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Influence of Print and Electronic Media on Youth **Voting Behaviour in Pakistan**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the effect of newspaper and news channels on voting decision/ behaviour of educated youth in Pakistan during the 2018 general elections. It is a quantitative study based on a questionnaire survey. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 381 master students enrolled at the faculty of commerce, arts and humanities, science, behavioural and social sciences, and education. Significant positive interaction has been found between newspapers, news channels, and educated youth' voting behaviour. Along with creating awareness media has become the opinion leader. Results indicate an increase in the rational behaviour of youth but still, their decisions have been shaped by the structural conditions. This study establishes pertinence in micro-macro factors within the context of voting behaviour. Micro factors include individual cognitive ability while macro factors include big structures. It demonstrates that cognitive ability has largely been shaped by socio-political structures and these structures were created by political actors using mediums such as newspapers and news channels. Findings also revealed a change in voting trends of youth. This area of research is not new in the field of psephology, however the uniqueness of this study is that it will assists youth of developing countries to obliterate false consciousness and structural constraints on their cognitive ability. Further, it will alleviate into conscious, informed, and rational decisions. In Pakistan field of psephology is ignored, formerly attention has been paid to study elections in terms of civil-military relationship and the use of election as a means to control state machinery. There is no such study conducted in a local context.

Keywords: Voting behaviour, Structural coupling, State machinery, Political actors, 2018 General Election, Pakistan-Democracy, Electioneering

Introduction

"You have to serve the truth as a candidate for public office and not mislead, misguide and misdirect the people merely to provoke emotional responses and win votes that way, says Adlia Steveson an American politician, while talking about American politics in his interview with Wallace in 1958 (Mike, 2012). Although this statement is long in the tooth but still prevails in these days. This statement indicates that it's difficult to engage good citizens in politics and to persuade average people to take part in government formation, because an individual's emotional sentiments easily precipitate in their decisions. Voters assumed their decisions are

rational but in reality, it is the result of the structural coupling of the candidate's campaign strategies and the social ecosystem in which an individual resides.

Compared to print media, the new mediums of information such as Facebook and Twitter not only increased the level of interactivity but also escalates the level of bluff and subjectivity, and this cause people to divert back to the old but reliable source of information.

A newspaper is the oldest mean of information and communication, its editorials play a paramount role in building opinion. Freedom of the press enables it to cover the desire part of political issues, secondly, have the power of agenda-setting. During campaign, print and electronic media provides the information regarding the past performance of a candidates in office. Political theorist, e.g. Barro (1973) and Ferejohn (1986) worked on the moral hazard model. According to moral hazard model, voters evaluated the past performance of candidates. Gentzkow (2006) believes that the invention of television decreased the readership of the newspaper. However, Dr. Bastos (as cited in Gibbs, 2017) states the decline in circulation of newspapers in the western world neither infer it nor its influence has been decreased, this influence is the result of the structural coupling of the public opinion.

Early experiments on election campaigns found that not only print and electronic media but the environmental setting in which the individual resides also play an important role. Electorate sociological characteristics and partisan attachment play a dominant role in decisions, than issues as well as campaign and short-term factors (Berelson, 1954; Campbell, 1960). However, Iyengar and Simon (2000) explored that the media campaign is more influential as widely believed. They found that voter's perception and behaviour were to a large extent shaped by resonance and strategic models, used by candidates. Other Scholars such as Umeno, Bugarin, and Vergne (2008) focused on economic factors and discover a dichotomy between individual and aggregate level preferences. Kiewiet (1983) initiated a debate on economic voting by exploring that voters ignore personal finance and focus on national economic conditions. McKuen, Stimson, and Erickson (1992) view economic voters as forward-looking and highly sophisticated voters. Several factors have been used by candidates to affect the voters' decisions e.g., social media, candidate image, current events, personal events, identity, and partisanship. Literature found that incumbents have more media coverage than their challengers (Robinson, 1981; Kahn, 1981), Campaign managers also believe that television is the most important communication medium and incumbents spend more time on it as compared to their opponents, (Ansolabehere, Snowberg & Synder, 2004).

The purpose of the study is to measure the campaign effect on voter's perceptions and decisions, using data collected from educated youth. This examines the thinking capability of electorates that were widely framed by the candidate's campaign strategies. It also through light upon the effect of news channels and newspapers on voter's perception and behaviour.

The objective of this paper is to explore the extent to which newspaper and news channels impact the strategic calculations of youth. It also assesses how the voter's preferences have been mold during election time? And how the social structure in which individual lives sway on their cognitive abilities? In this paper, we will try to initiate a debate on micro – macro factors and the impact of structural coupling on voter choice.

Literature Review

Ever since the invention of different quantitative techniques and tools such as correlational, regression and bayesian analysis, the studies related to cognitive ability have gained importance. The context of this study can be divided into three parts. In the first part, the study concentrates on the types of role print and electronic media plays to influence the readers and viewers during the campaign. The second focus is on the tactics and strategies candidates deployed using these mediums. Third and last part focus on how individuals made a decision? Either they used their cognitive ability or they fall into false consciousness created by candidates. A review of studies related to tactics and strategies used by candidates and methods used by scholars to measure the influence on the masses is presented in the following.

During active electioneering candidates use print and electronic media frequently to interact with the masses to shape their preferences. Lazerfield, Berlson & Gaudet (1949) conceptualized the campaign as the process of planning and executing activities to win votes. Arterton (1984) explains that the campaign revolves around three points that are to persuade, inform, and commit. On the contrary, Lippmann (1992) assumes that to function completely and honestly the political system has to assume that the entire community should have a very partial experience of public affairs. He advocates that not only campaign but a reasonable mind is required to make sound judgments. Technological advancement and campaign strategies grow side by side e.g., after the invention of television Eisenhower was the first candidate that uses television commercial spots in the 1952 presidential campaign. Political journalist Theodore once said that the old bosses are long gone and with them their old parties. In their place has grown a new breed of young professionals whose working skills in the news politics would make the old bosses look like stumblebums (Trent & Friedenberg, 1983).

Marketing consultants become the mastermind behind the success and failure of the candidate's campaign strategies. Both candidates and content managers face the same problem, which is how to compete for the loyalty of the target audience. This professionalization of the election campaign affected the political parties' technical resources and thematic development (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002). Electorates are exploited in political marketing to win votes. Shaughnessy (1993) regarded this type of vote as a psychological purchase. Emotionally and intellectually voters were coaxed to cogitate in a certain direction.

Political marketing abates the distance between voters and candidates. The effect of marketing strategies varies depending on factors such as education, age, political efficacy, and the marital status of voters. Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) presented the resource model of political participation, using two-stage least square analysis. They found the socioeconomic status of voters' influence on the particular kind of political activity through the resources that are linked with their socioeconomic status.

In the case of Pakistan particularly in rural Punjab Sufi shrines play a large role in politics due to their large local following and influence on rulers (Malik & Mirza, 2015). There is nexus within religion, society, and politics and from them, religion plays a dominant role in Punjab (Kalhoro & Saleem, 2016).

The print media is an essential forum that educates voters on how to practice their democratic rights by offering true information so they can make a better decision. In developed countries during the campaign newspaper like the Des Moines register hold events that bring candidates and voters together so they can have a conversation (Odell, 2015). But this type of practice is not common in developing countries and electoral malpractice becomes usual practice in elections.

This is one side of an electoral process. The other involved the types of attitude and perception of electorates towards the candidate and political system. Gaudete and Berlson (1948) recognized that some voters manage to reach to necessary information in 30 seconds of American television advertisements during the electoral time and become more informed, attentive, and participatory. The other category of voters is rational, consider the issues and ideology of candidates in making decisions. Esponda and Pouza (2017) identify that party polarization plays a significant role in voters' strategic calculations by developing the Nash equilibrium model.

In the participation model there exit a potential conflict between retrospective and prospective voting. Feltvoich and Giovanni (2015) explains the antagonism between these models. According to them, low ability candidates who produce good policy outcomes were replaced through prospective voting but survive through retrospective voting. On the contrary, a high ability candidate who produce poor policy outcome reelected by prospective voters and replaced by retrospective voter. It is believed that voters lack the cognitive ability to fully calculate and understand the strategic calculation of complicated decisions and even if they have it is difficult for them to optimize across (Conlisk, 1996). Woon (2012) found that voters tend to vote retrospectively even the condition call for prospective voting, this is due to voters' bounded ability to make inferences but also desperate to sanctioning errant politicians. Ashworth (2012) recognized that formal accountability by electorate lead to better governance.

There are a handful of studies that investigates the impact of newspaper and news channels on voting behavior, generating different models and equation such as socio-economic model, resource model, and Downsian theory to measure the intensity and level of influence on voting decision. However, the uniqueness of this research from others is that it not only focuses on one aspect of electioneering but combine the structural and agency debate. The second point that distinguishes this study is that from the past fifteen years the focus of researchers is on the digital medium and while searching literature on impact of newspaper on voting behavior we don't found any latest study on it. Therefore, in this study, we try to contribute the latest finding in the literature by founding either the print and electronic media hinder or develop the cognitive ability of youth by applying simple statistical tests.

Theoretical foundation and hypothesis

To predicted and explore why do people behave as they do? Psychological theory provides a stimulus organism response chain (Visser, 1998). The S-O-R chain has helped in determining the primary causations behind individual behavior. The two S-O-R chains related to this study have been formulated.

S-O-R chain1

Stimulus Organism Response Environmental setting Individual strategic calculations Decision

S-O-R chain 2

Stimulus Organism Response
Peers and family opinions Individual strategic calculations Decision

Individual's environmental setting and peers, family opinion is directly affected by newspaper and news channels. According to Umeno & Bugarin (2008) mostly individuals are risk-averse and that's why they follow the opinion that prevails in society. The environmental setting is largely shaped by the print and electronic media. During the 2018 elections in Pakistan, the main campaign issues were well advertised by electronic media. According to the EU(EOM), 69% of winning candidates actively used the media (European Union Mission Election Observation, 2018).

The second approach to study individual decision is a survey-based approach used to study "US 1940, 1948, 1952 and 1956 presidential elections (Rossi, 1959). These studies found that individuals tend to vote under the influence of their social group, religion, and as their families do. They coined a new concept of "cross pressure" in voting behavior (Sarlamanov & Jovanski, 2014). They interpreted cross pressure as a contretemps information that persuades voters to alter their voting attitudes and this conflictual information is provided by dissimilar social groups. Lazars Feld further evolved this theory and merged it with the "two-step flow of information" after the invention of television (Sarlamanov & Jovanski, 2014). TSFOI assumes that individuals follow opinion leaders present in their social group (family friends, workplace) that propagate and vindicate media messages.

Individuals consider their decisions are rational and well informed but they are trapped into fall consciousness created by candidates using print and electronic media. Thereby to know either they used strategic calculation or just play a puppet role in elections, we formulate a hypothesis

H1. Print and electronic media hinder youths' strategic calculation in voting decision.

Methodology

The goal of this study is to investigate the effect of newspaper and news channels on the voting behavior of youth. A mix structured questionnaire was constructed through the review of scholastic literature. To check the reliability, Cronbach's alpha value has been calculated. The value .785 and .765 for newspaper and news channels respectively specify that internal consistency is quintessential.

From sampling techniques "Proportional stratified random sampling" was adopted to gather data. Samples were taken from the subgroups on the basis of equality. The unit of analysis was Students of "University of the Punjab". The logic of selecting

this institution is its diversity and this diversification provides benefit in grasping the general view of youth .The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamani formula (Kerjcie & Morgan, 1970).

n=sample size

 Table 1

 Sample allocation in eight departments of University

Faculty of:	Departments	N
Commerce	Hailey college of commerce	57
Science	Center for environmental studies	52
	Center for high energy physics	39
Behavioural & Social	Political science	48
Science	Mass communication	40
Art & Humanities	English	41
	Philosophy	48
Education	Institute for education and	39
	research	
Total		381

After determining sample size through the above mention formula, from five major disciplines that include "faculty of Commerce, Arts & Humanities, Science, Behavioral & Social Sciences, and Education," eight departments were selected for the survey.

In Pretesting phase ten questionnaires were arbitrary distributed and then reviewed objectively. Alterations have been made according to suggestions given by them. After that, an actual survey was conducted. The collected data entered in to "statistical package of social science" (SPSS version 21). From the constructed database, descriptive analyses were carried out and results were displayed in tabulated and pie chart form.

Results and Discussion

Data shows the ratio of male and female respondents, along with their age. It is noted that out of 381 respondents, 210 (55%) were female and 171(45%) were male. Among the 210 female respondents, 168 age ranged from 20-25 years followed by 35 females were from 26-30 age group. Only 7 female respondents were from more than 30 age group. While among the 171 male respondents, 158 were from first and 10 were from the second age group. Overall,

the majority of respondents 326 (85%) were from 20-25 years and 45(15%) respondents were from the second age group. In Pakistan minimum age for voting is not less than 18 years of age.

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Table 2Demographic characteristics of the respondents (N=381)

Age	20-25	26-30	>30	Total
Female	168	35	7	210
Male	158	10	3	171
Total	326	45	10	381

Participants' educational level

A significant number of respondents 268(70%) were bachelor/undergraduate students, 75(20%) were Master students and 38(10%) were MS/MPhil scholars.

Effect of newspaper on voters' behaviour

Five-point Likert scale was used to quantify the participants' feedback on eight perceptions, based on newspaper plan of action during election 2018. Arithmetic mean varies from 3.14 to 3.40, on the contrary SD (standard deviation) exhibits inconsistent value. This inconsistency revealed a difference in the respondent's perspective. Results indicate that newspapers compete with other mediums by doing modifications in their approach and strategies. But still, take on its conventional role of enlightening masses along with constructing and clearing viewpoint on sociopolitical events.

Table 3 *Effect of newspaper on voting behaviour* (N=355)

1.42
1.40
1.38
1.37
1.35
1.32
1.28
1.09
)

Scale:1=Strongly Disagree,2=Disagree,3=Neutral,4=Agree, 5 =Strongly Agree

The highest mean 3.40 recorded on "newspaper traditional role of creating awareness on political events through experts' analysis", pointed toward its long-established role of creating awarenesss. This medium is usually use by the politician to increase their familiarity among the readers and to create their image as a candidate. Through newspaper candidates target large number of audience. During initial days of campaign candidates try to establish link with journalist (Trent, 2008). Establishing link with journalist aids candidates in introducing them to general public.

The second highest mean 3.39 shows that in this digitized era, the newspaper still possesses the power to control the thinking capability of people. Editorials through

comparing performance of past governments helps in making a well informed decision. The intensity of influence depends on the reliability of newspaper. Technological advancement has made possible to get information on the go by subscribing newspaper on the smart phones.

The lowest mean 3.14 recorded on newspaper biasness' toward their preferred political parties, depicts that participants have a positive view toward newspaper strategies and policies. On the whole respondents have a positive evaluation of newspaper reporting strategies. In this high –tech age newspapers continue to influence readers through innovatory strategies and use of two-step flow theory, such as catholicisation of socio–political events and publishing of twitter trending hashtags.

Situational involvement is best created by this medium. Crum (2007) explains that situational involvement is related to individual involvement in a specific election campaign at that point. In Pakistan 2018 general elections, there was a political environment of accountability of ruling party which helped to shift their voter bank to other opponent parties. The leader of PMLN and former Prime minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif was on court trials, on account of corruption. One of the most important events that depicts gerrymandering was the delimitation of constituencies after the fresh census in 2017. To delay the elections, the Balochistan national Assembly demanded delimitation for eight provincial assembly constituencies in Ouetta. The Lahore high court gave verdict on nomination paper but Supreme Court suspended that verdict, commenting that delay in polls would not be accepted. In this way, the role of judiciary became prominent and the term like judicial activism, judicial imperialism became part of public lexicon. (Dawn epapaer, 2018). All such political events create awareness and results in to new political trend among youth. Wazir (2018) reported a rise in the political participation of women peculiarly in the FATA region of Pakistan.

Results indicate that newspapers play a dominant role in "political socialization" and in raising awareness about the constituencies of candidates. It also tracks campaign of renowned and new political leaders. Literature indicates that newspaper is the prime channel used by political runners to communicate with an audience and this helps candidates to create their image and develop a relationship with few major journalists (Trent, 2008, p 22).

Information received from newspaper during 2018 elections

Table 4 displays the diversity of facts obtained by participants via newspapers in the course of the 2018 general election. Results specify that respondents gained positive and motivational information from this medium.

Table 4 *Information receive from the newspaper during 2018 elections (N=142)*

Political structure	54
Biased opinions	42
Campaign of political parties	25
Importance of vote	14
Candidates constituencies'	7

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Fourteen respondents become conscious of the importance of the vote, 7 respondents get knowledge about the candidate's constituencies Forty-two answerer have exposure toward prejudice viewpoint, 54 responders have the knowingness of political structure and 25 participants get a route of a campaign by political parties. Out of 381 participants, only 142(38%) answer this open-ended question, this point toward a decline in newspaper readership. Norris (2000) believes that the role of the newspaper is fulfilled by the democratic media if there is a pluralistic environment where knowledge is readily available to citizens.

Effect of news channel on voting behaviour

Answerers' views on given perceptions related to news channels policies and tactics during election time were assessed by a five-point Likert scale. To ascertain their influence on voters' strategic calculations.

Table 5 *Effect of news channel on voting behaviour* (N=370)

I think during the 2018 election, news channels:		SD
Highlighted the politicians promise to increase their vote bank		1.35
Showed more content of the political party of their affiliations	3.19	1.31
Conducted pre-election polls guiding politicians in changing their	3.18	1.25
stance		
Overemphasised socio-ethnic difference affecting voting behavior		1.22
Used negative image of a particular events influencing voting		1.20
decision		
Created a feeling of discontent via anchors overdramatic language		1.9
Broadcasted negative advertisements spreading distrust in	3.01	1.15
government		
Created a negative attitude toward the political system	2.76	1.12

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Respondent perceived that news channels emphasized the politician's demagogue, to raise their votes have the highest mean value followed by news channels assist in advertising manifesto of an affiliated political party with 3.23 and 3.19 respectively. Norris (2002) believes that media exert diffuse, long-term, and cumulative influence on political culture. Statistics indicates that mass media impact in an efficacious manner. It causes the audience to think concretely. McCombs (1972) found that news media set agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion formed, daily repeating, and length of time given to issue provide cues to the public.

Newscasters now play a dominant role in opinion formulation (Adedumni&Stella, 2018). They framed the thinking capability of masses, along with creating an image of the real world issues. The mean value of 3.16 reveals that Participants have attach

weight to the exaggerating role of media. Mostly media fabricates the socio-cultural contradictions. Results testify the use of the "Michigan approach" by the candidates to augment their ascendency and to generate "false consciousness" among electorates.

Gronbeck (2019) identified negative advertisements as implicative. In Pakistan 2018 general elections EU (EOM) reported 11,427 cases of negative advertisements. Nevertheless, the statistics of the survey manifest that participants pay no attention to negative advertisements during the election campaign. The lowest mean 2.76 reported on news channels creating cynicism toward the political system, indicates that respondents don't experience partiality in news channels. These statistics did not confine with Robinson (1976) "video malaise hypothesis" which states that relying on "television" adds to citizens' distrust towards government. Further, this hypothesis also confirms that news viewers' have lower political efficacy and weaker political loyalties than those who rely upon newspapers, radio, and magazines.

This result also confines with the "Marxist media theory", which postulates that the pattern of coverage is determined by the contrarians in media groups. By and large news channels are the pre-eminent contenders in constructing agenda and cognitive skills. Comprehensively candidates use a variety of strategies and diversity of platforms to interact and convince electorates but these two mediums were used by candidates frequently during the campaign duration.

Discussion

As discussed previously, the research question focus on the impact of print and electronic media on the voting behavior of youth with in context of Pakistan. Historically Pakistan's nationals experience irregularity in their elections, after independences first general elections on the base of adult franchise conducted on 7 December 1970 (wikipedia). From that day 7 December was celebrated as National voter's day. From 1977 to 2008 Pakistan's national experienced control elections. From 2008 to 2018 Pakistani national experience regular elections but not in their true spirit. According to EU (MOE) (European Union election observation mission in Pakistan 2018) observed the increase in accountability and transparency in 2018 general elections of Pakistan.

The results manifests youth optimistic view towards newspaper. Print media plays a prominent role in creating awareness and developing opinion during campaign. Editorials not only develop opinion but also have a detective and watchdog role (Kelling and Thomas, 2018). This research results contradicts with Goldstein (2011) he believes that UK national newspaper are losing their ability to influence on politics in an essay on open democracy . As compared to developed countries, newspaper still have an influence in developing countries.

On the other hand, youth have a pessimistic view toward electronic media. Results confined with the research of Bartels, Mondak and Hetherington (2009) they found that mass media shapes political discussion, public opinion, and voting behaviour and that uninformed voters can behave in sophisticated manner using voting clues from informed voters. According Bray (2018) media did not represent reality but in fact shape and filter it, by focusing on one issue and lead audience to consider that issue.

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The respondents believe that media informs voters about candidates, political parties, and constituencies. Sometimes media creates an obstructive structure that creates a suspicion among voters that their vote value is zero, for example in general elections 2018 of Pakistan, the media journalists especially in television talk shows used the term "Establishment" to make PTI a ruling party. The term "helping alien" was also used in political discussions. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) found that negative advertisement techniques decrease the voter turnout by converting the independent, well-educated voters in to non-voting apathetic

To design voters' taxonomy in Pakistan, a question was adjoin, to line up factors that youth prioritize informing voting decisions. Only 100 respondents replied to this open-ended question and data illustrate that 25(25%) take into account identity, these types of voters fall in the risk-averse group. Sixty-four (64%) think over candidates' preliminary accomplishment, these kinds of voters belong to the retrospective group and 11 (11%) gave weight to runners' personality and they fall in likableness group.

Conclusion

The ultimate aspiration of this paper is to contribute some fruitful insights in voting behavior literature, especially focusing on adding new information to enhance the debate on mediums affecting voting decisions. This study analyzes the effect of news channels and newspapers on the voting behavior of youth, as one-third of registered voters belong to the age group of 18-30 and 18-40 years (Hussain & Jullandry, 2018). Secondly, their political ideology plays a long term impact on the election outcome, because once the ideology assumed it become difficult to alter. This study explores the impact of new strategies and tactics deployed by news channels and newspapers to influence decision making. Results manifest two factors that impact voting decisions and perception. These two factors are interlinked, one is a micro factor that includes the individual thinking and cognitive ability and macro includes the big structures used by candidates to run their campaign. These factors have a reciprocal effect. The other byproduct of a macro structure is changed in the political structure after the 2018 general elections. There is gambling of political power between two dynastic political parties from 1990 -2018 except 1999 to 2007, but in 2018 general elections a new political party was elected and this is due to change in voting pattern. Previously voters did prospective voting but the political circumstances compelled toward retrospective voting. Woon (2012) clarifies that voters did retrospective voting when they want to sanction errant politicians. Secondly, the campaign manifesto of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf facilitates them in making decisions.

To sum up, youth decisions are largely shaped by structural coupling. The structure in which individual lives has a deep impact on their psychic and this effect the strategic calculation and this structure is created by different elements and one of the main element is candidate's campaign strategies and tactics.

Practical implication

This study will help youth to get rid of false consciousness created by the candidate using print and electronic media. Secondly, it will also assist youth in prioritizing their interest in strategic calculation while making a decision.

Limitations

The results were based on a survey of youth of The University of Punjab, Pakistan. A limitation of the study is that the participants' responses were the views of that specific population, there is no guarantee that their views were typically the view of all the youth.

Future research

Future research should be conducted to investigate what other factors influence voting behavior. Research should also be conducted to know about the means and methods to make voters more informed and educated in developing countries. A thorough comparison of developed and developing countries print and electronic media by applying most similar system design(MSSD) or most different system design(MDSD) will be helpful in getting the insightful differences in factors that influence the political decisions of youth in north and south.

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