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# Strategic Innovation and Organizational Performance in the COVID-19 Era

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**Abstract:** *The study examined the strategic innovation and organizational performance in the COVID-19 era. The objectives of the study are as follows to: Examine the effect of market innovation on health care services in Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era. Investigate the effect of organizational innovation on health care services in Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The data for this study was gotten from primary sources. This is suitable for a survey of this nature. This study involved a direct collection of all the needed data as firsthand information from the healthcare staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi. The target population of this study was the 780 senior level personnel from five departments in Nnamdi Azikiwe Teaching Hospital Nnewi.. This includes the administrative directors, medical directors, consultants, registrars, nursing directors and senior nursing officers, food science directors and chief pharmacists and laboratory and diagnostic directors. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The percentage frequency was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while ANOVA was used for testing of hypothesis . The study revealed that Market innovation has significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era. Organizational innovation has significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era. The study recommends that Health care sector should consider innovation that is either market, or organisation based, in order to improve and increase the organisational performance as innovation is significant to performance and creation of a new market as experienced in new product lines.*

**Keywords:** *strategic innovation, organizational performance, covid-19, market innovation, organizational organization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

In a highly competitive environment, strategy innovation is the indispensable key to an organization obtaining a dominant position and gaining higher profits (Cerulli, 2014). Therefore, the understanding of which strategic innovation management practices lead to an improved organizational performance is important. When looking at strategy innovation, Pinoy (2015) posit that an effective strategy must correctly inform which job executor, job, and segment to target to achieve the most growth, and which unmet needs to target to help customers get the job

done better. It is important to note that most innovation strategies fail in these regards, which is why innovation success rates are perceived to be spineless. Innovation in service-based industries has not been considered in details at the organizational level (Thomke, 2007). However, the health care firms is an attractive environment for innovation studies on organizations, due to its complex and important nature (Pennings & Harianto, 1992).

In the present era of economic instability, health care sector has emerged as one of the major and vital service sector which has affected millions of lives of people all over the world. It is unique in its service, socially and economically.

According to Frances (2010), the health care sector has been continuously reforming with respect to market share, technology, competition and service demands. Frances (2010), in addition added that the vital force of this sector is the fast paced evolution of consumer requirements, wants and desires because there is a high demand by the consumers for the delivery of health care services in addition to an increased variety in investment and deposit products. Therefore, there has been a need for health care service to amend their competitive strategies for products and marketing, in a wider context.

Every innovation strategy ought to align with the mission, vision, goals and objectives of an organization (Karabulut, 2015). According to Gilbert (1994), innovation strategy refers to the extent to which innovation is used to foster organizational performance. Katz, & Preez, & Schutte, (2010) defined innovation strategy as the entirety of strategic options an organization makes regarding its innovative pursuit. Innovation strategy plays an important role in developing organizational precedence and supply-chain actions (Celtekliligil & Zafer, 2019)

Marketing innovation entails new marketing method that involves significant changes in the packaging, design, placement and product promotion and pricing strategy. The objective of marketing innovation is to increase sales and market share and opening new markets. The distinctive feature for the marketing innovation from the other types of innovation is the implementation of a new marketing method that the firm has never been implemented before (OECD, 2005).

Organizations in today's operational environment face stringent competition from rivals and competitors in creating core values for their customers. To meet customers' requirements and expectations, organizations are saddled with the challenges of innovation. Every organization including health care institutions operate effectively and efficiently by exploiting modern technology and innovation. The decision to integrate innovation approach into business strategy enables organizations to gain competitive advantage over competitors who are slow to respond to dynamic changes in the operational environment (Lim, 2010).

Abbing (2010) opines that innovation in a business involves the development of new products, services, processes or business models and how to use them effectively together with business strategy to achieve the desired goals. Innovation enhances organizational competitiveness and it serves as key to competitiveness in which a firm differentiates itself from its competitors in terms of products and services.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The main aim of this study is to examine the effect of strategic innovation on organizational performance in the COVID-19 era. Its specific objectives are to:

- (i) Examine the effect of market innovation on health care services in Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era.
- (ii) Investigate the effect of organizational innovation on health care services in Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

To direct the thrust of the study, the following research questions were formulated and used:

- (i) How does market innovation affect health care services of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era?
- (ii) What effect does organizational innovation have on health care services of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era?

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Strategy Innovation**

Innovation originated from the Latin word “innovare” which means to modify as. It is considered to be the capacity of individuals to create new processes to meet the demands of the market and customers. The survival of a firm in the competitive business environment requires outstanding technologies to sustain market growth. Garcia and Calantone (2012) focus on the two critical definitions of innovation. First, innovation comprises the development of technology and the introduction of the technology into the market to meet the demands of consumers through the process of adoption and diffusion. Second, the process of innovation is repetitive and incorporates the first introduction of the new innovative product and its subsequent improvement. Innovation is typified by high levels of autonomy, risk-taking, team cohesion and sufficient resources at the disposal of the people and competitive advantages of generic strategies Porter (2015). Innovation enables operational improvements, which enhance cost efficiency. Innovation is an organizational capability to adapt and apply new ideas, products, and processes (Porter, 2015). To achieve long-term goals and competitiveness, innovation is a necessary option. It is a strategic tool for strategic positioning of a firm. Innovations enable firms to adapt their strategy to market alterations by developing new products, or altering the processes (Popescu, 2014).

A considerable number of types of innovation have been identified relative to product and process innovation (Oke, 2007). Some other authors have identified different types of innovation, stressing the importance of having a clear framework of the different types of innovation including the relationships between them (Verhees, & Meulenber, 2014; Ongwae, Mukulu and Odhiambo, 2014). Product innovation means introducing new products/services or bringing significant improvement in the existing products/services. For product innovation, the product must either be a new product or significantly improved concerning its features, intended use, software, user-friendly or components and material.

Polder et al., (2010) see process innovation as significant improvement in production and logistic methods and other support activities such as purchasing, accounting, maintenance and computing. Firms bring process innovation to produce innovative products and amendments are

also brought in their processes to produce the new products. To decrease the production cost, firms go for bringing process innovation. The process innovation is reflected by the cost of the product.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

The research is anchored under the Contingency Theory.

### **Contingency Theory**

Contingency refers to circumstances which are likely to happen but cannot be predicted with certainty. A major proponent of this theory is Professor Fred Fiedler in the 1960s who explained how a leader should respond to specific situations in management process. At the helm of every organization is the leader who determines the flow of the organization, hence its' performance. Wolinski (2010) stated that a leader's effectiveness is contingent on how well the leader's style matches a specific setting or situation. The theory posits that there are certain factors (task, the personality of the leader and the composition of the group that is meant to be led) determine the most effective leadership style for the given situation. The basic assumption of the theory is that the success or failure of a leader is situational. There are four models to the contingency theory: Fiedler's Contingency Theory, The situational leadership, the path-goal theory, and the decision making theory.

- The Fiedler's Contingency Theory posits that "effective leadership hinges not only on the style used by the leader, but also on the control held over the situation". In order to succeed, there must be strong leader-member relations.
- The Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory posits the leadership style and the maturity of those being led defines the most suitable decision for a leader. Leadership styles hinge on four behaviors: telling, selling, participating and delegating. The maturity levels range from an incompetence or unwillingness to perform the task, to a willingness and ability to perform. The idea is that a successful leader will adapt leadership techniques to fit the maturity level of the group in question on a situational basis.
- Path-Goal Theory posit effective leaders create clear paths to help their subordinates achieve goals and that they work to remove obstacles that stand in the way.
- Vroom-Yetton-Jago Decision-Making Model of Leadership posit effective leaders size up situations, assess them and then determine how much support the group will give toward the effort, adjusting their preferred leadership style to fit.

For an organization to be effective, the organizational functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling should be tailored to suit each particular situation. The leader should consider the particular task and its' conditions, the requirements of the task and the people involved as composite parts of that management situation.

Organizations operate in a dynamic environment filled with uncertainties, changes in technology, size of the market, competition among others and all these all impact on the effectiveness of the organization. Contingency approach to management suggests organic structures that highlights decentralization to accommodate flexibility and adaptability. Uncertainty and unpredictability require general problem solving methods for non-routine tasks and problems.

The general point about the contingency theory, irrespective of the model is that effective management of an organization is contingent on the situation, task and people involved. Therefore, different situations call for unique approaches to solving the attendant challenges and will respond differently to a myriad of factors in the workplace. There's no best solution or one cap that fits it all.

COVID 19 pandemic presented a situation where various corporate bodies tries out a number of management strategies as the outbreak was novel and had no semblance or prototype to copy from. The

contingency theory is suitable for this study in that it enables the management to apply the best decision based on the events presented during the COVID 19 era.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Eyibio, Ehugbo, Abam, Obeten, & Tabi, (2021). Investigated the role of innovation strategy on performance of Femine Flour Mill Calabar. The study employed survey research design. The target respondent is the total employees of Femine flour mill Calabar which stand at 126 staff. Self-administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to content validity and test retest statistical analysis was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument at 0.82. The study adopted simple random sampling technique and Taro Yamane's statistical formula was used to determine the sample size at 96. Pearson Correlation was employed to establish the relationship between the two variables. Out of 96 distributed questionnaires 85 was properly filled and was used for the analysis. , the relationship between level of process innovation strategies, product innovation strategies and firm performance is positive at 0.419 and 0.419 respectively, indicating that an improvement in level of process innovation strategies and product innovation strategies will lead to increase in the firm performance on the average. The study concluded that marketability of our different segmented products and In-depth understanding of customer needs since is a critical source of competitive advantage. The study therefore, recommended that the management should conduct a comprehensive product analysis and also develop a product technology track in order to actively explore the potential market opportunities.

Eke, & Onuoha (2019) investigated innovation strategies and organizational performance of waste packaging firms in Lagos State, Nigeria due to the seeming dearth of studies on the topic. Cross-sectional research design methodology was used in collecting data from 118 water packaging firms in Lagos State. The hypotheses were analyzed with Kendall's Tau-b correlation coefficient (denoted  $\tau$ ) by means of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. Results suggest that higher levels of innovation strategies (aggressiveness- $\tau = 0.658$ ,  $p = .003$ ; defensiveness- $\tau = 0.535$ ,  $p = .001$ ; futurity- $\tau = 0.736$ ,  $p = .003$ ; proactiveness- $\tau = 0.877$ ,  $p = .000$ ) amplify organizational performance. The study recommends that management of water packaging firms should ensure innovation strategies supersede profit making and give more attention to potential and prospective customers as they develop the quality and performance of their product.

Saka, (2021) examine the influence of innovation strategy on organisational performance, evidence from Fintech firms in Lagos. The objective of this study is to examine if the innovativeness of selected Fintech firms can enhance organisational performance. In conducting this study, the survey research design was explored and the population of the study was 350 members of staff of five (5) Fintech firms across Lagos and they were randomly selected. The questionnaire was the primary source of data collection. This was used to obtain necessary information needed for the study, the questionnaire was found to be useful after the validation of the instrument with content validity. 0.78 was the Cronbach Alpha level of reliability of the research instrument. Out of one hundred and eighty-seven (187) copies of questionnaire distributed, 112 respondents filled the questionnaire and their responses found useful. Regression analysis was used in this study. The study found that market, product and organisation

innovations are significant and important ways to achieve organisational performance. The study recommended among others that organisations should take innovation of any kind in order to improve performance.

Nyabaro, Muya, & Ngacho, (2021). Established the influence of strategic innovation on performance of coffee cooperative societies in Nyanza region. The study was grounded on resource based theory. The research was guided by positivistic research design. The target population was the top management personnel in both coffee cooperatives and ministry of cooperatives. Nasiuma (2000) formula was used to select a sample of 394 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data. A pilot study was carried on randomly selected individuals in different coffee cooperative societies in Bungoma County. Both descriptive statistics (percentages, mean, standard deviation and variance) and inferential statistics (Multiple regressions and Pearson's correlation) were used to analyze data. The findings showed that strategic innovation had a positive and significant relationship with performance of cooperative societies in Nyanza region. The study concludes that strategic innovation enhanced performance of coffee cooperative societies. The study recommended that management of cooperatives societies should allocate enough funds for research and development. In addition, the management needs to understand and come up with best strategy to be innovative and creative, and come up with new products.

Owich, Katuse & Nagari (2018) carried out a survey on the influence of strategy formulation on organizational performance of companies listed in Nairobi Securities Exchange. The population was 325 senior managers of such companies. Stratified sampling technique was employed to cover twelve strata of the economy. Sample size was 179 managers and data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential analyses were used to analyze data and findings showed that strategy formulation has a great significance on organizational performance.

Afonina (2015) investigated the level of strategic management tools and techniques utilization and its input on organizational performance in Czech Republic. It focused on 20 management tools and techniques and subjective approach was used to gauge organizational performance. 91 respondents from 91 companies in the republic was used as the sample. The instrument of data collection was a four point likert scale. Hypotheses were analysed with correlation analysis and further with multiple regression analysis and the result shows that strategic management tools and techniques affect financial and non-financial performance of the companies.

Aldehayyat & Twaissi (2011) examined the relationship between strategic planning system and corporate performance in small industries in Jordan. A descriptive survey with 105 firms registered with the Amman Stock Exchange. Questionnaire was used for data collection with a response rate of 52.1% and analysed with Spearman's correlation. The result showed evidence of top and line managers involvement in planning and indicated a strong and positive relationship between strategic planning and corporate performance.

### 3. . METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This is a type of research design that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied (McCombes, 2019). The descriptive survey is capable of not only identifying and analyzing the characteristics of a population, it would equally succinctly explain the relationship thereof. The design was chosen for its suitability in describing the relationship between two or more naturally occurring variables (Nworgu, 2015).

#### 3.2 Sources of Data

The data for this study was gotten from primary sources. This is suitable for a survey of this nature. This study involved a direct collection of all the needed data as firsthand information from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital Nnewi

#### 3.3 Population of the Study

The target population of this study was the 780 senior level personnel from five departments in Nnamdi Azikiwe Teaching Hospital Nnewi. This includes the administrative directors, medical directors, consultants, registrars, nursing directors and senior nursing officers, food science directors and chief pharmacists and laboratory and diagnostic directors. This is presented in Table 1 below

Table 1: List of tertiary healthcare institutions and their senior personnel strength

S/N	Tertiary health care facilities	Location	Total
1	Nnamdi Azikiwe Teaching Hospital Nnewi	Anambra State	780
	Administrative Directors – 77		
	Medical Directors/Consultants – 119		
	Nursing Directors/Senior Nursing Officers – 405		
	Food Service Directors/Chief Pharmacists – 81		
	Laboratory/Diagnostic Directors – 98		

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Source: Information gathered from the Chief Administrators offices of the facilities.

#### 3.4 Sampling Technique

The study adopted stratified sampling because permitted each of the different respondents in all the different states to be selected without bias.

#### 3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The data were collected by administering the questionnaire directly to the respondents at their locations.

### 3.6 Administration of Test Instrument

The copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher to the respondents and retrieved as they fill it. The respondents being top level management personnel in the healthcare sector are literates and as such the researcher required minimal efforts in guiding them to properly fill the questionnaires. Thus, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the identified samples and returned within a while to collect them.

### 3.7 Method of Data Analysis.

The percentage frequency was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

## PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to establish the effect of strategic innovation on organizational performance in the COVID-19 era. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaire. This chapter presents the findings of the study. This section presents the questionnaires issued and the ones that were returned to the researcher for analysis. However the number of questionnaires distributed was seven hundred and eight (780), whereas six hundred and seventy-seven (677) filled well and returned in good condition. The number of returned questionnaire will be used for the analysis of the study

**Table 4.1: Respondents’ Demographic Variables**

#### 4.1.1 Gender

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	451	66.6	78.2
Female	226	33.4	100.0
Total	677	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2022

The above table reveals that the four hundred and fifty-one (451) of the respondents which represents 66.6% were male respondents, while two hundred and twenty-six (226) respondents which represent 33.4% were female respondents. By implication, male respondents were more than female respondents by 33.2 respondents in our selected population sample for this study. The implication of this is to enable us to know the number of female and male that successfully returned their questionnaire

#### 4.1.2 Status

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	484	71.5	66.6
Single	193	28.5	100.0
Total	677	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2022



In the table above, out of the six hundred and seventy-seven (677) respondents, four hundred and eighty-four (484) of the respondents were married, while one hundred and ninety-three (193) respondents which represent 28.5 percent are single. It is therefore glaring that the majority of the respondents are married as at the time of this study. Thus marital status table help us to know the number of single, and married, and respondents that answered the distributed questionnaire

**4.1.3 Level of Education**

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	WAEC/NECO	23	3.4	21.3
	BSC/HND	277	40.9	52.0
	MSC/MBA	298	40.0	86.3
	PHD	79	15.7	100.0
	Total	677	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2022

The table above indicates that twenty-three (123) respondents which representing 3.4% percent maintain to acquired WAEC OR NECO while 40.9% percent of the respondents which represents two hundred and seventy-seven (277) have BSC/HND. However two hundred and eighty-nine (289) respondents which represent 40.0 percent either have MSC or MBA. More so, seventy-nine (79) respondents which represents 15.7% have acquires phd. This as the one of demographic item helps us to identify the education qualification of the respondents.

**4.1.4 AGE**

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	313	46.2	54.2
	26-33	132	19.5	77.1
	34-40	31	4.6	82.5
	41-50	137	20.2	88.9
	51-ABOVE	64	9.4	100.0
	Total	677	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2022

Table 4.3 above depicted the age bracket of the respondents. The distribution shows that 46.2% of the respondents are between the age brackets of 18 to 25 years while 19.5% respondents are within the age bracket of 26-33 years. On the same note, 4.6% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 34 - 40 years. On the same note, 20.2% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 41 - 50 years, while the remaining respondents representing 9.4% are within the age bracket of 51 years and above.

4.1.5 Years in service

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	1-10	293	35.3	40.4
	11-15	261	38.6	68.3
	16-20	80	11.8	82.1
	21-above	43	6.4	100.0
	Total	677	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2022

The table above indicates that two hundred and ninety-three (293) respondents which representing 35.3% percent maintain that they have been in the services for 10yres or less while 38.6% percent of the respondents which represents two hundred and sixty-one (261) have work for over 15yrs. However eighty (80) respondents which represent 11.8 percent either have work for 16-20 years. More so, forty-three (43) respondent which represents 6.4 % have work between 21-above. This as the one of demographic item helps us to identify the number of years the respondent has work for.

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

4.2.1: Test of Hypothesis One

H<sub>01</sub>: Market innovation has no significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	269.248	3	89.749	125.865	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	479.890	673	.713		
Total	749.137	676			

Sources: SPSS Output 2022

In testing this hypothesis, the F-statistics and probability value in table above is used. Market innovation variable have a F-statistics of 125.865 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Market innovation has significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era

4.2.2: Test of Hypothesis Two

H<sub>02</sub>: Organizational innovation has no significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era.

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	47.778	2	23.889	62.535	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	257.472	674	.382		
Total	305.250	676			

Sources: SPSS Output 2022

Second hypothesis has f-statistics of 62.535 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses and conclude that Organizational innovation has significant positive effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era

### **4.3 Discussion of the Finding**

#### **Market innovation and organizational performance**

Market innovation has a positive and significant effect (f-test = 125.865, p = 0.000) effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital Nnewi in COVID-19 era. This means that firms with improved Market innovation would not necessarily engender improved performance. The process of innovation is expected to ensure that mismatches and deviations from strategic plans are corrected, perfected and maintained. The organizations in the tertiary healthcare sector that were covered by this study had high level of innovations. The study revealed that this high level of innovation has led to significant increase in organisational performance. This agrees with the work of Eke, & Onuoha (2019) which showed that innovation strategy evaluation is effective in improving organisational performance.

#### **Organizational innovation and organizational performance nexus**

Organizational innovation has a significant strong positive (f-test = 62.535, p = 0.000) effect on organizational performance of Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital in COVID-19 era. The result means that a rise in the level of innovative plans in the organization process ensures about 62% improvement in her performance level. For the organization in the tertiary healthcare, there has been high level of Organizational innovations. This implies that the healthcare facilities are expected to witness about 62% continuous improvement in organizational performance. From the empirical fronts, this study is in line with previous studies. This implies that innovation is the bedrock of organisational performance. For instance, Rodrigues, *et al* (2021) in a very recent study noted that lack of innovation causes liquidity problem. This was in the face of the recent COVID 19 menace. Hence emergency must meet with innovation to drive continuous improvement and sustain organizational goals.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Strategic innovation has not been fully and effectively employed in management of tertiary healthcare facilities in the Nnamdi Azikiwe university teaching hospital. The study showed that strategic innovation is a sound driver of organisational performance in the healthcare sector facilities. Market and organizational innovation showed positive effects on performance, however, Market and organizational innovation are the strong drivers of performance in any organization and cannot be neglected. Health care sector should consider innovation that is either market, or organisation based, in order to improve and increase the organisational performance as innovation is significant to performance and creation of a new market as experienced in new product lines.

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