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	<p>Title of research article</p> <p><b>Occupational Alienation: A Comprehensive Theoretical Examination of its Conceptual Foundations, Determinant Factors, and Organizational Implications</b></p>
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<p><b>Keywords</b></p>	<p>Occupational Alienation; Work Environment; Organizational Factors; Personal Factors; Performance; Job Satisfaction; Productivity</p>
<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>Occupational alienation has become a salient issue within the modern workplace, particularly in light of profound economic, technological, and organizational changes. This article provides a comprehensive theoretical analysis of the concept, tracing its intellectual foundations in sociology, psychology, and management science, and examining its multi-dimensional nature. The discussion explores how occupational alienation emerges as a response to structural and personal factors, including organizational design, leadership styles, job characteristics, individual expectations, and socio-cultural influences.</p> <p>The paper further highlights the far-reaching implications of alienation for both employees and organizations. At the individual level, it can manifest as emotional detachment, loss of purpose, low motivation, and diminished psychological well-being. At the organizational level, it is often associated with decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, lower performance, absenteeism, and higher turnover rates.</p> <p>Through an integrative framework, the article emphasizes the importance of recognizing occupational alienation not merely as an individual experience but as a systemic phenomenon deeply embedded within the organizational environment. By addressing its drivers, organizations may mitigate its negative effects, fostering a healthier work climate and enhancing both productivity and employee well-being.</p>	
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## 1. Introduction

Occupational alienation is one of the organizational phenomena that has attracted the attention of researchers in sociology, psychology, and management, due to its direct connection to the quality of professional life and its impact on both individual and organizational performance. In the context of economic and technological transformations, workers often experience a sense of detachment from themselves and their professional environment, which negatively affects their levels of satisfaction, commitment, and belonging. The seriousness of this phenomenon lies in its dual impact: not only on the individual but also on the organization, leading to decreased productivity and higher turnover rates.

Based on this, the study raises the following research problem: **What is occupational alienation, and what are the factors explaining its emergence and its implications for both the individual and the organization?**

## 2. The Concept of Occupational Alienation

Occupational alienation is considered one of the human phenomena that an individual may encounter in his professional life within an organization. Thus, it can be said that this phenomenon is present in any organizational setting, yet its intensity, causes, and manifestations vary depending on the characteristics and conditions of each institution.

Some scholars define it as a set of negative feelings experienced by the individual toward his job as a result of the interaction of various causes, influences, and factors, such as feeling neglected, undervalued, and unappreciated, which leads to a sense of failing to achieve self-fulfillment (Jaber, 2013).

According to Akar (2018), occupational alienation reflects employees' feelings of disappointment in the work environment, isolation, and indifference toward their tasks. It includes feelings of losing control over work and being unable to participate in setting effective goals, which in turn leads to apathy and negligence (Basac, 2016).

It has also been defined as employees' perception of weak belonging to the organization and its dominant culture due to the loss of control and the inability to perform tasks with willingness and responsibility, as these do not align with their personal desires and career aspirations (Abbas, 2018).

Furthermore, Amouda (2018) defined it as an individual's sense of not belonging to his institution and losing the desire to remain within it, as it does not serve his ambitions, value his efforts, support his skills and abilities, or foster his career development. Such a situation, whether caused by organizational or individual factors, has negative repercussions for both the institution and the employee.

## 3. Factors Leading to Occupational Alienation

The factors leading to occupational alienation are diverse. Some are related to the organization, such as weak administrative effectiveness, leadership deficiencies, incentive and training systems; while others are linked to employees themselves, such as lack of competence, poor adjustment, idleness, introversion, social isolation, and poor time management. These factors can be outlined as follows:

### 3.1 Organizational Factors

An organizational environment that fails to reward employees equitably, distributes resources unfairly, implements unjust procedures, or excludes employees from decision-making processes often leads to alienation. Moreover, allocation processes that disregard the perspectives, needs, and values of employees may result in feelings of isolation and estrangement within the organization (Adnan et al., 2011). The most significant factors include:

- a) **Technology:** The recent digital revolution has brought about widespread use of machines and computer-based tools essential to organizational work. While technology has contributed to organizational advancement, it has also led employees to feel displaced by machines, generating alienation, routine work, and even psychological problems (Faiza et al., 2020; Sheta, 1999).
- b) **Organizational Size:** Large organizations may hinder managerial supervision and create inefficiencies. Employees may feel neglected or treated equally to underperforming colleagues, resulting in perceptions of injustice, frustration, and alienation (Al-Jaber, 2016; Faiza et al., 2020).
- c) **Excessive Competition:** While healthy competition can enhance performance, unethical practices or unfair advantages can cause frustration among skilled employees, leading to apathy, reduced performance, and alienation (Mansour, 2007).
- d) **Weak Administrative Effectiveness:** Ineffective planning, poor follow-up, lack of delegation, and insufficient employee autonomy contribute to alienation. Employees who cannot participate in decision-making or work outside their area of specialization are more likely to feel detached (Ben Zahi, 2011; Adnan, 2011; Al-Eisawi, 1997).
- e) **Flaws in Performance Appraisal:** Biased evaluations influenced by favoritism, personal biases, or subjective judgments undermine trust, weaken employee-management relations, and foster alienation (Al-Mutairi, 2016; Al-Ghamri, 2002).
- f) **Absence of Organizational Justice:** Discrimination among employees, unequal access to information, and biased task distribution generate alienation (Daham et al., 2018).
- g) **Weak Incentive Systems:** Lack of fair and transparent rewards, reliance on personal relations, and mismatch between effort and compensation foster dissatisfaction and alienation (Daham et al., 2018; Abdulatif, 1999).
- h) **Ineffective Communication and Rigid Structures:** Bureaucratic and hierarchical structures limit autonomy, innovation, and participation. Centralized authority and rigid rules constrain employees, leading to frustration and alienation (Nazli, 2018).
- i) **Lack of Specialization:** Assigning employees to tasks outside their expertise reduces performance and creates feelings of injustice and marginalization, resulting in psychological alienation (Suzan, 2014).
- j) **Knowledge Hoarding:** Senior employees who withhold knowledge and fail to train others foster dependency, isolation, and fear of replacement, reinforcing alienation (Abdulatif, 1999; Mansour, 2007).

### 3.2 Personal Factors

In addition to organizational aspects, several personal factors contribute to occupational alienation, including:

- a) **Weak Leadership Skills:** Ineffective leaders who fail to recognize and appreciate employee contributions create frustration and alienation. Good leadership requires emotional and social intelligence to motivate and inspire employees (Qaryouti, 2009).
- b) **Fear and Job Insecurity:** Job insecurity generates anxiety and distraction, pushing employees toward withdrawal and alienation (Abdelghani, 1989).
- c) **Lack of Competence:** Employees with insufficient skills often underperform and blame the organization, which may lead to absenteeism, conflicts, and alienation (Suzan, 2014; Al-Eisawi, 1997).
- d) **Routine and Idleness:** Monotonous, repetitive tasks and long idle times foster boredom, frustration, and disengagement (Daham et al., 2018; Moqabla et al., 2012).
- e) **Employee Attitudes:** Lack of autonomy and limited participation in decision-making prevent employees from expressing themselves, leading to alienation when personal values clash with organizational goals (Akar, 2018; Al-Kubaisi, 2005).

- f) **Poor Adaptation:** Employees who fail to adjust to their workplace often externalize personal problems onto the organization, spreading dissatisfaction and alienation (Moqabla et al., 2012).
- g) **Introversion and Isolation:** Introverted employees often feel disconnected from their organizational culture, intensifying psychological alienation (Zaghl et al., 1990).
- h) **Repression and Unconscious Stress:** Anxiety, tension, and pessimism caused by repressed emotions can lead employees to depression and alienation, affecting both their work and personal lives (Qaryouti, 2009).

In summary, researchers attribute occupational alienation to multiple factors, including specialization, division of labor, rigid rules, authoritarian supervision, poor interpersonal relations, lack of knowledge sharing, role conflict, and absence of fairness and trust. Excessive centralization, low social interaction, and weak organizational justice are among the most critical determinants of alienation (Suleiman, 2018).

#### 4. Manifestations of Occupational Alienation

##### 4.1 Powerlessness

Powerlessness can be defined as an individual's feeling of helplessness and inability to influence events. The origins of this dimension can be traced back to *Karl Marx*, who linked it to working conditions that alienate the worker from their own production. According to *Seeman*, powerlessness is "the individual's expectation that their behavior cannot lead to the outcomes they desire, whether in terms of rewards or reinforcement, due to their belief that they cannot control the course of events and their consequences" (Hassanein, 2014). In the workplace, it refers to the worker's sense of lacking control over how things are done (Lars et al., 2013).

Symptoms of powerlessness include (Mansour, 2007):

- **Perceived incapacity:** Expectation that the worker cannot achieve desired rewards or enhance abilities due to lack of control over events.
- **Pessimism:** Persistent anticipation of failure and misfortune, with a constant sense of danger and a bleak outlook on the future.
- **Hopelessness:** Lack of desire to excel, avoidance of challenging tasks, absence of competitiveness, and low achievement motivation.
- **Low self-confidence:** Feelings of inferiority, loss of self-esteem, and self-perception of worthlessness.
- **Suppression of social skills:** Worker perceives themselves as valueless and miserable.
- **Perceived incompetence:** Sense of inability to control new tasks.
- **Lack of personal value:** Inability to determine one's destiny or direct the course of one's life.

##### 4.2 Meaninglessness

The French philosopher *Jean-Paul Sartre*, within his existentialist philosophy, conceptualized meaninglessness as "absurdity," in which life is perceived as aimless and devoid of purpose (Abdel Moneim, 2010). In the organizational context, meaninglessness refers to the worker's perception that their job lacks value or significance, often due to the absence of clear goals, weak connection between present tasks and future roles, and lack of guidance (Ismail et al., 2012; Hassan, 2014). The alienated worker feels emptiness and purposelessness, failing to see how their contribution matters to the organization (Wayne et al., 2014; Sebahattin, 2014).

Manifestations include (Pieter, 1978):

- Loss of meaning in one's role due to task fragmentation and division of labor, rendering work repetitive and rigid.
- Lack of opportunities for creativity and skills utilization, particularly when the job is below the worker's qualifications, causing frustration and unfulfilled ambitions.
- Spillover of job meaninglessness into personal life, where individuals perceive their existence as lacking purpose.

#### 4.3 Normlessness (Anomie)

Normlessness refers to the breakdown or rejection of societal norms and values, where individuals pursue goals through illegitimate means when legitimate ones are unavailable. It reflects a decline in adherence to religious, legal, and social norms. The alienated worker may possess values but find them in conflict with those of society, rendering them unable to achieve personal ideals within the organizational or social context (Abbas, 2005).

This dimension emerges when workers are unaware of or reject shared societal norms, instead adopting deviant or undisciplined behaviors (Yusuf, 2018; Guller, 2018). In other words, normlessness arises when workers disregard societal rules and values, perceiving them as marginalized or irrelevant.

Key factors contributing to normlessness include:

- Family disintegration, leading to moral breakdown.
- Deteriorating living conditions and economic crises.
- Social ills that weaken social structures.
- Dominance of business elites over markets through obscure methods.

#### 4.4 Social Isolation

Social isolation refers to workers' feelings of estrangement and detachment from those around them, both inside and outside the organization. This results in weakened belongingness to their workgroup and reduced effectiveness in achieving organizational goals, often due to lack of participation in social activities, dissatisfaction with organizational systems, or failure of social adaptation (Tamidi, 2013).

Isolation occurs when workers fail to establish satisfying social relationships at work, often aggravated by bureaucratic structures (Sebahattin, 2014). It is viewed on two levels (Abdel Moneim, 2010; Al-Bayati, 2010; Geyer, 1976):

- **Social-level isolation:** Weak integration with reference groups that provide social norms.
- **Personal-level isolation:** Lack of meaningful relationships with significant others, withdrawal from social activities, preference for solitary work, and indulgence in daydreams.

Social isolation thus reflects the absence of positive interpersonal relations and detachment from community norms, values, or culture.

#### 4.5 Self-estrangement

Self-estrangement is among the most extensively studied dimensions of alienation (Seeman, 1975). It reflects the worker's inability to realize or actualize their potential, leading to disconnection from their own capacities and aspirations. Marx (1963) argued that workers lose themselves when their product exists independently and becomes alien to them. Later theorists noted that estrangement is rooted not only in labor itself but in exploitative relations of power (Mariano, 1987; Faiza et al., 2020).

Self-estrangement refers to workers' inability to enjoy life, difficulty in social interaction, loss of enthusiasm, and detachment from personal identity (Nazli, 2018; Aziz, 2016). Workers feel that their self and abilities are reduced to mere instruments, leading to indifference and disengagement (Sonia, 2016).

It occurs when there is a profound mismatch between workers' skills, capacities, and experiences on one hand, and their actual roles and opportunities for growth on the other (Jwan et al., 2017). Alienated workers lose their connection with their inner selves, perceiving a rift between personal identity and organizational life, culminating in feelings of emptiness, withdrawal, and existential detachment.

## **5. Stages of Occupational Alienation**

Researchers have identified three successive stages of occupational alienation. Each stage is more severe than the preceding one, and the relationship between them is cumulative, ultimately intensifying negative outcomes and escalating their impact (Oudah, 2017). These stages are:

### **5.1 Stage of Psychological (Occupational) Alienation**

At this stage, the employee feels that the relationship with the organization is no longer natural, but rather characterized by tension. The worker perceives that the organization—or its representatives—holds a negative attitude toward them, diminishing their functional importance and social standing, eventually leading to neglect and marginalization (Mansour, 2007). This stage is marked by the accumulation of negative feelings toward the organization, where the worker attributes most of their problems to it, becoming preoccupied with worries (Al-Dosari, 2001).

The worker experiences a sense of loss of control, powerlessness, normlessness (absence of values and standards), and meaninglessness (failure to find goals or meaning in life). Moreover, they feel objectified, treated as a mere tool rather than as a person (Abdulrazzaq et al., 2016).

### **5.2 Stage of Mental Alienation**

This stage extends from psychological alienation but is more dangerous for both the worker and the organization. It is characterized by absent-mindedness, inability to concentrate, sadness, and depression. Employees exhibit frequent performance errors, reduced learning capacity, lack of interest in training, increased requests for leave, and eagerness to find excuses to stay away from the workplace (Mansour, 2007). In this stage, the worker is physically present but mentally absent, unable to control tasks and prone to mistakes that may lead to disciplinary actions (Hamdi, 2022).

Alienation here is viewed as dissatisfaction and conflict between the real and the ideal, resulting in opposition to dominant values, interests, and norms (Tai, 2015). Psychological manifestations include anxiety, anger, despair, arrogance, resentment, helplessness, uprootedness, and grief (Jaber et al., 2015).

### **5.3 Stage of Physical Alienation**

At this final stage, occupational alienation becomes total. Absenteeism, tardiness, early departures, and unauthorized breaks become frequent. Collective resignations and open conflicts between employees and supervisors emerge, with direct managers losing authority and control (Al-Mutraf, 2005).

The alienated worker at this stage often demonstrates the following traits (Al-Jama'i, 2010):

- Absence of clear goals to guide life, resulting in a sense of loss.
- Weak adherence to social norms, leading to an inability to reconcile the self with society, and thus social isolation.

- A nihilistic view of life, perceiving it as meaningless.
- A sense of dehumanization, which undermines feelings of security and reassurance.
- Rebellion against institutional or societal obligations, resisting them by all means.
- Loss of belonging, whether to religious faith, the organization, or the community, due to weakened values and indifference.
- Materialism, where money becomes an end rather than a means, pursued even through destructive means.
- Poor personal adjustment, reflected in low self-confidence, chronic anxiety, and pathological fears.

In this stage, the worker experiences deep anxiety, restlessness, feelings of loss, despair, and inefficacy. They withdraw socially, isolate themselves, avoid participation, develop self-contempt, egocentrism, aggressiveness, hostility, and antagonism toward society and prevailing culture (Al-Rwashdeh, 2011).

## 6. Results and Impacts of Occupational Alienation

Occupational alienation does not emerge out of nowhere; rather, it is driven by a set of factors that may relate either to the individual or to the institution to which they belong. Given the negative consequences it leaves on both parties (the employee and the organization), it becomes essential to adopt an effective strategy to eliminate or at least mitigate its severity. This section outlines the key causes that lead individuals to experience alienation:

### a. Withdrawal and marginalization:

Many individuals find themselves unable to adapt to the fast-paced materialistic orientation of society and the pursuit of prestigious social status. A major reason lies in their insistence on clinging to traditional values, which hinders the alignment of their behavior with ongoing social changes. Consequently, frustration turns into a form of moral success, where honor and ethical justification prevail over material gains in shaping their attitudes and their rejection of life's pleasures (Louay, 2018).

### b. Isolation and the erosion of belonging:

This phenomenon is often evident in modern Western societies that prioritize individualism over collective spirit. It manifests in the decline of communal bonds, reduced interaction among urban dwellers, and the rise of psychological and social barriers that further weaken interpersonal relationships.

### c. Decline in job performance:

Neglect and indifference among workers contribute directly to a reduction in the quality and efficiency of job performance.

### d. High turnover rates and recurrent sick leaves:

Employees suffering from occupational alienation frequently prefer isolation, sometimes extending to alienation from themselves. They gradually lose the ability to control their own actions and responsibilities, leaving them vulnerable to external control and domination by their superiors.

### e. Decreased organizational commitment and loyalty:

This is accompanied by a negative impact on employees' focus, abilities, and adherence to responsibilities, ultimately leading to lower levels of job performance (Atiyah et al., 2013).

Empirical studies confirm the existence of a negative relationship between organizational alienation and job performance. Alienated employees tend to display destructive or counterproductive behaviors within the organization, thereby increasing institutional costs and reducing productivity. Moreover, the work environment becomes characterized by fragmented and tense relationships, apathy, and a lack of engagement with work (Melike, 2017).

Organizational alienation, which is closely associated with job dissatisfaction, work-related stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological and physical illnesses, diminishes employees' efficiency and enthusiasm. It further undermines organizational performance, commitment, and citizenship behaviors. Alienated workers are often deprived of support from both colleagues and superiors and lack sufficient social inclusion and acceptance within the workplace (Seyfettin, 2010).

### Strategies for Addressing Occupational Alienation

Organizations rely on a range of strategies and tools to reduce the phenomenon of occupational alienation and prevent its spread among employees. When alienation becomes widespread, it may lead to serious consequences that negatively affect both individuals and the organization as a whole. Hence, institutions seek to eliminate or at least mitigate its impact. Properly diagnosing and identifying the causes of alienation makes it possible to design solutions that overcome the issue and minimize its adverse effects.

Alienation can be confronted by ensuring a minimum level of psychological comfort, encouraging employees' commitment and positive attachment to their work, and fostering engagement that reduces organizational alienation. This contributes not only to enhancing productivity but also to overcoming obstacles, creating opportunities, and promoting organizational growth that ultimately benefits society at large. Studies have further highlighted the importance of promoting professional autonomy through the delegation of authority and implementing genuine organizational rotation policies to ensure equal opportunities for employees (Abdulrazzaq et al., 2016). Researchers, drawing particularly on Fromm's perspectives, have proposed key principles to address occupational alienation, including:

- a) **Awareness of alienation and the capacity to endure isolation:**  
Awareness cannot be achieved without addressing the concept of isolation. Ordinary individuals tend to escape feelings of loneliness by conforming to and complying with societal norms (Hammad, 2005).

- b) **Reviving faith and rejecting idolatry:**

There is a need to revive intellectual faith rooted in human freedom and dignity, which empowers individuals to resist all forms of idolization.

- c) **Achieving a healthy society:**

Positive freedom is contingent upon appropriate social, economic, political, and intellectual transformations that allow individuals to express themselves freely and authentically (Hammad, 2005).

- d) **Job satisfaction:**

Research consistently highlights a strong correlation between work-related stress and job satisfaction, underlining the importance of tackling both dimensions to combat alienation (Awda, 2017).

- e) **Organizational justice:**

Organizations require employees to deliver beyond their job descriptions to ensure sustainability and development. This, however, is only possible in an environment characterized by fairness and justice. Studies by Al-Rubaie and Al-Zubaidi revealed a significant negative relationship between organizational justice and occupational alienation, both at the overall level and across its sub-dimensions.

f) **Need fulfillment:**

It is essential for organizations to meet employees' diverse needs, including social belonging, safety, recognition, and achievement. Naissa's study indicated a positive correlation between psychological alienation and psychological security.

g) **Provision of adequate resources and conditions:**

Offering suitable resources and working conditions that facilitate task completion—whether in production, services, or administration—enhances job performance. It also clarifies the purpose of employees' efforts, raises morale, fosters job satisfaction, and strengthens institutional loyalty (Dhiab, 2018).

h) **Participation in decision-making:**

Involving employees in decision-making, especially in matters related to their work, reflects a shift away from bureaucratic structures toward more participatory models. Traditional authoritarian bureaucracy often leads to inefficiency, stagnation, and widespread employee apathy. Studies (Seeman & Neal) show that employees involved in institutional decision-making processes feel less powerless compared to their non-participating counterparts.

i) **Improving the work environment:**

Enhancing the work environment by providing breaks, improving workplace conditions, and mitigating adverse circumstances helps reduce alienation. Periodic adjustments to the work setting can also prevent monotony and boost employees' enthusiasm for their roles (Dhiab, 2018).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, occupational alienation is not a passing phenomenon within the workplace; rather, it is a deeply rooted issue linked to individual, organizational, and social factors. It directly affects employees' performance, commitment, and job satisfaction, while simultaneously threatening the institution's continuity and stability. The analysis has shown that occupational alienation progresses through successive stages—psychological, mental, and physical—ultimately leading to negative outcomes such as declining performance, weakened loyalty, high absenteeism and turnover, and a loss of meaning and satisfaction at work.

Based on these findings, organizations are urged to adopt practical strategies to mitigate this phenomenon and prevent its detrimental effects. The key recommendations include:

1. **Enhancing the work environment** by improving both material and non-material conditions to increase job satisfaction.
2. **Expanding employee participation in decision-making** to strengthen belongingness and reduce feelings of powerlessness.
3. **Promoting organizational justice** as a foundation for building trust and job loyalty.
4. **Fulfilling diverse employee needs** such as recognition, appreciation, job security, and equal opportunities for professional growth.
5. **Developing professional autonomy** through delegation of authority and participatory leadership practices.
6. **Establishing preventive and supportive programs** that address employees' psychological and social well-being to reduce isolation and alienation.

Addressing occupational alienation is not a secondary choice but a strategic necessity that enhances performance, boosts productivity, and reinforces organizational cohesion—ultimately benefiting both the institution and society as a whole.

## 2. Theoretical Background

- Conceptual Evolution: From Marx’s alienation of labor to modern organizational theories.
- Dimensions of Alienation: Powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement (Seeman, 1959).
- Cross-disciplinary Relevance: Sociology, psychology, organizational behavior, and management science.

## 3. Factors of Occupational Alienation

- Organizational Factors: Hierarchical structures, bureaucratic rigidity, lack of autonomy, poor leadership, and unfair evaluation systems.
- Personal Factors: Individual expectations, personality traits, educational background, coping mechanisms, and socio-cultural influences.
- Environmental Factors: Technological disruption, job insecurity, economic instability, and globalization.

## 4. Findings (Analytical Synthesis)

This theoretical exploration yields the following insights:

1. Occupational alienation is multidimensional, encompassing both organizational and personal determinants.
2. Organizational design plays a pivotal role, as rigid structures, limited participation, and inadequate recognition exacerbate alienation.
3. Individual well-being and organizational performance are interlinked: alienated employees exhibit low satisfaction, disengagement, and high turnover intentions.
4. Alienation undermines innovation and adaptability, which are essential in competitive and technologically evolving environments.
5. Preventive strategies—such as participative leadership, job enrichment, transparent evaluation systems, and professional development—are critical for reducing alienation.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

This study is theoretical in nature and did not involve human or animal participants. Nevertheless, the authors adhered to academic integrity, ensuring proper acknowledgment of intellectual contributions from prior literature, and avoided plagiarism or misrepresentation of ideas.

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## 8. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

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