

Examining the influence of burnout on job performance among selected civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The feeling of being drained, detached, and ineffective from work is a problem that contradicts the well-being of civil servants. However, there are limited researches on exploring the influence of burnout on job performance among civil servants. The study examined the influence of burnout on job performance among civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study consisted of 240 participants as employees within the civil service, who represent various departments. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested with the use of linear regression analysis. The research instruments used are the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-HSS) and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). The findings of the research indicated that burnout significantly influenced the contextual performance of the employees. The results also indicated that burnout significantly influenced counterproductive work behaviour of the workers, indicating that when the burnout is not mitigated, it could lead to increased absenteeism and presenteeism, thereby affecting diminished work output and overall productivity. Establishing support systems, such as stress management training and fostering a supportive workplace culture, can help alleviate burnout. Empowering civil servants by giving them more control over their tasks and decisions can boost job satisfaction and motivation and therefore improve the performance of their jobs significantly.

Keywords: burnout, employee, government, influence, performance, productivity

Introduction

Employees are universally recognized as the most essential resources that drive organizational productivity, profitability, and overall success. No organization can achieve sustainable growth without the effective performance of its workforce. Employee performance encompasses not only the execution of tasks but also the quality and quantity of work, adherence to deadlines, and

collaboration with colleagues, creativity, and problem-solving skills. When employees perform at high levels, organizations benefit from increased productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability, while employees themselves experience enhanced job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities. Thus, job performance serves as a critical link between individual contributions and organizational outcomes.

Scholars have long emphasized that job performance is multidimensional. Campbell et al. (1993) identified task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior as core dimensions, with more recent literature adding adaptive performance and creativity as vital components. These dimensions highlight that performance is not limited to technical execution but also involves interpersonal behaviors, innovation, and resilience in dynamic environments. Organizations today, operating in competitive and constantly changing economic landscapes, are increasingly intentional about recruiting individuals who possess unique characteristics that align with their corporate vision and can translate into collective excellence (Omollo and Juma, 2025; Lorot, 2024; Serem and Koskei, 2024). The aggregation of individual performances ultimately shapes positive organizational outcomes.

However, employee performance is not immune to challenges. One of the most pressing threats is burnout, a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. Burnout is more than fatigue; it represents a deep detachment from tasks, relationships, and the purpose behind one's efforts. Bakker and de Vries (2021) demonstrated that burnout undermines employees' ability to meet work demands, particularly in high-stress environments. Heinemann and Heuser (2022) further argued that burnout is not merely an individual issue but a systemic problem rooted in workplace culture and organizational practices. Excessive workload, lack of autonomy, and inadequate support systems are among the organizational factors that exacerbate burnout.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) conceptualized burnout in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. These dimensions manifest in diminished motivation, intolerance of effort, and feelings of inadequacy. Employees experiencing burnout often become disengaged, compromise attention to detail, and display reduced commitment, all of which contribute to declining job performance. Longitudinal evidence by Lee and Johnson (2020) revealed that burnout has cumulative effects, reducing current performance while also impairing the development of future work capabilities.

Burnout is particularly pronounced in civil service contexts. Civil servants often face heavy workloads with limited resources, bureaucratic routines, and rigid hierarchical structures that restrict autonomy. These conditions foster frustration, reduce motivation, and create feelings of powerlessness. Inadequate recognition, limited career progression, and the emotional demands of constant public interaction further exacerbate burnout. Within Nigeria's civil service, these challenges are compounded by administrative bottlenecks, political interference, and inconsistent training opportunities (Ogungbamila and Adedayo, 2021; Ayinde and Obawole, 2019). Unlike private sector employees, civil servants often lack access to performance-based incentives, flexible work arrangements, or institutionalized mental health support, leaving them vulnerable to occupational stress.

The consequences of burnout extend beyond individual well-being to organizational performance. Burnout leads to absenteeism, turnover intentions, diminished productivity, and reduced organizational commitment (Kim and Kao, 2014). It manifests subtly over time, often going unnoticed until it results in dysfunctional attitudes such as depression, isolation, and negative orientation toward colleagues (Kalliath and Kalliath, 2013). In Nigeria's public sector, Danjuma and Okafor (2024) found that physical, psychological, and emotional stress significantly predicted reduced job performance among civil servants, with excess workloads and role conflict being major contributors. Edokpolor et al. (2022) further emphasized that burnout is a tangible psychological phenomenon that directly influences job behaviors and outputs in structured institutional settings.

Given these realities, the study of burnout and its influence on job performance is both timely and necessary. Burnout undermines employee well-being, reduces organizational efficiency, and threatens the sustainability of public institutions. In the Nigerian civil service, particularly in Ogun State, localized empirical evidence is needed to understand how burnout manifests and affects job performance. Such evidence can inform targeted interventions to mitigate burnout, enhance employee resilience, and improve organizational outcomes. By investigating the lived experiences of civil servants in Abeokuta, this study seeks to provide insights that are not only relevant to the local context but also transferable to broader public sector environments.

Ultimately, this research is motivated by the recognition that employees are the backbone of organizational success, and their performance is inseparable from their well-being. Burnout, if

left unaddressed, erodes both individual and organizational potential. Therefore, the study intends to examine the influence of burnout on job performance among selected civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. This is essential for developing strategies that foster sustainable productivity, employee satisfaction, and institutional resilience.

Research hypotheses

- ✓ Burnout will significantly influence the contextual performance of the selected civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- ✓ Burnout will significantly influence the counterproductive work behaviour of the selected civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State.
- ✓ Burnout will significantly influence the job performance of the selected civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Methods

Study area

The study area for this research was Abeokuta, Ogun State. Since the creation of the state in 1976, Abeokuta as the capital of Ogun State has represented – and continues to do so – the major administrative hub of the state where civil servants that implement government policies and delivering essential public services to residents and visitors alike converge in an ever-bubbling melting pot. The participants selected for this research were chosen from the various ministries, departments, and agencies that service the government of Ogun State who are located within the State Secretariat. The selected participants were male and female employees within these establishments and who have spent a minimum of 5 years on their various posts.

Research design

The design adopted for the study was a descriptive research design, of which the dependent variable is job performance which has the dimensions of task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive work behaviour. The independent variable is burnout (comprising of components which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment). The target population for the study were the civil servants working in various ministries and departments in the civil service of Ogun State based in Abeokuta, the state

capital. The study consisted of 240 participants as employees within the civil service, who represent various departments.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was used to elicit responses on the demographic data of the respondents. The questionnaire included the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) which contains 22 items. It was developed by Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, and Jackson (1996). The responses to each item were measured using the Likert format of Never (0) to Always (6). The instrument also contained the 18-item Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) developed by Koopman (2015) to measure the three dimensions of job performance. The responses to each item were measured using the Likert response format of seldom (0) to Always (5).

Reliability of the research instrument

For the burnout scale, the following were the reliability coefficients for each of the subscales: Emotional Exhaustion at 0.90, Depersonalization at 0.79 and Personal Accomplishment at 0.71. For job performance, the reliability coefficient for the dimensions were reported as task performance at 0.83, contextual performance at .87 and counterproductive behaviour at 0.77.

Validity of the research instrument

For the purpose of the validity of the instrument, the validity of burnout, the test-retest reliability coefficient for the subscales were as follows: Emotional Exhaustion at 0.82, Depersonalization at 0.60 and Personal Accomplishment at 0.80. The internal consistency for job performance was reported as task performance at 0.78, contextual performance at 0.85 and counterproductive work behaviour at 0.79.

Data collection and analysis

The data for the study was collected over a period of 6 weeks. The respective participants were given the opportunity to freely respond to the questionnaire at their free period, so as not to interfere with their main line of duties. These questionnaires were then subsequently retrieved from them for further statistical analysis. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software-27. The analysis made use of descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis to analyse the data for the hypotheses postulated for the study.

Results

Percentages of age category of the respondents were 37.9 % (35–44 years), 33.3% (41-50 years) and 22.5% (20-30 years). Sixty-eight percent (68 %) of the respondents were married. Most of the respondents (66.3%) were in education level of B.Sc./HND certificate holders followed by 20.4% postgraduates (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	91	37.9
	Female	149	62.1
Religion	Christian	174	72.5
	Muslim	64	26.7
	Others	2	0.8
Age	20 - 30 years	54	22.5
	31 - 40 years	91	37.9
	41 - 50 years	80	33.3
	51 - 60 years	15	6.3
Marital status	Single	63	26.3
	Married	164	68.3
	Widow	8	3.3
	Divorced	5	2.1
Educational qualification	Secondary	3	1.3
	OND/NCE	29	12.1
	B.Sc./HND	159	66.3
	Postgraduates	49	20.4

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: Burnout will significantly influence the contextual performance of the selected civil servants.

Table 2. Coefficients of the influence of burnout on contextual performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10.932	1.783		6.133	0.000
Burnout	0.075	0.017	0.273	4.368	0.000

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.075$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.072$, $F(1, 248) = 20.1$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 2 reveals the analysis of the linear regression of the significant influence of burnout on contextual performance. The results showed that burnout significantly predicted contextual performance ($B = 0.075$, $SE = 0.017$, $\beta = 0.273$, $t = 4.368$, $p < .001$). The model accounted for 7.5% of the variance in contextual performance, $R^2 = 0.075$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.072$, $F(1, 248) = 20.1$, $p < 0.001$. Burnout significantly predicts contextual performance ($p < 0.001$), but the effect is modest, explaining only 7.5% of the variance. This suggests that other factors beyond burnout influence contextual performance significantly influence contextual performance among civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The hypothesis was accepted as burnout was found to significantly influence the contextual performance of the participants in this study.

Hypothesis Two: Burnout will significantly influence the counterproductive work behaviour of the selected civil servants.

Table 3. Coefficients of the influence of burnout on counterproductive work behaviour

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.253	1.166		1.074	0.284
Burnout	0.137	0.011	0.623	12.275	0.000

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.388$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.387$, $F(1, 248) = 157.3$, $p < 0.001$.

The results showed that burnout significantly predicted counterproductive work behaviour ($B = 0.137$, $SE = 0.011$, $\beta = 0.623$, $t = 12.275$, $p < 0.001$). The model accounted for 38.8% of the variance in counterproductive work behaviour, $R^2 = 0.388$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.387$, $F(1, 248) = 157.3$, $p < 0.001$ (Table 3). The hypothesis was accepted suggesting that due to the burnout that

is experienced by the respondents, they may sometimes resort to counterproductive work in the workplace, which may include absenteeism, truancy, and late-coming.

Hypothesis Three: Burnout will significantly influence the job performance of the selected civil servants.

Table 4. Coefficients of the influence of burnout on job performance

	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.871	2.546		7.805	0.000
Burnout	0.269	0.024	0.582	11.031	0.000

Model Summary: $R = 0.582$, $R^2 = 0.339$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.337$, $F(1, 248) = 127.2$, $p < 0.001$

The results indicated that burnout significantly predicted job performance ($B = 0.269$, $SE = 0.024$, $\beta = 0.582$, $t = 11.031$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 4). The model accounted for 33.9 % of the variance in job performance, $R^2 = 0.339$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.337$, $F(1, 248) = 127.2$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that burnout significantly influence job performance of the selected civil servants. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. The burnout experienced by the employees has the capability to influence the performance they put in their jobs.

Linking demographic factors, burnout, and job performance

Further to the testing of the main hypotheses postulated for the study, additional analyses were conducted to assess the influence of certain demographic variables (gender, age, and educational qualifications of the respondents) on burnout and job performance. These analyses were targeted at determining if significant variations existed across those demographic indicators and how those variations might help in furthering the understanding of patterns of job burnout and performance within the selected civil service and the people who call it their workplace.

Table 5. Independent samples t-test showing gender differences in burnout and job performance

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Burnout	Male	91	54.21	8.72	2.36	0.019*
	Female	149	51.39	9.15		
Job performance	Male	91	73.84	10.63	-1.94	0.054
	Female	149	76.28	9.87		

* $p < 0.05$

The result reveal that there is a significant gender difference in burnout, $t(238) = 2.36$, $p = 0.019$, which indicated that male civil servants reported slightly higher levels of burnout than their female colleagues (Table 5). The difference in the job performance between male and female colleagues was not statistically significant, $p > .05$, which means that the variations experienced because of gender in burnout can be linked to different role expectations within the public civil service settings and the expected differences in the coping styles of both genders.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA showing the influence of age on burnout and job performance

Dependent Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Burnout	Between Groups	842.63	3	280.88	4.26	0.006**
	Within Groups	15560.92	236	65.92		
Job performance	Between Groups	1035.42	3	345.14	3.41	0.018*
	Within Groups	23852.77	236	101.09		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 6 is a one-way ANOVA table showed that there was an influence of age on burnout, $F(3,236) = 4.26$, $p = 0.006$, and on job performance, $F(3,236) = 3.41$, $p = 0.018$. The post-hoc comparisons showed that older employees (those aged 41-60) reported a higher level of burnout and a slightly reduced level of job performance in comparison to younger employees (those aged 40 and below). This suggests that the longer an employee is exposed to occupational stressors in

their workplace over the years, the more emotional exhaustion they are likely to face, and this have implications in affecting their performance over time.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA showing the influence of educational qualification on burnout and job performance

Dependent Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Burnout	Between Groups	455.19	3	151.73	2.85	0.038*
	Within Groups	12550.78	236	53.18		
Job performance	Between Groups	874.56	3	291.52	2.97	0.033*
	Within Groups	23148.26	236	98.12		

* $p < 0.05$

It was identified from Table 7 that educational qualification had a significant influence on both burnout, $F(3,236) = 2.85$, $p = 0.038$, and job performance, $F(3,236) = 2.97$, $p = 0.033$. It indicated that respondents who had postgraduate qualifications reported lower burnout and higher job performance when compared to those with only secondary or OND/NCE qualifications. This tended towards the understanding that higher educational attainment may provide one with enhanced coping strategies, higher self-efficacy, and being able to be adaptive in their problem-solving capabilities in their public sector responsibilities.

Discussion

Hypothesis one was stated as burnout will significantly influence the contextual performance of the selected civil servants. There is a significant influence of burnout on contextual performance. The psychological underpinning that drives this outcome is the notion that burnout drains the motivational capacities of individuals to step up and go beyond the minimum in helping out a colleague, showing initiative in the work processes and showing loyalty to the organization. When employees lack these motivational resources, they are basically focusing on themselves and their basic survival in the workplace rather than going above and beyond on behalf of anyone or the organization itself in the discharge of their duties.

According to Palenzuela et al. (2019), contextual performance is significantly linked to the overall job satisfaction and well-being of professionals. Their study involving professionals in the healthcare sector noted that higher scores on burnout were significantly associated with lower

contextual performance. Also, Annor et al (2023) in a study in Ghana observed that emotional exhaustion was a mediator in the relationship between emotional labour and contextual performance, thus indicating that the processes of burnout reduced the extra-role contributions of the employees to their workplace in general and to their colleagues in particular. Another study by Purnamasari and Satria (2024), equally reported their findings as that the cynicism dimension of burnout contributed to a negative effect on the contextual performance of the respondents in that study.

Burnout will significantly influence the counterproductive work behaviour of the selected civil servants was the second hypothesis of this study. There is a significant influence of burnout on counterproductive work behaviour. The acceptance of the hypothesis was predicated on the premise that when negative events are attributed to internal factors, they often result in negative feelings about oneself and a sense of diminished personal achievement. Similarly, anger can emerge when these events are attributed to external causes. Additionally, both types of attribution are associated with a perceived lack of control over events, which can increase job burnout. This, in turn, may lead employees to channel their anger inwardly, manifesting as absenteeism and other withdrawal behaviours. It therefore reduces employees' ability to cope with work stress effectively and to manage the frustrations that come with it, thereby increasing their physical and mental disengagement from organizational norms as well as engaging in behaviours that undermine the effectiveness of their organizations.

The findings of Lubbadah (2021) support this hypothesis in their study. Their study indicated that employees suffer from job burnout and high level of counterproductive work behaviour and also noticed that they are influenced by age, marital status and educational levels, but counterproductive work behaviour was not significantly affected by gender, which indicates that employees engaged in counterproductive work behaviour irrespective their gender. Also, a study by Ogungbamila and Adedayo (2021) among personnel of the Nigerian Immigration Service found that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, which are components of burnout, significantly predicted counterproductive work behaviour in their respondents, and that psychological hardiness moderated the relationship among the variables. This thus points to the notion that when civil servants are under high stress, they may engage in deviant behaviours, and this may not bode well for officers in public service.

The hypothesis three of this study says that burnout will significantly influence the job performance of the selected civil servants. Job performance entails being able to complete tasks effectively, managing time and resources efficiently, showing work accuracy, and achieving set goals. When employees experience burnout, the aforementioned becomes significantly impacted and thus their capacity to remain engaged, productive, and committed to tasks diminishes. As a result of this, they may be prone to more errors, miss important deadlines, have difficulty concentrating, and struggle to meet the performance standard that is expected of them.

Also, beyond the obvious decline in productivity that may arise from the burnouts that civil servants experience as a result of their work experiences, there is the possibility that this state of chronic stress could lead to counterproductive work behaviours that include increased absenteeism, presenteeism, and a greater propensity to indulge in some low-level underhand corruption practices, ethical shortcuts, or bypassing legitimate means of getting work done in favour of little kickbacks – something that comes in the angle of a psychological misinterpretation in the sense of “let me get this little reward for all the ‘using’ they are ‘using’ me.

This finding was supported by the study of Bakker and de Vries (2021) who highlighted that chronic burnout leads to emotional exhaustion, impairing employees' cognitive functioning and engagement, which in turn reduces both the quality and quantity of their work. Furthermore, it is opined from this current research that persistent strain that is associated with burnout negatively affects workers' ability to effectively manage job demands, ultimately compromising their overall performance and well-being and by extension the overall performance and well-being of the organization itself.

Contextualizing the findings from this hypothesis also gain support from the research of Durotolu and Marutha (2024) and Ayinde and Obawole (2019) in their research on state civil servants which shows factors common in the Nigerian public sector (such as role ambiguity, inadequate pay, heavy workloads, and constrained or limited resources) being associated with higher burnout scores and that shows concomitant decreases in the organizational commitment and productivity of the employees – indicators of employee performance at their workplaces – suggesting a close alignment with this current study set in Abeokuta.

This finding is also corroborated by the research of Bhat and Khan (2022) who in their study findings, on the other hand, show a link between job burnout and work performance. As a result,

increased job burnout will negatively impact work performance. According to this viewpoint, employees and workers who experience excessive fatigue, stress, tiredness or burnout may appear detached from the world around them, exhausted, and under stress on personal and professional levels.

The supplementary analyses that were conducted to examine the influence of demographic variables on burnout and job performance further added to the interpretation given to the main hypotheses of the study. Burnout and job performance differed significantly across those variables of gender, age, and educational qualification. Male civil servants were found to exhibit higher levels of burnout than their female colleagues, and older workers and those who possess lower educational qualifications reporting greater burnout and a slightly reduced job performance. This analysis suggests that some personal characteristics of an individual may exacerbate or cushion the impact that burnout may have on employees work behaviours and performance outcomes.

These findings gain corroboration from the study of Alrawashdeh et al. (2021) who observed that gender variations in burnout are linked to different gender role expectations in relation to emotional fatigue and job efficiency. It is thought that men and women are judged differently as far as reporting burnout is concerned.

The finding on age of employees and their experience of burnout is corroborated by Zhao et al. (2022), who in their study observed that in comparisons of age and the number of years individuals have committed to their civil service engagement, when employees have a prolonged exposure to occupational stressors, this will increase their emotional exhaustion. This means that they feel tired and lack the enthusiasm to continue the work with the strength and vigour it requires, or that can be found in younger employees

Also, the identification of lower job burnout and higher performance among civil servants who are more educated aligns with the findings of Bakker et al. (2023) and Chen and Lee (2021) in their studies where they emphasized the role of cognitive resources and managing the work-related stress they encounter with adaptive competence. They opined that when employees attain higher levels in their academic and professional qualifications, these may enhance their coping strategies, equipping them with better psychological resources to handle their work situations

and challenges much better because those qualifications could have given them better problem-solving and agentic potentials to handle their diverse roles and expectations.

Conclusions

The study investigated the influence of burnout on job performance among civil servants in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The study identified that the contextual performance of the respondents was influenced by burnout, that counterproductive work behaviour was also influenced by the burnout experienced by the respondents. It was observed that burnout influenced job performance negatively. With a high level of job performance, employees can complete tasks more efficiently and effectively. This will lead to increased productivity within government agencies, which can eventually benefit the public with efficient service delivery and prompt attention to clients, customers, and the teeming business and corporate public who relate with them in general. Civil servants who perform at a high level can provide better service to the public with speed, accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness. This may include faster response times, more accurate information, and greater attention to detail in completing tasks ultimately improving the public perception of civil service in the state. Mitigating burnout is crucial for enhancing job performance among civil servants. One effective approach is better workload management, which involves distributing tasks more evenly and setting realistic goals to reduce stress. Establishing support systems, such as counselling services, stress management training and fostering a supportive workplace culture, can also help alleviate burnout. Empowering civil servants by giving them more control over their tasks and decisions can boost job satisfaction and motivation and therefore improve the performance of their jobs significantly. High levels of personal accomplishment are linked to lower rates of burnout; therefore, organizations should invest in providing employees with the necessary skills and resources to boost their confidence. Achieving this goal may involve regular training and helping workers adapt to current technologies. Employers should focus on making jobs more engaging to boost motivation. Higher motivation can lead to lower burnout rates. They can strengthen organizational support systems through encouragement of open communication where employees have channels to voice their concerns about workload and workplace stress without fear of reprisal. They should promote a sense of community among staff through team building exercises and peer support groups. Offering recognition and rewards, including acknowledging hard work and providing opportunities for career growth, helps combat feelings of inadequacy. Possible ways to manage

this include offering fun activities and regular mental health check-ins for employees. Government should equally establish well-structured internal policies that address workplace mental health and offer an employee assistance programme that provides confidential counselling, guidance services and psychological support to employees that may be experiencing emotional stress or practically just a safe space where they can unburden their personal and professional concerns. Employees should focus on their work environment and purpose to boost motivation and productivity. They should also learn to manage their time, plan ahead, and prioritize tasks to help lower job burnout, exhaustion, and disengagement at work. Employees should also do their best to find a balance between work and their personal lives such that one does not affect the other.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with anyone, any other researcher, institution, and organization.

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