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Research Article

CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF EXPATS

Rashmi Kodikal¹, Habeeb Ur Rahiman^{2*} and Bindu T³

¹Sahyadri College of Engineering & Management, Mangaluru

²Mr. Habeeb Ur Rahiman, Faculty Kingdom University of Bahrain

³Government First Grade Women's College Balmatta, Mangaluru

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ABSTRACT

In a diversified and multi-cultured era of globalized business environment, managing Human Resources and multi-cultured organization has become more challenging to organization. With the growing significance of developing economies multi-cultural adaptability in an organization is required to avoid cross cultural issues. The purpose of this study is to understand the cross-cultural human resource management and understand the methods to build the harmonious working relationship between expatriates and local citizens of Middle East countries. The paper revolves on factors that contribute building harmonious relations and on issues faced by expats.

Key Words:

Cross Culture, Human Resource
Management, Middle East, Expatriates

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INTRODUCTION

The term Human Resource Management and the concept that support it as laden with high values. Values are the part of threads of the fabric that are woven into culture that revolves around the human resource in any organization. Organizations with distinct cultural environment may have different responses from their intellectual capital that work within the paradigm of instrumental relationship that exists between the employees and employers.

A unique dimension of global working is that we are working with human resources ranging from the broadest to the narrowest definition of culture. Cultural issues must be taken in to consideration when communicating and interacting with cross cultural people. Although MNC's are supranational in operations and strategy, people within them may not share similar kind of culture and values. According to Hofstede (1981), companies like IBM have a strong corporate culture but within IBM there is a wide cultural variation across the nation. Culture is shared understanding made manifest in act and artifact (Regfield 1954). The members of distinct cultures have characteristic lifestyle that correspond to subjective events and shared habits for paying attention to specific aspects of their environment.

An expat to a foreign culture needs to realize his capacity to gel with analien culture in totality and understand how it varies from his own home culture. This may lead to awkwardness in adaption to the new culture. In this race of adjusting as early as possible many a times the Expat faces a cultural shock or a transition. While overcoming these problems. The process of adaptation depends on individual characteristics, their intents and needs as well as the cultural and social context of adaption (Taft 1977, Suresh, S., & Kodikal, R. 2015). The proposed adaption, adjustment and development of intercultural skills should be taken care with due diligence, using skills to resolve crisis and gradually leading to acceptance of some personal changes.

India has had close commercial ties with Gulf countries for centuries. India today has managed to develop a healthy relationship with the Middle East countries. While economic interest has provided the basis for many of those relationships, ease in match of cross cultural ties have added a feather to this relationship between the nations.

The present study has been undertaken to understand the degree of these cross-cultural interfaces that exists. The present research studies the adaptation of foreign nationals the host countries cultural set up. The research involves comparing, analyzing& assessing its variations due to demographic and

*Corresponding author: **Habeeb Ur Rahiman**
Sahyadri College of Engineering & Management, Mangaluru

organizational variables This study also aimed to understand the problems that expatriates are facing in Middle East and how they deal with these problems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of cultural challenges and Human resource management with special reference to Arab countries has received very little attention in the literature. Perhaps owing to the kind of governance very few studies were found on middle east nations regarding cultural relations. However, a summary of few research papers is listed below which provides and insight into the cross-cultural issues of expats.

Rahiman, M. H. U., and Kodikal, R. (2017) opined that job-related attitude of employees is have an influence on human resource management of the organization. Holistic development of business and productivities of the organization is depending upon the organizational value. Muenjohn, N., & Armstrong, A. (2015) studied the possible relationships between the work-related values of subordinates and the leadership behaviors exhibited by expatriate managers found that the culture of Thai subordinates has a very limited role in predicting the leadership behaviors of expatriate managers. He suggested that certain leadership behaviors are likely to be to a given culture, whereas others argue that there should be certain structures that leaders must perform to be effective, regardless of cultures.

A Koveshnikov (2014) found a significant and positive relationship between EI and expatriates' general living, interactional and work-related CCA. Moreover, effect between gender and the ability to appraise and express emotions: the influence of the latter on all three dimensions of CCA tends to be slightly stronger for male than female expatriates. Similarly (Rahiman, M. H. U., and Kodikal, R. 2017 a) opined that attitude and cultural facilitates general living adjustment and not interactional or work adjustments. BM Firth et al. (2014) opined that the language and culture deviates substantially from their countries. This is not least in relation to age perceptions. Kodikal, R et al. (2014) opined that An optimum level of conflict needs to be maintained by an organization, i.e. there should be enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allows release of tension and initiate the seeds of change and rejuvenation, yet not so much as to be disruptive or deter co-ordination of activities. Zhang, Y. (2013) opined that there will be a significant difference in business expatriates on reciprocal transfers in terms of the extent of their socio and psycho-cultural adjustment. His study observed cultural distance has moderated the relationship between cultural intelligence and expatriate adjustment, such that the relationship between cultural intelligence and adjustment is stronger when the direction of cultural flow is from a less authoritarian cultural context to a more authoritarian cultural environment. Froese, F. J., & Peltokorpi, V. (2013) examined the differences in individual- and job-related factors, and two important expatriate outcomes, cross-cultural adjustment and job satisfaction, between self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) and organizational expatriates (OEs) found that, OEs tend to work more often at foreign MNCs and frequently occupy higher positions. (Rahiman, M. H. U., and Kodikal, R. 2017 b) opined that SIEs enjoy higher interaction adjustment but less positive

work attitudes, specifically in terms of job satisfaction than OEs.

Hayfaa Tlaiss and Saleema Kauser (2011) found that wasta (Nepotism) remains traditional in its influence in the career advancement of individuals and business life and social life and is unlikely to diminish in the near future, despite the perception that it is an unfair practice. Wasta also displays similarities and differences with networking and mentoring. Similar study made by P Iles et al. (2012) opined that HRM in the Middle East (ME) is greatly influenced by culture, Islam, and the role of wasta (Nepotism) as well as by national and global politics. Their findings showing similarities with and differences from the ruling managerial models that prevail in the West. They observed that favoritism and relaxing merit and competence criteria in a partisan way, letting liking, obedience, and exchange of favors influence performance ratings, salary recommendations, and training places; using nepotism to obtain favors and benefits for family, relatives and partners in such areas as appointment, promotion, transfer, discipline, reward, sanctions, and delegation are common.

G., Chen, et al. (2010) developed a multilevel model of expatriate "cross-cultural motivation and effectiveness" (motivation and effectiveness pertaining to cross-cultural contexts) that incorporates the influences of foreign subsidiary-level attributes. Their study indicated that expatriate cross-cultural motivation was more positively related to work adjustment-and that work adjustment was more likely to mediate the positive relationship between cross-cultural motivation and job performance-when expatriates were assigned to foreign subsidiaries characterized by lower levels of subsidiary support and cultural distance. Ochieng, E. G., & Price, A. D. F. (2010) examined the cultural factors that influence communication and explores how communication can be made effective in multicultural project environments. Their study revealed that communications within multicultural project environments can be effective when project managers demonstrate an awareness of cultural variation. Participants further highlighted that, one of the critical components of building multicultural project teams is the creation and development of effective cross-cultural collectivism, trust, communication and empathy in leadership. Mellahi, K. (2007) opined that there are significant discrepancies between the letter of the law and the actual practices when it comes to foreign workers in Saudi Arabia. While the new legal framework provides weak and vulnerable foreign workers with a potentially powerful tool against unlawful exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous managers, most foreign workers are unaware of their legal rights and/or are restrained financially or psychologically from challenging their employers. This paper also explores the emerging legal framework for HRM in the private sector, and evaluates the adequacy of changing HRM practices through laws and regulations.

Manz, S. (2003) stated that cultural shock is a sudden and disturbing impression on the mind or own concept of culture produced by some un-circumstances or a perception in a foreign culture lasting depression or an excited feeling or any kind. It is also a shock caused by being confronted with a different culture. Yousef, D. A. (1998) studied the role of satisfaction with job security in predicting organizational commitment and job performance in a multicultural

non-Western environment found that satisfaction with job security is positively correlated with both organizational commitment and job performance. Furthermore, Demographic variable like employees' age, educational level, job level, monthly income, marital status, tenure in present job, tenure in present organization and an organization's activity contribute significantly to the variations in satisfaction with job security among employees. Smith, K., & Berg, D. (1997) opined that multinational teams are often formed in hopes of producing cross-cultural collaboration. These teams face a special challenge as they work to become functional groups for, unlike groups composed of individuals from one nationality, the members of a multinational team cannot assume that they share the same beliefs about work group dynamics. They further noticed that each member approaches the assignment to a multinational team with a very different understanding about how to contribute to the development of a productive team.

Dowling (1994) opined that an expatriate, who is positioned as manager for international assignment, should have certain traits and characteristics for expatriate success. It does not mean that an expatriate with these characteristics is guaranteed to be successful on the assignment, but those without these traits the probability of failure is higher. These characteristics include technical ability, managerial skills, adaptability and adaptability of family, cultural empathy, diplomacy, language ability, positive attitude, emotional stability and maturity. Hofstede's (1980) employee working in these subsidiaries differed along four primary dimensions viz; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. It described organizational behaviors within cultures and countries, and, compares it together and perhaps, most importantly, tries to understand and improve the interaction of co-workers, client suppliers and partners from various cultures and countries.

In a Multicultural organizational environment, there are cultural differences amongst between people, such as language, food, dress and traditions (Cultural Diversity, Wikipedia, 2010) Similar to this article, Pederson (1995) opined that common cultural experience encountered while abroad. His study prescribed five stages regarding to cultural shock namely the honeymoon, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and interdependence.

Objectives

1. To identify the Cross-cultural issues of expats
2. To understand the cultural issues related to International Human Resource Management
3. To suggest suitable resolutions for cross cultural issues

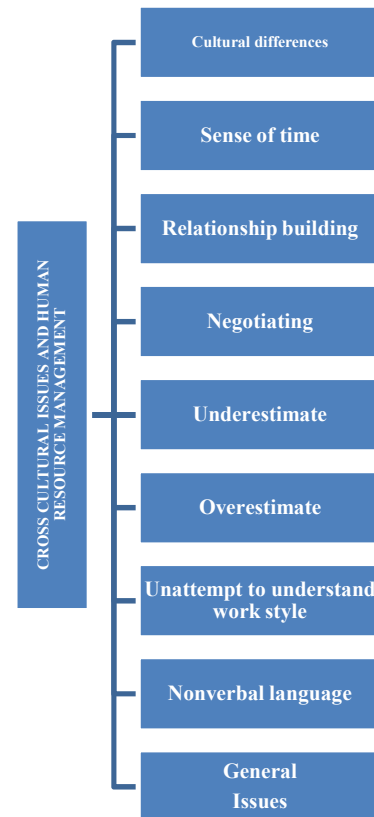
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in various Middle East countries and the point of reference was Expats from India. The primary data was collected on the basis Probability sampling methods. A sample of 200 respondents spread across the middle east countries were used for the empirical investigation. But with a response rate of 46.5% only 94 filled questionnaires were received.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was administered based on numerous factors involved in cross cultural human resources issue viz; Cultural differences, Sense of time, Relationship building, Negotiating, Underestimate, Overestimate, Understanding of Middle east working Style and General issues. The reliability test of the instrument showed a cron bac alpha measure of 0.84 which indicates that the questionnaire is very reliable.

Conceptual Framework



Cultural Differences: In managing cultural differences effectively increasing one's general cultural awareness is important. This is one of the most influencing factors in which prevails international assignment. (RT Moran *et al.* 2014).

Sense of Time: Sense of time is one among the factor generally expats face. Patience is a virtue that middle east expats must understand. People of Middle East usually take more time than normal which may annoy expats. They have a more liberal view of time in reaching agreement and negotiating deal.

Relationship Building: Generally expatriate may underestimate the concept of relationship building in Middle East. Middle East maintains healthy relationship with most of the expats, in particularly executives. In most of the cases Indian view point of personal relationship is not in practice by Middle East Citizens.

Negotiation: International negotiation requires the ability to meet special challenges and deal with the unknown activities. Sometimes cross-cultural communication may work against their own best interests during international negotiations. Skilled business negotiators know how to analyze each situation, set up negotiations in ways that are advantageous for their side, cope with cultural differences of Middle East, deal

with foreign bureaucracies, and manage the international negotiation process to reach a deal.

Underestimate: Underestimation of local's capability and ability of work knowledge is one among few mistakes of expatriate. It can even result in conflict and squandered goodwill. This perception is application in Middle East, were expatriate may underestimate their potentials.

Overestimate: Expatriate may get disappointed the in case of lack coordination due to incapability of locals to understand the conceptual knowledge. This may be due to cultural and educational gap between India and Middle East citizens which leads to the gap between foreigners, expatriates and locales.

No attempt to Understand Middle East work culture: Expatriates are mostly obsessed with achieving an organizational and personal goal without considering their Middle East colleagues' reactions. They are often task-oriented without finding the flexible way to work with local staffs who seriously consider people-oriented. This can lead to conflict in workplace.

Non-Verbal communication: Nonverbal communication is one of the obstacle while communicating with other country nationals which could lead to misunderstanding while conversation. Developing a cross-cultural mindset requires being more observant and demonstrating a willingness to adjust expatriate own behavior.

General Issues: Apart from specific issues most of the expatriates faces few other issues which can categorized as general issues. That may be adjustment with food and other aspects, weather and homesickness etc. may cause expatriates negativity.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides an outline of the means and standard deviations for the calculated

Factors	Mean	SD	N
Cultural differences	2.90	0.78	94
Nonverbal language	2.82	0.75	94
Sense of time	2.89	0.82	94
Relationship building	2.25	0.66	94
Negotiating	2.86	0.75	94
Underestimate	2.32	0.58	94
Overestimate	3.34	0.74	94
Middle East working style	2.52	0.73	94
General problems	2.38	0.86	94

Source: Field Study

Cross cultural issues are scored based on the nine factors viz. Cultural differences, Nonverbal language, Sense of time, Relationship building, Negotiating, Underestimate, Overestimate, Middle East working style and General Problems. The study reveals that respondents were most content with Overestimation (Mean=3.34, SD =.74) and least happy with is Relationship building (mean=2.25, SD=.66). The table given below shows mean and standard deviation of demographic variable

The above table shows that Female respondents are more comfortable then male respondent. Remaining variables have normal moderate adjustment with cultural differences. The table also emphasizes on P value show 0.0103 ($p > .05$) show

moderate degree of relationship with General problems and cultural differences.

Nonverbal language notably contributes to the international communication. From Table 2it is evident that less experienced, young expats face problems in nonverbal communication in Middle East than elderly people who are comparatively comfortable. In case of Gender, Female expats are facing more nonverbal communication issues than male (2.86). Here nonverbal communication found to be have moderate significance with general problems of expats 0.0854 ($P > .05$).

Sense of time is a considerable factor especially in cases where international assignment was based on different region and culture to meet the task. As per Table 2, Male employees experienced better than female employees about time sense of Middle East (.289). Similarly, other variable also shows not much unique experience in case of the time sense of Middle East. Here also there is moderate level of significance found between general problem and sense of time $p = 0.0343$ ($p > .05$).

The entire variable shows that expats are not comfortable to share their personal time or other then assignment with people of Middle East. Here P value also supports the similar arguments 0.0107 ($p > .05$) which is insignificant.

Negotiation in international negotiation is a challenging task. There are several characteristics which need to be developed in negotiation. Table 2 shows, Male respondents who are bachelors are better negotiator in comparison to others. Here P values 0.0545 ($p > .05$) shows significance relationship between general Problems and negotiation.

Table 2 reveals that most of the respondents opined neutral in case underestimating of staff members and middle East system. Study found that irrespective of variables significance relationship with general problem. (p value 0.0161)

Table 2 shows that particularly male respondent and Unmarried with less experience overestimate Middle east colleagues & their potentials, working caliber and professionalism. Here P value shows highly significant with general problems .007 ($p < .05$).

Table 2 inference that most of the employees are not so willing to adopt the culture of middle east in terms of family and professional. Adoption of once culture and working style is depending upon environment. Here P value show 1.10 which explains not significance relationship between general problem. Table 1 emphasis overall impact of all these eight factors with general problems and there is moderate significance relationship found between cross cultural issues with general problems of expats. $P = .09$ ($P > .05$).

Generally, Cross cultural issues are depending upon various dimension as mentioned in above. The study reveals that the interrelationship between the variables in terms of correlation is not very high. Table 3 shows that scores obtained from cross cultural factors viz. Cultural differences, Nonverbal language, Sense of time, Relationship building, Negotiating, Underestimate, Overestimate and General Problems.

Table 2 Table shows the Mean and SD of demographic variables

Demographic Variables Cross Cultural Factors	Gender		Age		Marital Status		Experience			P Value
	Male	Female	25-35	35-45	Married	Unmarried	1 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	
Cultural differences	2.9	2.92	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.88	2.89	0.0103
Nonverbal language	0.78	0.75	0.78	0.74	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.74	0.78	0.0854
	2.82	2.86	2.82	2.85	2.83	2.82	2.82	2.83	2.87	
Sense of time	0.75	0.74	0.75	0.71	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.67	0.73	0.0343
	2.89	2.93	2.89	2.93	2.9	2.89	2.89	2.91	2.92	
Relationship building	0.82	0.74	0.82	0.72	0.78	0.82	0.82	0.72	0.8	0.0107
	2.25	2.24	2.25	2.25	2.23	2.25	2.25	2.24	2.25	
Negotiating	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	0.67	0.67	0.0545
	2.86	2.9	2.86	2.88	2.89	2.86	2.86	2.85	2.87	
Underestimate	0.75	0.72	0.75	0.72	0.73	0.75	0.75	0.72	0.75	0.0161
	2.32	2.33	2.32	2.35	2.31	2.32	2.32	2.34	2.34	
Overestimate	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.56	0.0079
	3.34	3.37	3.34	3.38	3.36	3.34	3.34	3.37	3.33	
Middle East working style	0.74	0.68	0.74	0.69	0.71	0.74	0.74	0.69	0.75	.0087
	2.52	2.55	2.52	2.56	2.55	2.52	2.52	2.55	2.52	
General problems	0.73	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.71	0.098
	2.38	2.37	2.38	2.4	2.37	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.37	
	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.86	

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.517	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1527.597
	df	351
	Sig.	.000

Since KMO =0.716 >0.50, it can be concluded that sample size n=94 is sufficient, to conduct a factor analysis. Hence derived factors may be appropriate. From total of 24 attributes are reduced to 8 factors which contribute for overall cultural development. The factor Overestimate [My Middle East staffs have freedom on making most decisions has highest score

Table 4 Showing Rotated Matrix (Factor Analysis)

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a							
	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
It is hard to understand the meaning of Middle East's nonverbal behavior	0.74	-0.058	0.045	0.204	0.081	0.107	-0.183	0.157
Sense of time [In general, the actual time for a meeting last longer than your expectation]	0.738	-0.075	0.164	0.084	-0.151	0.191	0.206	-0.028
Middle East nonverbal language is confusing to me.	0.737	0.083	-0.077	0.102	0.216	0.009	0.009	-0.076
My culture is totally different with Middle east culture.	0.72	0.232	0.05	0.041	0.176	-0.003	-0.026	0.093
Sense of time [The Middle East's counterpart often takes longer time than those in my country for a negotiation.]	0.653	0.143	0.111	0.137	-0.068	-0.09	0.492	-0.015
Middle East's non-verbal cues are different to those in my country	0.615	-0.395	0.111	0.256	-0.022	0.228	0.164	0.172
Middle East culture is strange to me	0.588	0.296	0.466	0.258	0.199	0.076	-0.263	0.044
Negotiating [It is difficult to guess Middle East counterpart's perspectives.]	0.538	0.105	-0.005	0.257	0.24	0.389	0.101	-0.409
Sense of time [The Middle East's take a liberal view of time when it comes to reach agreement.]	0.519	-0.022	-0.203	-0.113	0.05	0.376	0.467	0.131
I may not encourage my friend to come to Middle East for work	0.167	0.855	-0.061	-0.119	-0.178	0.05	0.039	-0.058
I would not like to work in Middle East for long time	0.149	0.701	0.195	0.048	0.138	-0.001	-0.111	0.149
I have problems with Middle East employees when I work there	-0.092	0.683	0.053	0.066	-0.104	0.224	0.238	0.27
Relationship building [I dislike seeing my Middle East colleagues to have a coffee or tea during working hours]	-0.068	0.12	0.817	0.125	0.091	-0.18	0.061	0.092
Underestimate [I don't encourage my staffs to suggest their ideas.]	0.073	0.034	0.812	0.246	0.044	-0.001	-0.12	0.158
Underestimate [When thing don't happen as expected, I blame the country (like, red tape, bureaucracy) instead of listening to my staff.]	0.185	-0.115	0.732	-0.258	-0.221	0.372	-0.034	0.03
Relationship building [It bothers me when I have to go out for dinner with my Middle east counterparts to discuss the business.]	0.484	0.103	0.514	0.273	-0.097	-0.084	0.268	-0.217
Relationship building [I am annoyed to be asked about my personal life.]	0.133	0.003	0.185	0.818	0.063	0.044	0.128	0.12
Negotiating [Middle East negotiators do not reveal their thoughts or feelings.]	0.314	-0.069	0.017	0.747	-0.179	0.263	-0.037	-0.091
Negotiating [It is hard to recognize Middle East counterpart's tricks on a negotiation]	0.41	0.048	0.214	0.597	-0.044	0.03	0.055	-0.38
Overestimate [I totally believe in my Middle East staff's abilities.]	0.087	-0.057	0.148	-0.093	0.9	0	0.028	-0.05
Overestimate [My Middle East staffs have freedom on making most decisions]	0.18	-0.103	-0.124	0.006	0.889	0.012	0.122	-0.003
It is not necessary to try to understand the Middle East working style	0.113	0.204	0.049	0.226	-0.02	0.815	-0.003	0.002
I am interested in exploring Middle East diversified culture	0.279	-0.469	-0.054	-0.053	0.27	0.525	0.058	0.2
Middle East working style sometimes makes me angry	0.051	0.448	-0.182	0.295	-0.172	0.483	0.401	0.19
Underestimate [I ask my staff to strictly follow my guideline at work]	0.028	0.014	-0.011	0.078	0.169	0.032	0.82	0.034
I don't like my staff working style	0.157	0.194	0.225	0.008	0.031	0.201	0.119	0.741
Overestimate [My staffs have a high standards and level of professionalism.]	-0.065	-0.434	-0.123	0.059	0.394	0.357	0.035	-0.552

0.863 and General Issues I would not like to work in Middle East scores the lowest (0.608). The classification based on factor analysis shows the primary factors and secondary factors.



Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

CONCLUSION

The globe has been reduced to a global village because of work force travelling across the world hunting for a desirable job. This has opened new avenues for behavioral scientists as they must start thinking from a broader view point and come to some conclusive decisions about cross cultural behavior. The paper emphasizes on factors that the Human resource managers must consider while they hire, train and develop manpower from different countries. Degree of priority must be based on the factor analysis that has been shown in this paper to see that people live harmonious and contribute more towards the productivity of any organization whether it is in their home country or host country. Cultural understanding may minimize the impact of cultural shock and maximizing intercultural experience, as well as professional development and organizational effectiveness.

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