

THE EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT ON JOB SATISFACTION: REGULATORY ROLE OF GENERATIONS X AND Y

Pınar Erdoğan*¹, İlknur Çevik Tekin²

1. Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University, Karaman, Turkey

2. Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya, Turkey

Correspondence: pinarayturk@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to determine the moderator role of generation gap in the effect of psychological empowerment perception on job satisfaction. The population (N: 200) and sample (n=136) of the study consists of health professionals working in the Karaman Provincial Health Directorate, Türkiye. In the research, data were collected with a questionnaire technique and the hypotheses were tested through the SPSS Macro Process program. The significance of the regulatory role (statistically) was calculated by the bootstrap test. As a result of the analyzes made, it was found that the moderator effect of psychological empowerment perception on job satisfaction differed between the X and Y generations.

While the effect of the psychological empowerment perceptions of the X Generation employees on job satisfaction did not show a statistically significant difference, this effect was found to be statistically significant in the Y Generation employees. It has been found that generations have a moderator effect on the effect of psychological empowerment perceptions of health workers on job satisfaction (X and Y).

KEYWORDS

job satisfaction, psychological empowerment, generation X, generation Y

INTRODUCTION

Today, organizations need more flexible organizational structures where employees can participate in decision-making instead of traditional, hierarchical organizational structures. As a result of the ever-changing environmental conditions, both the change in organizational structures and the increasing importance of quickly responding to customer needs, it has become imperative to empower employees in organizations. Empowerment is a dynamic management concept that meets the expectations of employees and the needs of customers. While what

managers need to do to have empowered employees is related to the structural empowerment approach, how managers' empowerment activities are perceived by the employees is related to the psychological empowerment approach.

According to Halse and Mallinson [1] the personality and characters of generations are formed as a result of homogeneous experiences and sharing that people in the same generation have in many common denominators, such as socio-economic conditions. The name of the generations, that change in a period of approximately 25-

30 years, depends on what the individuals who are the members of the generation in question are after [2, p.68] According to the definition obtained from the study of Williams and Page [3, p.201] "generation or generation is a group of people who were born at the same time in general, shared the social, political, historical and economic conditions of that period, that is, faced similar problems and assumed similar responsibilities" [4, p. 20] Generational classification was made by researchers in different ways based on different years. In this study, the classification made by Kerse [5] was used. Kerse classified those born between 1965-1980 as Generation X, and those born between 1981-2000 as Generation Y.

In this study, psychological empowerment, which is the cognitive dimension of empowerment, will be discussed. After the outcome of a literature review on psychological empowerment, information will be given on job satisfaction, which is of great importance for today's employees. Then, in line with the purpose of the study, these concepts will be discussed in terms of generations. Finally, the research findings will be presented and the results will be interpreted.

PSYCHOLOGICAL (COGNITIVE) EMPOWERMENT

Psychological empowerment, which is associated with the concept of "self-efficacy" introduced by Bandura [44], is a process in which employees' belief in their own competence is increased. According to the definition in their study titled "Cognitive Elements of Empowerment: An Interpretive Model of Intrinsic Task Motivations" published by Thomas and Velthouse [6, p. 666-681], "to empower is to give power to someone else". Empowered employees: have the ability to affect their work and work environment in a meaningful way, to feel competent about their work, to use initiative, to facilitate proactive behaviors and to do their jobs independently [3, 4]. Four dimensions (meaning, competence, autonomy and impact) are required for employees to be psychologically empowered. Although the under-perception of these dimensions does not completely eliminate the empowerment, it reduces the degree of empowerment [6, 7].

Meaning dimension: Spreitzer et al. [8] see this dimension as the most important element of staff empowerment. In cases where the work of the employees is not meaningful to them, the employees will be indifferent to the issues

related to the organization and will not be able to deal with their work, as a result, their work motivation will decrease [6] According to Hochwalder and Brucefors [9], employees compare their roles in the workplace with the values and standards they have, and the more similar their expectations to their actual jobs, the more empowered they feel.

Competence dimension: Is the belief and confidence that employees have in themselves about doing their jobs as they should. On the other hand, if the employees do not trust their skills and competencies related to the work they do, or if the employees do not have self-confidence about their work, they will avoid jobs that require the use of skills related to their work. The competence dimension of empowerment is an element that drives the employee to action as a result of his evaluation of his current potential. The higher the employee's belief that he/she can do the job in question, the more confident he/she is about the competence related to this job, the higher the probability of doing the job [6].

Autonomy dimension: While the competence dimension is related to the expertise, competence and mastery of the employee; the autonomy dimension is related to the ability to make decisions and use initiative on business processes such as starting, stopping, continuing or correcting the work [10].

Impact size: Autonomy is the dimension that expresses the freedom of employees regarding their own work areas, while influence is a dimension related to employees having control over organizational outputs. To illustrate the difference between competence and impact dimensions with an example, would be if employees accept that they have an impact on work-related activities (impact dimension), they will not be sufficiently empowered if they feel that they do not have enough ability (competence dimension) to do the job well. Deficient perception of one of these dimensions will not completely eliminate reinforcement, but will only reduce its degree [11].

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction, which has been the subject of many research studies in the organizational behavior literature since the 1930s, has entered the literature with motivation theories. According to Hoppock [12], job satisfaction is "the sum of physiological, psychological and environmental

conditions that provide employee satisfaction with his job". According to Hackman and Oldman [13], job satisfaction is "the degree to which employees are satisfied with their job and the key features of the job (occupational health and safety, pay, and opportunities for personal development)". In short, job satisfaction is the positive view that employees have as a result of reviewing their work or work-related experience.

The concept of job satisfaction was first used in the organizational behavior literature as a result of the research of Elton Mayo and his colleagues in the Tavistock coal mine [45]. Thanks to this study, an important step has been taken in terms of human resources management by considering the fact that physical conditions, in which employees have feelings and emotions, can affect the productivity of employees, contrary to previous ideas that considered human beings as a mechanical element.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION

The degree of empowerment felt by employees in organizations is expected to affect their job satisfaction. It has been confirmed by many studies that the employee's job-related competence and acquisition, taking responsibility for their job and seeing themselves as the owner of the job, and using initiative in decision-making about their job increase the level of job satisfaction of the employees [14,15, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27]. With psychological empowerment, employees gain skills and competencies related to their jobs, take responsibility for the job, and see themselves as the owner of the job. Thanks to empowerment, it is expected that the job satisfaction of employees who can use initiative in the decision-making phase will increase. The higher the job satisfaction level of the employees, the more positive attitudes they show towards their jobs, and the negative organizational results such as leaving the job or looking for a new job will decrease [28] Based on this information, the H1 hypothesis was formed.

H1: Psychological empowerment affects job satisfaction positively and significantly.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION BY GENERATIONS

According to Kopperschmidt [29], it has been noted that generational communities differ in their values. For

example, Generation X individuals are a hard-working generation that cares about career, as it is a generation that witnessed the oil crisis that affected the world. The Generation Y, on the other hand, is a generation that cares about time and wants quick answers and results, as it has witnessed the development of technology. Echo Boomers", "MTV Generation", "Generation Next", "Next Generation", "Peter Pan Generation" also known by the names of Generation Y and "baby fall-baby bust" and "lost generation", the regulatory effect of Generation X. Before moving on to the findings of this study, it will be appropriate to give the results of the study that deals with how the birth interval of the employees affects the variables of psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. According to the results of Sparks [30] study in which Baby Bommer employees and Generation X employees measured psychological empowerment and job satisfaction levels, while Baby Boomer employees had higher psychological empowerment than Generation X employees, no difference was found in job satisfaction scores according to generations. Kong et al. [31] in their study, the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, namely impact, competence, autonomy and meaning, contributed positively to the job satisfaction of Generation Y. In the study of [26], it was found that the perceptions of job satisfaction and psychological empowerment of employees younger than 26 years old are lower than those of older age groups. According to the results of this study, it can be said that higher age groups have higher job satisfaction and psychological empowerment levels. Onen [32] found that as age increases, job satisfaction also increases. Herzberg explained the relationship between job satisfaction and age, which he expressed as a U-shaped curve, as job satisfaction is high in employees who start their business life early, decreases towards the age of 30, and increases again as age progresses [33]. Based on this information, the H2 hypothesis was formed.

H2: The positive effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction differs in Generation X and Y employees.

METHOD

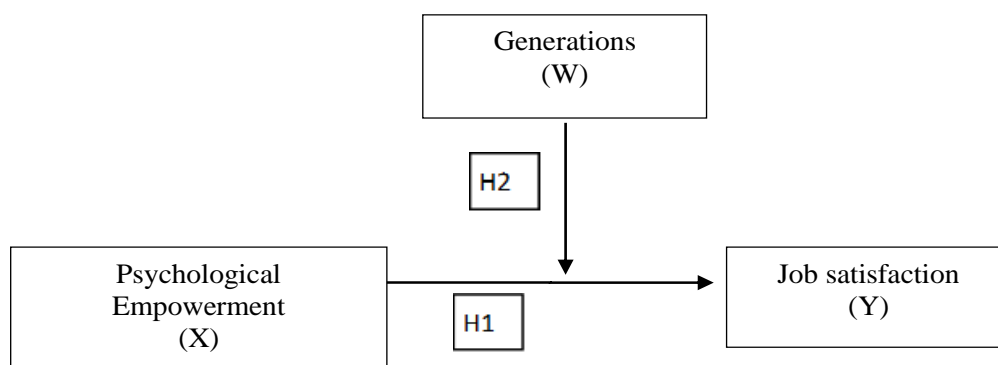
In this part of the study, which was designed to investigate the moderator role of X and Y generations in the effect of perceived psychological empowerment on job satisfaction in health directorate employees, information about the research model, environment, sample and measurement tools used in the study are given.

MODEL OF THE STUDY

In this study, the aim was to determine the moderator role of the Xx and Y generations in the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction. The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable may vary according to many individual characteristics. One of these individual characteristics is the generation of people according to their year of birth, as one of these individual characteristics. It is thought that the age of the individuals may be the moderator variable in many effects. Regulatory variable (W); It is the variable that has the power to affect the direction and severity of the relationship between

dependent (Y) and independent (X) variables [34, 81-83]. In social sciences, the power of the independent variable to affect the dependent variable depends on the individual's gender, age, marital status, etc. may vary accordingly. The moderator variable in this study is the X and generation Y. Since the effect of generations on psychological empowerment and job satisfaction has been revealed by the results of previous studies, it is thought that psychological empowerment will also play a moderator role in the effect of job satisfaction. Based on this idea, the model to test the regulatory effect of generations is given in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. RESEARCH MODEL



ETHICAL CONSENT

Ethical consent was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University with their letter dated 13.09.2019 and numbered 25409. Research data were collected in 2020 (January-June period).

SAMPLE ENVIRONMENT

The study environment consisted of the employees of the Karaman Provincial Health Directorate, Türkiye. According to the information received from the personnel services department of the Provincial Health Directorate, 200 people worked in the organization in the relevant period. Participants in the study were determined by simple random sampling method. In the research, the data were collected by the method of leaving the research form by hand. In the research, all the employees of the provincial health directorate were included in the research and the participants were given the right to participate voluntarily. The sample size of the research that could represent the study setting consisting of 200 people (with an error margin

of 5% at the 95 confidence level) was determined as 132 [35].

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

In order to determine the psychological empowerment and job satisfaction levels of the employees in the study, measurement tools whose validity and reliability were tested were selected. The psychological empowerment scale used in the study was developed by Spreitzer [7] and its Turkish adaptation and validity-reliability study was performed by Uner and Turan [36]. The scale consists of 12 items and 4 sub-factors (meaning, adequacy, autonomy, effect). Uner and Turan [36] found the reliability (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient) of the scale to be 0.83 for the nurse sample and 0.88 for the physician sample.

The Job Satisfaction Scale used in the study is a one-dimensional 5-item scale adapted by Basim and Sesen [37] from the Job Characteristics Questionnaire of Hackman and Oldham [13]. The reliability of the scale was calculated as 0.78 using Basim and Sesen.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The SPSS program was used in the analysis of the research data. SPSS is one of the most widely used quantitative data analysis programs in social sciences in the world (46). Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis (Cronbach Alpha coefficient) were performed to reveal the validity and reliability of the scales. The hypotheses of the research were tested and interpreted using Hayes' SPSS Process Macro program. Process Macro is a SPSS plug-in where agent and moderator variable analysis are performed. In the Process Macro application, hypotheses regarding the mediating and regulatory effect are tested according to the confidence intervals obtained by the Bootstrap technique. Analyses based on this technique give more valid and reliable results in mediation models

[34]. Bootstrap, which is a useful technique in determining whether the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable changes at different levels of the regulatory effect, gives information about whether the hypotheses are supported at the 95% confidence interval [41].

FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The data regarding the status of the employees participating in the research are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Characteristics	Variables	F	%
Gender	Male	79	58.1
	Female	57	41.9
Education level	High School-Associate Degree	37	27.2
	Bachelor-Master	99	72.8
Generation	Generation X (41 - 56 years old)	47	34.6
	Generation Y (21-40 years old)	89	65.4
Job Definition	Health Officer	44	32,4
	Nurse/Midwife	36	26,5
	Officer	56	41,1
Total		136	100

According to Table 1, 58.1% of the employees participating in the study are male, 41.9% are female, 27.2% have high school and associate degree, and 72.8% have undergraduate and graduate education levels. 47 of the employees are in the Generation X and 89 are in the generation Y. 32.4% of the participants work as health officers, 26.5% as nurses/midwives and 41.1% as civil servants.

STRUCTURAL VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY ANALYSIS OF SCALES

Psychological Empowerment Scale

Since the variables must show a normal distribution in order to apply the factor analysis, first of all, it was checked whether the data belonging to the scales showed normal distribution. Since the skewness (-0.475) and kurtosis values of the psychological empowerment scale (-0.425) and the skewness (-0.198) and kurtosis values of the job satisfaction

scale (-0.945) were between -1 and +1, it was assumed that the data were normally distributed [40].

In order to test the structural validity of the scales, principal components analysis (principal component) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were performed using the direct oblimin axis rotation technique, and Cronbach Alpha Reliability Analysis was performed to measure the internal consistency of the items. Factor analysis is one of the statistical techniques that turns a large number of related variables into a small number of significant and independent factors. Principal Component Analysis, on the other hand, is the most widely used analysis to obtain factors Barlet test and KMO are used to evaluate whether the data set is suitable for factor analysis (47). Cronbach's Alpha, which is frequently used in Likert-type scales, is a coefficient used to question the homogeneous structure of the scale items.

As a result of the EFA being applied to the psychological empowerment scale, the sample adequacy value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was found to be 0.736, and it was decided that the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis. Since the Barlett test of sphericity was significant ($p < .000$), it was determined that the correlations between the items were suitable for factor analysis [38]. Eigenvalues greater than 1 formed the factors. As a result of the EFA being applied to the psychological empowerment scale, the 4-factor structure of the scale was revealed. As a result of the EFA, it was found that the 12-item scale had a 4-factor structure, the factors explained 83,614% of the total variance, the factor loads of the items were above 0.5, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.854 as a result of the reliability analysis.

Since the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy value of the job satisfaction scale used in the study was 0.774, the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis, and since the Barlett sphericity test was significant ($p < .000$), correlations between the items were found to be suitable for factor analysis [38]. The single-factor structure of the scale, which consists of 5 items with eigenvalues greater than 1, was revealed. As a result of the EFA, it was found that the 5-item scale had a 1-factor structure, a single factor explained 65.159% of the total variance, the factor loads of the items were above 0.5, and as a result of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.836.

Testing Hypotheses

The Process Macro (for SPSS) program developed by Hayes was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The program uses the bootstrap technique to calculate the modifier effect. [34] Confidence interval (95%) values (CI values)

obtained by the bootstrap technique are important to determine whether the relationship between variables is supported or not [39] If the confidence interval values do not contain zero, it can be said that the hypotheses are fully supported [41].

In order to test the moderator role of generations (x and y) in the effect of psychological empowerment perceptions of Provincial Health Directorate employees on job satisfaction, a regression analysis was performed using the Bootstrap technique-based Process Macro program, and the results are given in Table 2.

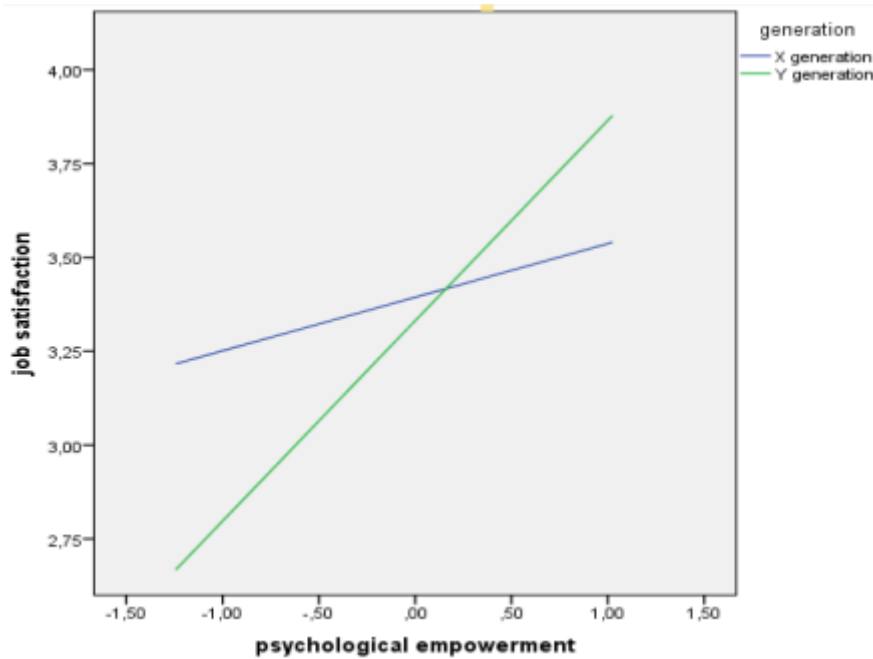
According to the results of the regression analysis, it was seen that all estimation variables included in the analysis explained 20% ($R^2 = .205$) of the change on job satisfaction. According to Table 2, the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction (path b1) was found to be statistically significant and this effect was positive. ($b = .399$; 95% CI [.2380; .5595]; $t = 4.9064$; $p > 0.00$). According to this result, the hypothesis of "psychological empowerment affects job satisfaction positively and significantly", which is the H1 hypothesis, was accepted. Another result obtained as a result of the analysis is related to the effect of generational difference on job satisfaction. According to the results of the analysis, the effect of generations on job satisfaction (path b2) is statistically insignificant ($b = -.030$; 95% CI [-.1931; .1334]; $t = -.3619$; $p > 0.05$). The result of the interaction (X.W) of psychological empowerment (X=independent variable) and generation (W=modulatory variable) variable expressing the B3 pathway was found to be significant ($b = .1866$; 95% CI [.0298; .0185], $t = 2.1963$, $p < .05$). When the effect slope graph in Figure 2 is examined, it is understood that the regulatory effect and Hypothesis 2 are supported more clearly.

TABLE 2. RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS BETWEEN VARIABLES

	b	SH	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						
Psychological Empowerment (X) (path b1)	.3987	.0813	4.9064	.0000	.2380	.5595
Generation (W) (path b2)	-.0299	.0825	-.3618	.7181	-.1931	.1334
X.W. (Path b3)	.1866	.0850	2.1963	.0298	.0185	.3547
Conditional Impact = Generations						
Generation X (1)	.1428	.1503	.9507	.3435	-.1543	.4400
Generation Y (2)	.5339	.0955	5.5881	.0000	.3449	.7228

R= .4523, R²= .2046, n=136, LLCI: lowest confidence interval, ULCI: highest confidence interval

FIGURE 2. THE REGULATORY ROLE OF GENERATIONS (SLOPE GRAPH)



When the regulatory effect of the generations is examined, the positive effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction differs according to the Generation X and Generation Y employees. The effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction was not significant in Generation X employees ($b = .1428$; 95% CI $[-.1543; .4400]$; $t = .9507$, $p > 0.05$). In Generation Y employees, the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction was found to be significant ($b = .5339$; 95% CI $[.3449; .7228]$, $t = 5.5881$, $p < .001$).

CONCLUSION

In this study, the moderator role of generations in the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction was tried to be determined with two hypotheses. For this purpose, data were collected from the employees of Karaman Provincial Health Directorate. The results and interpretations of the research findings are presented below.

As a result of the study, it was found that the psychological empowerment perceptions of the Provincial Health Directorate employees affected the job satisfaction statistically and positively. This result is consistent with many studies in the literature [14, 15, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27]. In previous studies, the moderator effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction has not been investigated. This study investigated the effect of previous psychological empowerment on job satisfaction

[14, 15, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27] and it adds a perspective to many studies with positive results as to whether this effect differs according to the generations of the employees.

As a result of the study, the moderator effect of the psychological empowerment and generation variables of the provincial health directorate employees on job satisfaction was found to be significant. According to this result, the positive effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction differs according to X and Y generations. While the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction was not statistically significant in X generation employees, the effect of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction was found to be significant in Y generation employees.

According to Generation Y employees, managers should be flexible and able to delegate authority when necessary. They can only obey generations older than themselves for a short time, and in the long run, dissatisfaction and resistance develop due to their fondness for their independence [42]. Çevik Tekin and Akgemci researched the business values of Generation Y in 2016, and the fact that "oppression" is the least they agree with in the Status-Oriented Business Approach shows that this generation does not like being governed by pressure and authority. The fact that the values they care most about in professional İGA are "giving importance to competence" and "inquiry", which shows that they expect mentorship

from their managers rather than authority. Employees of Generation Y care about being able to make decisions on their own. The effect of their psychological empowerment on their job satisfaction can be explained by this generation's understanding of work values. Generation X, on the other hand, is a generation that respects authority, has high work motivation, is loyal and contented ([42]. For this reason, while the psychological empowerment of the X Generation does not affect their job satisfaction statistically significantly, the statistically significant positive effect of the Y Generation's psychological empowerment on their job satisfaction can be explained by the aforementioned job values of the Y Generation.

More studies on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction have been conducted in the literature, and the moderator variables that may affect the relationship between these two concepts have not been investigated much. Since there is no other study investigating the moderator effect of X and Y generations on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in the literature, it is thought that this study will make an important contribution to the literature. However, since the study includes health workers working in the Karaman Provincial Health Directorate, conducting a study in different sectors may lead to different results. Therefore, it is recommended that the study be carried out in different sectors. Since the pandemic had not yet started in Turkey while obtaining work permits, it is not aimed to measure the effects of the pandemic. During the time when the study data were collected, a pandemic began to occur. Therefore, it is recommended to consider this variable when evaluating the results of the study.

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