajabi Farjad et al. (2017), Nekouyi Moghaddam et al. (2017), Hassanpour Chenarestan Sofla et al. (2016) et al. (2015), Rouhani Maryan (2015), Aghili-Nejad et al. (2015), Nouchian (2015), Shokati et al. (2015), Soltani et al. (2015), Alikhani (2015), Abedini et al. (1390), Gio et al. (2018), James (2016) and Rosto et al. (2015).

All of the abovementioned researchers believe that there is a significant negative relationship between communication skills and employee burnout, and communication skills can predict employee burnout. The results of their studies also showed that employee burnout is significantly correlated with listening, verbal persuasion, and feedback. Moreover, they are of the belief that job performance as a dependent variable has a significant relationship with public relations, speaking, listening, interpretation and clarification, questioning, encouragement, and feedback skills.

Finally, they believe that communication is effective when the communicator achieved his/her intended goal, which could be the pleasure of communication or other functional purposes. They further added that all organizations depend on communication processes, and the accomplishment of managerial tasks, such as setting and implementing goals, planning, organizing human and non-human resources, selecting training, and developing employees, as well as leading, motivating, creating a positive atmosphere, and evaluating individuals and organizations would be impossible without effective communication.

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intergenerational communication. Therefore, it can be concluded that satisfactory results are attainable if the members of the organization are emotionally attached to each other according to family and kinship relationships.

According to the results of the present study on the role of intergenerational-interpersonal communication in the performance of employees of different generations of the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province, the training of effective intergenerational-interpersonal communication skills should be one of the goals of stakeholders. Relationship solidarity is one of the effective factors in the performance of staff. This cohesion can be significantly improved by the establishment of intimate relationships, membership in companies, interaction, face-to-face communication, social status, appropriate expectations, necessary trust, and participation in decision-making.

Moreover, employees should be resilient in their activities, ideas, thoughts, and feelings to strengthen flexibility. They should accept differences and seek compatibility, agreement, cooperation, collaboration, and humor. To accept individual differences, managers' full recognition of their employees' personality traits paves the way for better guidance and management of their employees. Since the recognition and assessment of personality traits is of utmost importance in the attainment of numerous goals, such as selection, guidance, and leadership.

Moreover, the efficiency of people in their jobs, their position in the workplace, and adaptation of people in all life situations are related to their personality traits. The recognition of differences in attitudes, perceptions, mental and physical abilities, as well as personality traits, will help to understand the different levels of employee performance. It is due to the fact that neglect of individual differences and personality of employees presents managers with serious problems in coordinating the activities of individuals under their supervision.

### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their gratitude to all those who contributed to the conduction of this research project.

### Conflict of Interests

Authors declared no conflict of interests

regarding the publication of the present study.

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