



The effect of sports job burnout on the performance of workers in student activities departments in Iraqi universities

El efecto del agotamiento laboral deportivo en el rendimiento de los trabajadores de los departamentos de actividades estudiantiles de las universidades iraquíes

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Abstract

Introduction: Researchers seek to study job burnout by answering the following question: What is the level of athletic job burnout among workers in student activities departments in Iraqi universities?

Objective: The research aims to identify the level of sports job burnout among workers in student activities departments in Iraqi universities.

Methodology: The researchers used the descriptive approach with the analytical method for its suitability and the nature of the research problem. The research community was represented by (33) universities, with (1140) individuals working in student activities departments in Iraqi universities. The research sample consisted of all community members, consisting of (740) individuals, i.e. (400) individuals were excluded for the reasons mentioned above. After that, the researchers considered the scientific conditions for selecting the sample, as it was divided into a pilot sample (10) individuals, an adaptation sample (350) individuals, and an application sample (380).

Results: Based on the analysis of the statistical results, it was found shows that the results of all fields ranged between low and high, as the field of (emotional exhaustion) ranked first with a percentage of (68.71%), followed by the field of (inhumanity) in second place with a percentage of (58.41%), and the field of (low emotional achievement) ranked last with a percentage of (44.04%), noting that the total score of the scale reached (57.05%), which is an average score. **Conclusions:** The researchers concluded that the scale proved effective in measuring the variable of job burnout among employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities and that all areas of the scale enjoyed a medium degree of job burnout except for the area of diminished personal accomplishment, which was low.

Keywords

Burnout: emotional exhaustion; inhumanity; diminished personal accomplishment.

Resumen

Introducción: Los investigadores buscan estudiar el agotamiento laboral respondiendo a la siguiente pregunta: ¿Cuál es el nivel de agotamiento laboral atlético entre los trabajadores de los departamentos de actividades estudiantiles de las universidades iraquíes?

Objetivo: La investigación tiene como objetivo identificar el nivel de agotamiento laboral deportivo entre los trabajadores de los departamentos de actividades estudiantiles de las universidades iraquíes.

Metodología: Los investigadores utilizaron el enfoque descriptivo con el método analítico por su idoneidad y la naturaleza del problema de investigación. La comunidad investigadora estaba representada por (33) universidades, con (1140) personas trabajando en los departamentos de actividades estudiantiles de las universidades iraquíes. La muestra de investigación estuvo constituida por todos los miembros de la comunidad, constituyendo (740) individuos, es decir, se excluyeron (400) individuos por las razones mencionadas anteriormente. A continuación, los investigadores consideraron las condiciones científicas para seleccionar la muestra, ya que se dividió en una muestra piloto (10) individuos, una muestra de adaptación (350) individuos y una muestra de aplicación (380).

Resultados: A partir del análisis de los resultados estadísticos, se encontró que los resultados de todos los campos oscilaron entre bajo y alto, ya que el campo de (agotamiento emocional) ocupó el primer lugar con un porcentaje de (68,71%), seguido por el campo de (inhumanidad) en segundo lugar con un porcentaje de (58,41%), y el campo de (bajo logro emocional) ocupó el último lugar con un porcentaje de (44,04%), Destacando que la puntuación total de la escala alcanzó el (57,05%), lo que supone una puntuación media.

Conclusiones: Los investigadores concluyeron que la escala demostró ser efectiva para medir la variable de agotamiento laboral entre los empleados de los departamentos de actividades estudiantiles de las universidades iraquíes y que todas las áreas de la escala disfrutaron de un grado medio de agotamiento laboral, excepto el área de disminución de la realización personal, que fue baja.

Palabras clave

Burnout: agotamiento emocional, inhumanidad, disminución de la realización personal.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed the strengthening of the role of the human element as one of the most important resources within work organizations as the driver of management elements of planning, organization, direction, and control on the one hand (Lee et al., 2022), and as it has become a source for achieving the organization's goals on the other hand in order to preserve it from phenomena and negatives that may be influential in achieving what the work environment aspires to, and that what the world is witnessing today of scientific and technological developments has been reflected in many different aspects of life (Hammood et al., 2024). However, many researchers have described the current century as an era of psychological pressure and burnout. Because the work environment is dominated by many influences and pressures, the worker has become vulnerable to what is called burnout, which results in psychological and physical effects on workers (Bejtka et al., 2022), which is considered one of the important administrative problems facing workers and is an indicator of the existence of a crisis that leads to weak administrative performance (Jangra et al., 2023).

Burnout is a dangerous phenomenon that has negative consequences that can lead to the individual's separation from his organization and accepting any temptations for employment from other organizations (Bellod et al., 2021). Organizations seek to investigate the factors behind this dangerous phenomenon to reduce this phenomenon (Khalaf, 2018). Work organizations, including student activities departments in Iraqi universities, have become interested in all their employees by following up on their work as an active element. This interest is enough to act as an insulator and prevent its employees from suffering from such a feeling, for fear that this will affect the performance of employees within the institution, considering that performance is linked to the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization to achieve its desired goals. The importance of the research lies in addressing an important topic in the field of organizational behavior, which is burnout, as eliminating and reducing it has a positive role on other variables related to individuals working within the organization, as well as enriching research and studies related to burnout, as it is one of the rare studies that addressed burnout in student activities departments in Iraqi universities. Research problem Identifying the factors that affect the performance of employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities, positively or negatively, is the responsibility of those responsible, and neglecting to identify them is one of the causes and problems of management and that student activities departments deal with many employees in the branches and units of different university colleges, regardless of their cultures, academic achievement, and level of thinking, thus making employees vulnerable to the phenomenon of job burnout. Through the interviews conducted by researchers with some employees in student activities departments to obtain data on job burnout on the one hand and the extent of the clarity and level of that concept among them, it became clear that employees do not have sufficient awareness of the concept of job burnout. Therefore, this study came from the researchers seek to study job burnout by answering the following question:

What is the level of athletic job burnout among workers in student activities departments in Iraqi universities?

The research aims to identify the level of sports job burnout among workers in student activities departments in Iraqi universities.

Method

Study Design

The researchers used descriptive analytical methods for their suitability and the nature of the research problem (Ali et al., 2022).

Participants

1. Research Community

- The research community consists of all employees of the student activities departments in Iraqi universities.
- The number of Iraqi universities is (33) universities.
- The total number of members of the community is (1140) individuals.

2- Research sample



- Due to the large research population, a research sample was selected that is representative of all members of the community.
- (400) members of the community were excluded for the following reasons:
- Not answering some forms.
- Some individuals refrain from answering for any reason.
- Thus, the sample strength became (740) individuals.

3-Sample division

- The sample was divided into three sections, taking into account the scientific conditions for selecting the sample:
- Sample of the exploratory experiment: (10) individuals.
- Air conditioning sample: (350) individuals.
- Application sample: (380) individuals.

4- Justification for sample selection and exclusion

- The sample was selected in this way to ensure that it was representative of the original research community and objective and generalizable results were achieved.
- Individuals who did not respond to the questionnaire were excluded to ensure the accuracy of the data and to reduce the likelihood of bias in the results.
- The sample was divided for several reasons, including:
- Validation of tools: using the sample exploratory experiment.
- Ensure the suitability of the tools: using the air conditioning sample.
- Obtain basic data for the study using the sample application.

5- Table (1) Table (1) shows the division of research samples in detail.

Table 1. shows details of the research community and its samples.

| | Sample type | Number | Percentage | Total number |
|---|--------------------|--------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Survey sample | 10 | 0.87% | 1140 |
| 2 | Adaptation sample | 350 | | |
| 3 | Application sample | 380 | | |
| 4 | Excluded | 400 | | |
| 5 | Total sample | 740 | | |

Procedure

Study tools

Sports Job Fatigue Scale: The researchers used the job burnout scale (Maslck & Jackson, 1981). which consists of (22) statements distributed over three areas, as shown in Table (2) after it was presented to (9) experts in the field of sports management and sports psychology, and its paragraphs were modified to suit the research sample.

Table 2. Shows the fields and paragraphs of the burnout scale.

| | The fields | Number of paragraphs |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Emotional exhaustion | 9 |
| 2 | Inhumanity | 5 |
| 3 | Diminished personal accomplishment | 8 |
| | Total | 22 |

Scale correction key: The researchers used a five-point Likert scale to measure the research sample's answers to the scale's paragraphs, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. Shows the five-point Likert scale scores

| The answer | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Score | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Validity of the scale

The validity of the scale means that the questionnaire questions measure what they were designed to measure (Sağın, 2022). The researchers verified the validity of the questionnaire in two ways:

- Validity of the arbitrators: The researchers presented the questionnaire to a group of experts and specialists in the field of sports management and sports psychology. The researchers responded to the



opinions of the arbitrators and made the necessary deletions and modifications considering their suggestions. Thus, the questionnaire came out in its semi-final form to be applied to the survey sample.

•**Internal consistency validity:** Internal consistency validity means the extent of consistency of each paragraph of the questionnaire with the field to which this paragraph belongs (Azlan et al., 2021). The researcher calculated the internal consistency validity of the scale by finding the correlation coefficient between each field and the total score of the scale. The researchers conducted validity and reliability on the exploratory experiment sample, which numbered (10) individuals working in the student activities departments in Iraqi universities, to find the correlation coefficients for each paragraph in the field to which it belongs, as well as the correlation coefficients between each field and the scale, as shown in Table (4).

Table 4. Shows the validity coefficients for each paragraph with the total score of the burnout scale.

| Emotional exhaustion field | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| Phrases | reliability coefficient | Sig. |
| 1 | 0.730 | 0.01 |
| 2 | 0.501 | 0.01 |
| 3 | 0.582 | 0,01 |
| 4 | 0.726 | 0.01 |
| 5 | 0.675 | 0,01 |
| 6 | 0.587 | 0.01 |
| 7 | 0.602 | 0,01 |
| 8 | 0.525 | 0,01 |
| 9 | | 0.01 |
| Inhumanity field | | |
| Phrases | reliability coefficient | Sig. |
| 1 | 0.789 | 0.01 |
| 2 | 0.833 | 0,01 |
| 3 | 0.790 | 0,01 |
| 4 | 0.700 | 0,01 |
| 5 | 0.558 | 0,01 |
| Diminished personal accomplishment | | |
| Phrase | reliability coefficient | Sig. |
| 1 | 0.403 | 0.05 |
| 2 | 0.500 | 0.01 |
| 3 | 0.400 | 0.05 |
| 4 | 0.827 | 0.01 |
| 5 | 0.712 | 0.01 |
| 6 | 0.594 | 0.01 |
| 7 | 0.688 | 0.01 |
| 8 | 0.579 | 0.01 |

From Table (4), all validity coefficients are high and statistically significant at the level of (0.05), which gives confidence in the scale's ability to distinguish.

Scale stability

Scale stability means that the questionnaire gives the same result if it is distributed more than once under the same conditions and circumstances (Ordóñez-Dios et al., 2024). In other words, scale stability means stability in the questionnaire results and not changing them significantly if it is redistributed to the sample members several times during specific periods. The stability of the study questionnaire was verified using the following methods:

•**The half-split method:** The researchers used this method to verify the stability of the scale by calculating the correlation coefficient between the odd and even statements, and the modified Gutman coefficient was used for the half-split due to the inequality of the two halves, as shown in Table (5).

Table 5. Shows the stability coefficient of the burnout scale using the split-half method

| Fields | Paragraph numbers | Correlation coefficient before adjustment | Correlation coefficient after adjustment | Sig. |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|------|
| 1 Emotional exhaustion | 9 | 0.546 | 0.686 | 0.01 |
| 2 Inhumanity | 5 | 0.553 | 0.627 | 0.01 |
| 3 Diminished personal accomplishment | 8 | 0.572 | 0.713 | 0.01 |
| Total score on the scale | 22 | 0.623 | 0.767 | 0.01 |

From Table (5), all the stability coefficients using the split-half method were high, and the overall stability coefficient of the scale reached (0.767), which indicates that the scale has a high degree of stability.

•Cronbach's alpha method: The researchers used this method to calculate the stability coefficient between the statements of each field separately, as the results of the correlation coefficient of the scale were high and reached (0.860), which indicates the strength and validity of the scale(Kozin et al., 2022), as shown in Table (6).

Table 6. Shows Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the burnout scale domains.

| | Fields | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Emotional exhaustion | 0.790 |
| 2 | Inhumanity | 0.810 |
| 3 | Diminished personal accomplishment | 0.693 |

From Table (6), all the stability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha method were above (0.613), which indicates that the scale has a high degree of stability and can be applied to the study sample.

Application of the scale

The scale was applied to the research sample consisting of (380) individuals working in the student activities departments in Iraqi universities, where the scale was distributed on Sunday (2/25/2024) to the research sample. The number of questionnaires distributed to the research sample amounted to (380) questionnaires, and all questionnaires were retrieved after the sample answered them.

Data analysis

In this study, SPSS statistical methods were used to process and analyze the data collected from the employees of the sports activities departments in Iraqi universities. Mean arithmetic, standard deviation, percentage, correlation coefficient, half-segmentation, Alfakronbach method, and internal consistency were used. These statistical methods have contributed to the understanding and analysis of the phenomenon accurately and scientifically (Ali et al., 2024; Mohammed Hammood et al., 2025).

Results

To answer the questions of the study, the researchers adopted the criterion mentioned by(Samaher Abu Masoud, 2010) to judge the trend when using the Likert five-point scale, as shown in Table (7).

Table 7. Shows the scale of measures used in the study

| Level | Very low | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |
|-----------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Arithmetic mean | < 1.80 | 1.80 – 2.59 | 2.60-3.39 | 3.40-4.19 | >4.20 |
| Relative weight | < 36.00% | 36.00-51.90% | 52.00-67.90% | 68.00-83.90% | >84.00% |

Presentation and analysis of the question that states (What is the level of job burnout among employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities)?

To answer this question, the researchers found the frequencies, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, percentages, and arrangement of the paragraphs for the three scale domains, as shown in Tables (8, 9, 10, and 11).

Presentation analysis of the first domain (emotional exhaustion)

Table 8. Shows the frequencies, arithmetic means, standard deviations, percentages, and order of the items for the emotional exhaustion domain.

| | Paragraphs | Total score | Mean | Standard Deviation | Percentage | Paragraph Order |
|---|--|-------------|------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | I feel emotionally exhausted by the work I do. | 250 | 3.68 | 1.199 | 73.79% | 3 |
| 2 | I feel exhausted of energy at the end of each shift. | 256 | 3.83 | 1.023 | 76.79% | 1 |
| 3 | I feel tired when I wake up in the morning to go to work. | 245 | 3.61 | 1.281 | 72.39% | 4 |
| 4 | I feel stressed out dealing with people in the work environment. | 233 | 3.43 | 1.201 | 68.79% | 6 |
| 5 | I feel bored and fed up with the work I do. | 203 | 3.01 | 1.315 | 60.10% | 8 |
| 6 | I feel frustrated at my job | 222 | 3.27 | 1.219 | 65.59% | 7 |
| 7 | I feel like I am exhausted at work. | 254 | 3.69 | 1.01 | 74.10% | 2 |



| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----|------|-------|--------|---|
| 8 | I feel much pressure from dealing with people (clients) directly. | 238 | 3.45 | 1.064 | 69.19% | 5 |
| 9 | I feel like my career at work will end soon. | 198 | 2.92 | 1.330 | 58.59% | 9 |
| Total score for the field | | 236 | 43.3 | 0.832 | 68.71% | |

The results of Table (8) for the field of emotional exhaustion show that the arithmetic averages of the field's paragraphs ranged between (2.92 3.83) with medium and high percentages, as six paragraphs obtained high percentages between (68.00%) and (83.90%) and three paragraphs obtained a medium score between (52.00%) and (67.90%), where the paragraph (I feel that my energy is exhausted at the end of each shift) obtained first place with a percentage of (76.79%) and the paragraph (I feel that my professional service at work will end soon) obtained last place with the lowest percentage (58.59%) and the total score for the field obtained a percentage of (68.71%), which is a high score compared to the scale used, and this indicates the presence of emotional exhaustion among employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities.

Presentation and analysis of the second field (inhumanity)

The results of Table (9) for the field of inhumanity show that all the paragraphs had average percentages ranging between (52.00%) and (67.90%), as the paragraph (I feel blamed by individuals (clients) for some of the problems they encounter) got the first place with a percentage of (67.01%) and the paragraph (I feel indifferent to what happens within the work environment) got the last place with the lowest percentage (53.79%) and the total score for the field got a percentage of (58.41%) which is an average degree compared to the scale used, and this indicates that the workers in the student activities departments in Iraqi universities feel an average degree of inhumanity.

Table 9. Shows the frequencies, arithmetic means, standard deviations, percentages, and arrangement of the items for the field of inhumanity.

| | Paragraphs | Total score | Mean | Standard Deviation | Percentage | Paragraph Order |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | I feel like I treat people like numbers. | 186 | 2.74 | 1.407 | 55.01% | 4 |
| 2 | My personality has become harsh on people since I started working. | 193 | 2.80 | 1.330 | 56.19% | 3 |
| 3 | I feel anxious about the stress and emotional numbness my work causes. | 206 | 3.01 | 1.316 | 60.01% | 2 |
| 4 | I feel indifferent to what is happening within the work environment. | 182 | 2.68 | 1.340 | 53.79% | 5 |
| 5 | I feel blamed by individuals (reviewers) for some of the problems they encounter. | 230 | 3.34 | 1.234 | 67.01% | 1 |
| Total score for the field | | 201.5 | 2.91 | 1.106 | 58.41% | |

Presentation and analysis of the third area (diminished personal accomplishment)

The results of Table (10) for the field of diminished personal accomplishment show that all paragraphs were at low percentages ranging between (36.00%) and (51.00%), as the paragraph (I do not feel satisfied and comfortable through my dealings with individuals in the work environment) got the first place with a percentage of (47.19%) and the paragraph (I deal at a low level with the problems of the reviewing individuals) got the last place with the lowest percentage (38.59%) and the total score for the field got a percentage of (44.04%) which is a low score compared to the scale used.

Table 10. Shows the frequencies, arithmetic means, standard deviations, percentages, and order of the paragraphs for the field of diminished personal accomplishment

| | Paragraphs | Total score | Mean | Standard Deviation | Percentage | Paragraph Order |
|---------------------------|---|-------------|------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | I do not know how people feel about my work. | 148 | 2.18 | 0.901 | 43.79% | 6 |
| 2 | I deal with individual (client) problems at a low level. | 130 | 1.92 | 0.758 | 38.59% | 8 |
| 3 | I feel that through my work, I have had a negative impact on individuals. | 152 | 2.21 | 0.854 | 44.40% | 3 |
| 4 | I do not feel energetic and active at work. | 152 | 2.21 | 0.967 | 44.39% | 4 |
| 5 | I cannot provide the appropriate atmosphere to perform my work well. | 150 | 2.21 | 0.959 | 44.38% | 5 |
| 6 | I do not feel satisfied and comfortable with my interactions with people in the work environment. | 162 | 2.35 | 1.001 | 47.19% | 1 |
| 7 | I deal nervously with problems that occur at work. | 161 | 2.34 | 0.936 | 47.00% | 2 |
| 8 | I have not achieved anything worthy at work. | 145 | 2.11 | 1.021 | 42.39% | 7 |
| Total score for the field | | 151.0 | 2.19 | 40.59 | 44.04% | |

Presentation analysis of the job burnout scale

Table (11) shows that the results of all fields ranged between low and high, as the field of (emotional exhaustion) ranked first with a percentage of (68.71%), followed by the field of (inhumanity) in second place with a percentage of (58.41%), and the field of (low emotional achievement) ranked last with a percentage of (44.04%), noting that the total score of the scale reached (57.05%), which is an average score.

Table 11. Shows the frequencies, arithmetic means, standard deviations, percentages, and the order of the scale domains.

| | Fields | Total score | Mean | Standard deviation | Percentage | Paragraph order |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Emotional exhaustion | 236 | 43.3 | 0.832 | 68.71% | 1 |
| 2 | Inhumanity | 201.5 | 2.91 | 1.106 | 58.41% | 2 |
| 3 | Diminished personal accomplishment | 151.0 | 2.19 | 40.59 | 44.04% | 3 |
| Total score on the scale | | 198.85 | 2.852 | 0.547 | 57.05% | |

Discussion

1- Discussion of the first domain (emotional exhaustion)

The researchers attribute this to the difficult working conditions and problems faced by workers with individuals (clients) and their inability to solve problems, which is consistent with the study of (Saad Al-Kalabi & Rashid Mazen, 2001), (Dhaif Allah bin Abdullah, 2000), on the existence of job burnout among workers in the field of emotional exhaustion and at a moderate level.

2- Discussion of the second field (inhumanity)

The researchers attribute this feeling to the fact that workers are forced to perform some tasks that are not consistent with their human feelings because of the effort placed on them by being assigned extra-curricular duties outside of official working hours. This is consistent with the study of (Woodhead, 2014) and (Murtadha Jabbar, 2010) on the existence of job burnout and a moderate degree of inhumanity.

3- Discussion of the third area (diminished personal accomplishment)

The researchers attribute the emergence of these results to the presence of a positive level of personal accomplishment for the workers despite the presence of some problems surrounding them with their feeling of a low degree of achievement, which is consistent with the study (Alaa Hamdi, 2012) and (Khalaf & Waga, 2019) which showed a low level of job burnout in the field of diminished personal accomplishment.

4- Discussion of the job burnout scale

The researchers attribute the emergence of an average percentage of job burnout among employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities to the existence of some work problems surrounding them and the inability to solve them and work long hours outside working hours. All these circumstances generate great pressure on employees and thus the emergence of the phenomenon of burnout among them, which is consistent with the study (Jankome, 2013) (Bari et al., 2024), which showed the presence of job burnout among employees at an average percentage.

Interpretation of results

Previous studies indicate that sports burnout commonly affects workers in sports activity departments in Iraqi universities. Psychological exhaustion and emotional isolation are evident in their daily behavior and performance due to many personal and professional factors that contribute to the exacerbation of this problem.

The study results showed that a large percentage of workers in sports activities departments in Iraqi universities suffer from high levels of sports burnout, and the data indicate a close association between psychological exhaustion and emotional isolation and negative effects on psychological and social health. The analysis also revealed the influence of personal and occupational factors on the increased risk of athletic burnout. This analysis is an important step towards understanding and addressing the phenomenon by proposing measures and policies that stimulate workers' functional and personal balance in this field.

It can be said that there is an urgent need to implement policies and awareness programs targeting workers in sports activities departments in Iraqi universities to reduce levels of sports burnout. In addition, the data indicates the importance of improving the work environment and providing psychosocial support to workers in order to reduce psychological exhaustion and emotional isolation.

Conclusions

- The study recommends taking clear and effective measures to enhance the health and safety of workers in sports activities departments and reduce the spread of the phenomenon in Iraqi universities.
- The scale has proven its effectiveness in measuring the variable of job burnout among employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities.
- Employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities suffer from a moderate degree of job burnout.
- All areas of the scale enjoyed a moderate degree of job burnout except for the area of diminished personal accomplishment, which was low.
- The more job burnout among employees, the lower their performance.

Considering the conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

- It is necessary to pay attention to employees in student activities departments in Iraqi universities and provide them with the requirements for good work.
- Working to solve employees' problems and providing them with suitable opportunities.
- Allow employees to be involved in decision-making within the department.
- Strengthening the incentive and reward system will help reduce the phenomenon of job burnout.
- Conducting similar studies on the job burnout variable and other samples.

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