

## EXPLORING THE EFFICACY OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL AT DISTRICT PANJGUR, BALOCHISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically explore the effectiveness of students' experiences of community involvement in the learning outcomes of public secondary schools at District, Panjgur, Balochistan; is a qualitative study of the impacts of community involvement on the students' learning outcomes. Through a case study methodology, the research is about how students' involvement in the community based activities affects their academic growth, social development and learning experience in general. In depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation were used to gather data with students, teachers, parents and community members. The results show that community involvement improves students; understanding of practical issues, developing their critical thinking and social responsibility, and increasing the link between academic learning and real world environments. Although these benefits are important, they are challenged by factors like lack of community resources and unreliable community involvement. This research clearly emphasizes a greater role of community involvement within the educational framework as a tool of holistic development. The goal is to provide these insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop strategies that boost learning outcomes in resource constrained contexts. Thus, the study recommends that there is in dire need of outreach campaigns to increase community awareness about the importance of education and variety of media channels should be used to reach out to parents and other community members to engage them in the support of their children's learning.

**Keywords:** Community involvement, perception, student's perception, public schools, school activities.

### INTRODUCTION

Community is crucial to the cohesiveness and advancement of society. It is defined by shared language, customs, laws, and geography. Community provides a forum for members, whether officially or unofficially organized, to work together to solve problems by accomplishing shared objectives (Imran, 2017). However, community involvement is necessary to address various interconnected issues like wealth, child

development, education, safety, aggression, and law-breaking as well as housing and jobs. It also takes a coordinated effort from all stakeholders to empower families, communities, and schools while fostering resilience, well-being, and protective factors (Desforjes, et al, 2013 and Ogunbiyi, 2017). Education is a group endeavor that necessitates the active involvement of all stakeholders rather than an isolated group of people. The quality and

efficacy of institutional activities are improved by community involvement in educational processes. It benefits society as a whole (Said, 2013). By taking part in school initiatives, families and other community entities can treat psychosocial issues, improve parenting and socialization, and strengthen the bonds that bind families and communities together.

In order to clarify how families, communities, and schools can collaborate effectively, (Stephen, 2014) provides a summary of the many forms of involvement. Among these involvements are the following: Parenting: establishing home circumstances that facilitate children's academic success at school is made easier for all families through parenting; Designing efficient channels of communication between schools and homes will help parents stay informed about their children's academic progress and school programming, and it will also help teachers gain insight into how well their students are doing at home. Volunteering: This is the process of enlisting and planning parental support and assistance; Learning at home: This aims to give parents advice and suggestions on how to support their children at home with schoolwork and other curriculum-related activities, planning, and decision-making; Making decisions is essential for parent leaders and representatives to attend school meetings, for families to be involved in school decisions, and Working together with the community: This makes it easier to find and use community resources and services to support family practices, student instruction, and school programs (Stephen, 2014).

Additionally, the richest province in Pakistan, Balochistan, really faces numerous challenges in the field of education, including insufficient funding, insufficient infrastructure, unequal access to resources, high-quality education, and highly qualified teachers (Zaidi, 2021). In particular, by assessing how students in District Panjgur see community involvement across various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations, this study highlights variations in community-school collaborations and offer targeted strategies to diminish educational inequity (Kakar, 2022). Thus, in order to progress the delivery of education, programs and initiatives are planned, designed, coordinated, executed, overseen, monitored, and evaluated with the progressive participation of parents, families, and local communities. In numerous fields, such as

urban re-development, health, education, and the environment, community involvement has evolved into a core principle. Community involvement has been a popular approach across various industries for reasons like social cohesion, efficiency, and equity (Brown, L. M., & Green, P. K, 2021).

### Literature Review

Education has the potential to benefit everyone, everywhere, all one needs is the desire to see changes occur. However, these enhancements can only be accomplished by actively participating in the community rather than by remaining inactive. More people are realizing that integrating the community into school is essential to improving community development and individual learning outcomes (Epstein & Sanders, 2014). Research indicates that involving students in community service projects enhances their academic abilities while also fostering civic engagement and social cohesiveness (Sanders, 2016). However, participating in the community helps children develop socially and emotionally in addition to academically. Students gain a feeling of accountability, empathy, and community through involvement and community service (Billig, 2000).

The past researches have determined that the school and the students must leave the two-dimensional boundaries of the classroom and grasp the range of educational opportunities. When engaging in outreach programs, academic institutions ought to guarantee that students actively participate and engage with the community (Brown, et, al, 2023). If education does not advance the common good, it is useless since each group has its own unique body of wisdom-cum-information along with educational experiences, every community has just grown. Therefore, when students go into the field, they are not only imparting their knowledge but also receiving the chance to learn about the particular knowledge and practices of each community (Smith. J. A, 2023). Involvement in the community improves educational outcomes because a school's interaction with the community increases its effectiveness. A school's mission and vision serve as a road-map for a fruitful school-community relationship that accomplishes learning goals through initiatives that are integrated into the curriculum. Besides these, programs showing parent-school associations enhance education encourage families, foster community support, and

raise student success and accomplishment have all been documented. It is widely held that ensuring high-quality education is largely dependent on community involvement (Gul et al, 2022).

The research further has investigated that community involvement in education includes a broad range of activities and partnerships that integrate the resources and strengths of the community with the educational processes of schools. This holistic approach not only enriches the learning experience, but also fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility among students (Smith, J. A, 2023). On the other hand, resource sharing between schools and the community is another characteristic that makes community involvement unique. This can involve material resources, skills, volunteer labor, and money (Brown, L. M, 2023); besides these, Sanders (2006) points out that by giving schools access to extra chances and support that they might not otherwise have, resource sharing can dramatically improve the quality of education. Local businesses may provide internships or apprenticeships, for instance, while community organizations may offer tutoring services or after-school programs.

Moreover, Jhon (2015) explored the extent of community involvement in decision-making and planning processes for democratic education which delves into the distinctions of community involvement within the educational context and intended to gain insight into the viewpoints of stakeholders and personal reports of community involvement in educational planning and decision-making by employing these strategies. More noticeably, the parent community is not actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes pertaining to their children's education, which is highly problematic (Ocan, 2017).

Furthermore, the research sheds light on the challenges and opportunities associated with community participation in educational planning and decision-making; the results demonstrate that in order to improve the overall standard and effectiveness of the educational system, proactive measures to increase community awareness and commitment are required. Therefore, community involvement in education is characterized by cooperative collaborations, inclusive participation, resource sharing, service learning, cultural relevance, ongoing engagement, and a focus on holistic development (Jhon, et al, 2015). Various studies show that students' academic confidence

can be increased through community involvement and the role of community involvement in education has been widely studied, particularly its impact on students' learning outcomes. It is well-documented that the experiences of the students demonstrate how effective community involvement is improving their learning outcomes. Students that are involved in the community are more motivated, self-assured, and exposed to a wider range of viewpoints as compare to others who are far away from the community (Said, 2016). (Muthoni, 2015) proposed, with the previous studies, the educational establishments should take the initiative to notify all pertinent stakeholders about the various ways they may be involved in school management. By encouraging stakeholders to participate more meaningfully in decision-making processes and by cultivating greater knowledge and understanding, schools can improve the management and effectiveness of public secondary schools in Machakos County. Ergo, it takes coordinated efforts from a variety of stakeholders, including legislators, educators, parents, and the general public, to promote educational quality. Above all, effective instruction has a significant impact on students' learning results. Collaborative learning, formative assessment, and differentiated instruction are examples of evidence-based teaching strategies that can be used to improve student engagement and accomplishment (Hattie, 2009).

### **Material and Methods**

For this study, a qualitative research methodology was used, with the primary focus on conducting a case study as research strategy. Qualitative research is very appropriate for investigating the complicated and context-specific phenomena (Brinkmann, 2022). With reference to the efficacy of students' experiences on community involvement, qualitative research offers an in-depth investigation of the complexities of the problem. Within the methodology of qualitative research, case study is selected to be the research strategy because of numerous compelling factors. Case studies are specifically well-suited to the research works, which are aimed at exploring complex, diverse and context-specific issues within their real-world settings (Creswell, 2017). Case study is a thorough study of one particular unit with the aim of generalizing across the larger set of units. So, it is a method of research, which consists

of a deep investigation of one or more instances or cases within their natural context and the selection of these cases is made as they are believed to offer a diverse and relevant source of information for the research question (Thomas, 2021).

So far as the context of this study is concerned, the “cases” are two selected schools, which are part of a larger chain of governmental schools. This study focused on comprehending the viewpoints of students’ experiences on their learning outcomes in District, Panjgur Balochistan. Two schools, each of which represented a branch of the government school system, provided the data for the collection. In order to explore a thorough understanding of students’ experiences and their learning outcomes on community involvement, the sample comprised school teachers, students, parents and community members. The participants for this study were depended on the researcher’s unique goals which were in line with his perspective. The total population was 25. This study’s subjects included 05 parents, 05 instructors, 05 community members, and 10 students in this study. These participants were interviewed for this study. The design of the sampling process is a crucial part of every research project. It describes the method of choosing a portion of people, things, or events from a wider population to include in the research (Creswell, J. W, 2014).

For this study, the researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique. The sole reason for using purposive sampling was to ensure that the sample represents the population of interest effectively. The researcher aimed to select participants who possessed specific qualities or experiences that are relevant to the research topic. By doing so, they can gather in-depth and detailed insights that may not be available through other sampling techniques.

Since the school profile highlights the students’ involvement in community activities, data collection for the current study were conducted at Govt Girls High School and Govt Boys High School in Sordo, District Panjgur, Balochistan. Non-profit groups operate within the district, working in conjunction with the schools to offer students opportunity to engage in community service. From each school, the students of grade 9th and 10th were selected for the data collection and the total sample size for students was only 10 from the target population. The study utilized a purposive sampling strategy to identify individuals

who could offer a range of opinions on the subject matter and the research objectives are fully addressed (Drolet et al, 2023). The sampling process considered factors such as grade level, gender, academic performance, and socioeconomic background to ensure diversity within the sample and capture a range of perspectives (Creswell, 2017).

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants, consisting of 05 teachers, 05 parents, 10 students and 05 community members in District, Panjgur, Balochistan, Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility, allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants’ experiences, perspectives, and insights related to community involvement (King & Horrocks, 2022).

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data. This method involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the research questions. The coding process began with open coding, where initial themes were identified and labeled. Then, the coding was used to identify core themes that encapsulated the key findings of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis focused on several key areas: students’ perception and experiences, Motivational Factors and Outcomes, Barriers and Challenges to Effective Community Involvement, and recommendations for further study.

## Results and Discussion:

### Students’ perception and experiences

It is crucial to understand that motivation plays an immense role; however, most respondents expressed that the motivation to participate in community work was motivated by a passion to make a difference in their communities and to complement learning from the classroom with experiential learning. In addition, the data shows the different ways students interact within their communities, like joining sporting teams, participating in cultural festivals, and study groups or local clean-ups. For these students, participating in community life was not just a means of contributing to societal well-being, but also an opportunity for them to apply what they learned conceptually to real world situations.

*“Joining the local sports team taught me discipline and teamwork. It is not just about the game; it is about how we work together and*

support each other, even in school projects.” A student quoted

Another student shared:

*“The cultural festivals we organize every year connect me to my roots and give me a chance to learn about leadership and organizing events.”*

The analysis reveals that community work was beneficial in terms of developing life skills such as collaboration, communication, care for others, and discipline. Moreover, their participation in organizing cultural events was crucial to developing leadership skills.

A lot of students said they had benefited from community work because it helped them to engage in work that applied their theoretical knowledge in the context of collaborating and practicing. An example of the benefits of study groups was what the students who participated in them said: working together with their peers enabled them to approach complex problems through teamwork, thereby improving their ability to think critically and solve problems. This collaborative environment fostered peer to peer learning to exchange ideas, clarify concepts and fill the knowledge gap.

*“During our community clean-up drive, I realized how environmental science lessons in school are connected to real-life problems. It made learning more meaningful for me.”* A student stated

The interviewed data indicate that the community involvement turned out to be a very powerful way to develop emotionally and socially. The solidarity and teamwork aspect of these activities taught students how to achieve a sense of companionship and teamwork that was needed for students to feel more connected to their peers and community. It was especially important for students who never felt like they belonged or lacked self-confidence. By working with widely varying groups, they were able to get some exposure to people from different backgrounds, enabling them to understand how to understand people from different backgrounds and to be inclusive. All through such activities as collaborative problem solving, organizing an event, group discussions and etc encouraged them to share ideas, express

their thoughts, and listen to other ideas actively.

Most importantly, community involvement is a transformative experience, not in terms of academic growth, but also in the emotional and social life of students.

*“Volunteering at the local library gave me the chance to interact with people of all ages. I learned how to communicate better and gained confidence in public speaking.”*

Another student mentioned: *“Being part of community events made me feel valued. It is like I have a role in making things better around me, and that feeling is priceless.”*

It is crucial to note that when students participate in community service, they have a great feeling of pride. As individuals feel a feeling of fulfillment from helping others, their comments suggest that community service cultivates empathy, responsibility, and appreciation in them.

*“My parents always encourage me to take part in community events. They say it’s good for my learning and personal growth.”*

Some students say, however, that not all parents and members of the community had the same enthusiasm for their students’ participation in community activities. However, they attributed this to unknowing what community involvement held and thinking that it was lower on the list than academics.

A parent noted, *“We always tell our children that learning doesn’t only happen in classrooms. Being involved in the community teaches them values they can’t learn from books.”*

Students shared that encouragement and guidance from their teachers helped them bring effective initiatives. Teachers created opportunities for students to offer service meaningfully to their communities by including community involvement in their teaching practices, such as by assigning service: learning projects or by leading extracurricular activities. They consistently supported students, either through mentorship, accepting students’ efforts, providing structured platforms for engagement, which made students, feel the purpose and confidence to relate actively and exploit the advantages of community work.

### **Barriers and Challenges to effective community involvement**

Drawing on primary data from the interviews with students, parents, instructors, and community members, this part looks at the barriers and challenges that prevent effective community involvement to improve students' learning outcomes. The most challenging problems were found including students struggle with strike a balance between academic tasks and participation with the community.

*"In our village, there are very few programs for students. If we want to participate, we often have to travel long distances, which isn't always possible,"* shared one student. On the other hand, *"Our children are already so busy with their studies. Adding community work to their schedule can feel overwhelming at times,"* one parent explained.

One cited hurdle for students and families was a lack of structured and accessible community programs—most notably in rural and underserved communities. We often heard that there is a lack of initiatives targeting the students' interests and developmental needs. Others noted the absence of well-organized platforms of meaningful engagement, and the lack of available resources, such as funding, facilities and transportation.

An instructor remarked, *"We have great ideas for engaging students with the community, but without proper resources, it's difficult to implement them."*

A big problem was identified was the absence of resources and institutional support to execute proper community involvement. Indeed, many schools struggled to set up community programs because they could not afford materials, transportation or infrastructure to organize them. Moreover, these initiatives faced the shortage of staff for the planning and supervision for their implementation. But they said that without institutional support, it was difficult to implement community engagement into the school curriculum or guarantee sustainability, and called for greater investment and support to make those programs available and meaningful.

In addition, societal norms and expectations sometimes limited students – mostly, girls – from participating in public community activities. The limited adoption of community involvement also restricted from this lack of understanding that made the transformative potential of community involvement just too unfamiliar, yet required campaigns to change these perceptions and make the value of community involvement as a vital part of holistic education clear. *"Some parents in our*

*community don't see the value in these activities. They think school is enough, and anything extra is a waste of time,"* a teacher explained.

In particular, students often complained of being resisted or not encouraged enough by some community members to fully participate in the activities of the community. Many times, this resistance arose from the misconceptions about what the purpose and value of such efforts are. Some community members thought these activities are not needed to distract students' from academics or anything else; they did not understand that these activities could, in fact, be beneficial for students to enhance their personal and academic development.

*"I'd love to be more involved in my child's education, but my work hours make it very difficult."* A parent commented

*"Reaching the program location is often a struggle. If it were closer, more students would join,"* one student remarked.

Improved coordination and communication between schools and community members were also stressed as an important way to overcome some of the challenges keeping community involvement from being effective. Stronger partnerships and regular dialogue, they wrote, could result in more aligned goals, more shared resources and more structured and accessible programs for students. These efforts could bridge understanding gaps between schools, parents, and local organizations, enhance the support system and guarantee community initiatives to be integrated better into students' school experiences.

Barriers to parental and community involvement were very evident, busy schedules and lack of awareness were the major obstacles. Multiple parents said they did not seem to have time to take part in school or community initiatives due to work commitments and responsibilities at home. In families where two parents worked or where care giving responsibilities of greater emphasis were present, these time constraints were most pronounced. Because of this, parents often found it difficult to offer such support to their children's community engagement, including attending events, coordinating logistics and securing participation to further actively participate. However, this is lack of active involvement not only restricted the extent of encouragement students received, but also decreased the effectiveness of the community programs, which counted on the

collaboration of families and communities for their effectiveness.

*"There's a gap between what schools expect from us and what we can provide. Better collaboration could help bridge that gap,"* a community member suggested.

*"If schools and communities work together more closely, we can create opportunities that are accessible and beneficial for everyone,"* said one instructor.

In spite of these barriers, both students and stakeholders were committed to making progress, and overcoming the hurdles, to increase community involvement. Practical solutions were suggested, like providing schools and organizations with more funding to support community programs allowing them to offer more structured and accessible initiatives. In addition, we stressed the need to raise awareness about the advantages of community engagement as a way to alter attitudes and boost parent, teacher, and local leader participation. Moreover, better logistical support, including reliable transportation and properly developed facilities were identified as key to guaranteeing equal access to community activities especially to students in remote or deprived areas.

### Implications

This study has many practical and theoretical implications. They propose, practically, the inclusion of community based learning as part of educational policies and curricula as a way to help improve academic performance as well as cultivate indispensable life skills. As a theory, the study is intended to deepen understanding of the application of experiential and constructivist learning frameworks in various environments. Moreover, it also creates room for subsequent research, especially longitudinal ones to examine the long term influence of community involvement within the college's academic, personal and professional development of students (Phullan, 2023). This study refutes the notion that community involvement can be a backbone of contemporary education. Our work has shown how schools with community based learning embedded in the educational practice can foster inclusive and empowering contexts for academic excellence, social competence and civic responsibility by addressing systemic barriers. These efforts help individual students but also serve a larger purpose of helping us build more engaged and more equitable societies.

Although the advantages of community involvement are evident, the study demonstrates stickiness of barriers to effective community involvement. Recurring problems that students contend with in the context of time constraints, logistical challenges, and resource limitations to majority are the students in rural areas where access to structured programs are still rare. Rural students often face problems with lack of transportation, limited opportunities for extracurricular activities and insufficient institutional support, rendering them to a difficult participation in meaningful community involvement (Faisal, 2023). The socio-economic disparity is further unfolding these challenges and underprivileged students are mostly adversely impacted, and denied easy access to the resources needed to enable participation. The cultural and social undervaluation of community work makes it even more difficult to increase participation. Besides these, a stark lack of awareness of longer term benefits of community involvement, as well as a traditional mindset that puts academics before community, often means that students and parents alike see a disservice to acting on and with the community. Gender norms and the expectations of the society in some communities' present barriers to female students, restricting their mobility and limiting their participation in community projects that are public facing. In short, the barriers to these experiences reveal systemic inequities that must be addressed with targeted interventions for provision of equitable access to community based learning opportunities (Bulor et, al, 2019).

### Conclusion

The outcome of this study is synthesized, as the study highlights the main theme of the student experience, factors that motivate the students to participate in community involvement and challenges faced by the students and the community for improving the learning outcome through community involvement. In addition, it emphasizes the practical implications, offers theoretical contributions, and proposes recommendations for future research and policy development. Underlying the study is a key reminder: community involvement is critical to how students form their educational experiences, and ultimately, their outcomes. Participation in community work by students has been uncovered also to contribute not only the academic

development, but the emotional and social development of the students too (Kher, 2022). Through environmental initiatives, sports teams, cultural events and study groups, students have the chance to apply what they learn in the classroom in real life and gain understanding of real life situations and important lifelong skills. An example of such is environmental initiatives which allow students to associate scientific concepts with practical application, while making appreciating diversity and developing interpersonal communication skills through cultural events. Just like sports and team work builds the skills of collaboration, resilience, and leadership that are the skills needed outside of the classroom. This validates the necessity of integrating community based learning to the larger educational framework as an approach to complete, student development (Andrews, 2018).

In addition, the study also underscores the impulse reasons that mobilize students to take part in community work such as a sense of duty, personal development and the inspiration of their teachers, parents and fellow students. The experiential nature of community based activities allows these as linking these motivational aspects with the theory of constructivist and experiential learning of learning through contextual and active learning (Sadiq, 2020). The findings revealed in the discoveries are ways such participation leads to a sense of belongingness, responsibility towards civic duties, and consciousness of culture, all of which are necessary for raising productive and socially useful personalities and it also takes typical of the challenges and disparities to be faced in providing opportunities to meaningfully engage in the community. For instance, rural students have limited resources and structural barriers from which to draw on, compared to urban students. It is against this backdrop that equitable access to community based programs is needed much more. These disparities can be addressed with interventions such as mobile learning units, partnerships with local organizations, or inclusive curriculum design that brings students, particularly those from underserved populations, closer to transformative learning experiences.

The findings highlight the essential need for collaboration among schools, parents, and communities to create, offer structured, and meaningful opportunities for students if community engagement is going to be realized in

the transformative way outlined in the philosophy. Ultimately, schools should embrace their duty to bring this community based learning into their curricula, creating projects that merge with academic objectives, and that are inherently experiential. These initiatives should provide practical means for students to use classroom knowledge in practice, as a way of contributing to students' academic and personal growth.

Hence through the broader literature and theoretical frameworks this study examined how students' experiences within their communities, incentive to participate, and challenges to their involvement affect the process of learning, and implications for actions by the schools, the community and the policymakers. Their work also showed students' engagement in community work and the interaction of enthusiasm, learning, and mutual benefit. In addition to promoting personal growth, it enhances students' social skills, academic performance and sense of responsibility. These activities play an important role in helping students acquire skills like teamwork, leadership and communication skills which are necessary for success not only in academics but also in their professional lives. Furthermore, the outcomes demonstrate that experiential learning increases students' understanding of curriculum concepts as they apply theoretical knowledge to practical applications within organizing community events or solving community issues (Afzal & Hussain, 2020).

### Recommendations

- 1) There should be outreach campaign to increase community awareness about the importance of education. Variety of media channels should be used to reach out to parents and other community members to engage them in the support of their children's schools.
- 2) Community work should be part of the school curriculum and success indicators for students and their assessment need to be conceptualized.
- 3) In order to encourage community members to become more involved in school management-cum-activities, school administrators should make sure that there are positive relationships between the school and the community.
- 4) They should organize seminars and community gatherings to honor fruitful

collaborations and highlight how they have influenced students' development.

5) By bringing communities and schools together, school community councils should promote community involvement in school reform and educational management.

6) Formal partnerships should be established between schools and non-profits, businesses, and community organizations to provide organized possibilities for student involvement.

7) The authorities should create such a mechanism for community engagement that supports the schools' instructional objectives.

8) The government should enforce laws, regulations and sanctions that will compel parents and communities to be actively involved in the management of education.

9) Those people who contributed in one way or the other in educational management should be recognized by publishing their names in newspapers, radio and television to foster community participation in education.

10) NGOs could conduct training for school management committee and PTAs and members of the local community to increase community participation and involvement in school resource mobilization, planning and monitoring of activities.

11) School administrators and teachers must encourage students to work on real-world community concerns as part of their courses through project-based learning.

12) The stakeholders should conduct awareness campaigns for parents and community members to emphasize the importance of their role in education.

13) The students ought to be involved in the planning and decision-making of community engagement activities to ensure relevance and increased ownership.

14) The government should assist these initiatives through resources, funding, and policy frameworks for sustainability.

15) Schools should collaborate with local organizations and leaders to create meaningful student involvement opportunities.

16) Teachers should receive trainings to align community-based projects with academic goals.

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