The Customer Satisfaction Role on Customer Loyalty, New Evidence among Jordanian Hotel Industry

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Abstract: The present study attempts to contribute to the knowledge of how customer commitment, price, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction are defined and relate to each other in the five-star hotels; a questionnaire was developed and distributed. The study population consists of all hotels customers in Jordan, and a convenience sample was selected in this study pilot test 30 questionnaires. Finding a show, the reliability analyses provided satisfactory results. Surprisingly, company satisfaction was not interpreted as a conceptually distinct construct from customer loyalty; a conceptual overlap also emerged between attitudinal loyalty and loyal behavioral actions such as word of mouth; whereas customer commitment, the price was highly positively associated with loyalty (and satisfaction), according to expectations. While the relationship between customer loyalty and commitment, price as well as between satisfaction and customer loyalty are well understood in the literature, the interrelationships among these constructs are not so well illustrated. The discriminant validity of commitment, price and loyalty need to be further investigated – highlighting potential effects of culture, method and measure variance. To the knowledge of the researcher, no prior study has attempted to address these issues in the hotels, unfamiliar to many readers.

1. Introduction

Hotels are the backbone and cornerstone of the tourism industry in providing services to the tourists (Kandampully, Zhang, & Bilgihan, 2015). Therefore, the hotel plays an effective role in the development and expansion of tourism industry as well as the economic development as a whole (Niewiadomski, 2015).

One of the significant reasons that encourage the governments to support and promote tourism throughout the world is its positive impact on the economic growth and development (Cárdenas-García, Sánchez-Rivero, & Pulido-Fernández, 2015; Mazghouni & Goaied, 2015; Page, 2014). Tourism generates employment opportunities and income. Tourism leads to a positive balance of payments, stimulates tourism supply sector and leads to an overall growth of economic activity in the country (Khanna, Papadavid, Tyson, & te Velde, 2016; Papadaskalopoulos & Christofakis, 2016). Therefore, tourism should have an impact on the frequently economic quantitative measurement used in the economic development (Joppe & Li, 2014). As a result, a specialized literature has been developed to measure the impact of tourism based on GDP to deal with measuring how tourism contributes to the economic growth (Aslan, 2014).

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Jordan reported that tourist arrivals in Jordan decreased to 68.20 thousand in May 2015 from 78.10 thousand in April 2015 Trading Economics (Economics, 2015). Tourist Arrivals in Jordan averaged 79.68 thousand from 2006 until 2015, reaching an all-time high of 142.60 thousand in November of 2010 and the lowest record of 37 thousand in February of 2006, as shown in Figure 1.2. According to the statistics published by World Data Atlas, the percentage share of travel and tourism contribution to Jordan GDP has been decreased from 24.0% in 2010 to 21.8% in 2015 (Knoema, 2015).

Figure 1.1 Jordan Tourist Arrivals
Academic literature suggested that organization could attain their business sustainability specifically through customer satisfaction and loyalty (Vuuren, Roberts-Lombard, & Tonder, 2012; Yan, 2015). Customer's loyalty could be reflected by the customer behavior; such as involving positive in-kind word-of-mouth, less price sensitive, repurchase intention and provide positive feedback. With such benefits gained from a loyal customer, maintaining and sustaining customer predominantly important especially in the highly competitive hotel industry (Peter, 2014). This is because finding new customers cost is five times more than of retaining an existing customer (Khalid-Saleh, 2015; Lawrence, 2012). Thus, to ensure hotel sustainability, it is important to understand customer's behavior specifically what influences their satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer loyalty is a commitment to repurchase an ideal product/service frequently in the future, in that way causing recurring same brand, even though situational influences (Oliver, 1999; UKessay, 2015). This purchase attitude and behavior can be highly experienced in the hospitality industry. To create emotionally loyal customers, it is necessary to build customer commitment (Evanschitzky et al., 2012). As an important component of customer relationships, it reflects the firm’s commitment to its customers while simultaneously establishing a point of differentiation and competitive advantage (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011).

O'Mahony, Sophonsiri, and Turner (2013) found customer commitment to have a strong positive impact on hotel guests’ loyalty. To attract customer commitment for the further business development of hotels, the management should emphasize price and value consideration of its loyalty card features, its benefits, and pricing as customers are very much conscious about the price (Hefimaputri & Indriani, 2015).

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors affecting the performance of hotel business as it is the main driver of customer loyalty (Markovic & Raspor, 2010). The high level of customers satisfaction leads to repurchase and favorable word-of-mouth publicity and eventually increase the revenue (Chinomona & Sandada, 2013; Gundersen, Heide, & Olsson, 1996; Taghizadeh, Taghipourian, & Khazaei, 2013).

On the other hand, hotels nowadays have to offer value for money and provide exactly what travelers need. Also, Hotels should focus on how to satisfy customers from different perspectives. Providing and maintaining customer satisfaction is considered as one of the biggest contemporary challenges of management in service industries and specifically in hospitality management. Service quality and customer satisfaction have increasingly been identified as key factors in the battle for competitive differentiation and customer retention “loyalty.” Overwhelming customer demand for quality products and service has in recent years become increasingly evident to professionals in the hospitality industry (Fouad, Hussein, & Attia, 2016; Ho, Yang, & Hung, 2015; Sobihah, Mohamad, Ali, & Ismail, 2015).

Tourism is affected by the circumstances, whether negative or positive; depend on the surrounding regional and international circumstances. Jordan experiences a sharp decline in the tourism industry, particularly in the past five years. This harsh downturn affects the national economy, causes a decline in the revenues, increase of unemployment rate, and suspension of investment in tourist projects. The most important challenges facing this sector mainly include the political situation plaguing the region, which greatly affected the sector and led to a decline in tourist numbers.

Further, it has been demonstrated that the customer commitment, service quality, and price plays the role of an adjustment variable in the interrelationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. And put recommendation take the customer commitment (Chang, 2013; Martinez & Del Bosque, 2013) and price (Shamsudin, 2012; Yan, 2015) on customer loyalty.

2. Literature Review

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty describes the customer behavior repeated. In measuring loyalty behavior (Barsky, 1992; Ramanathan, 2012) found that the value of money was to be the most important criterion influencing loyalty behavior of customers. Furthermore, it was found that the significance of criteria related to physical-product management, people and process management generally vary across star ratings, The vision of a number of researchers for customer loyalty (Song, Li, van der Veen, & Chen, 2011) indicates that mainland Chinese tourists are most satisfied with the hotel sector in Hong Kong, followed by the retail sector, and least satisfied with local tour operators (Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011).

Recent research on customer loyalty reflects attempts to integrate the concept of attitudinal commitment to distinguish between true and spurious loyalty (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995; Fullerton, 2005).
There are two types of customer commitment conceptualizations: affective and calculative or continuance commitment, having different antecedents, contents, and consequences (Zins, 2001). Calculative commitment is the way that the customer is forced to remain loyal against his/her desire (Wetzels, De Ruyter, & Van Birgelen, 1998). In calculative commitment, customers can be committed to a selling organization because they feel that ending the relationship involves an economic or social sacrifice (Fullerton, 2005). Affective commitment reflects a consumer’s sense of belonging and involvement with a service provider akin to emotional bonding (Fullerton, 2003; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). The definition of customer commitment in the present investigation is based on its affective aspect, given its larger effect on loyalty compared to satisfaction (Ashforth, Johnson, Hogg, & Terry, 2001).

Anuwichanont and Mechinda (2011) argued that the following elements would explain customer loyalty: The service quality, emotional response, monetary price and reputation. These elements have significant and positive impacts on the customer satisfaction and confidence as hypothesized. Kandampully and Suhartanto (2003) believe that the hotel image and customer satisfaction are shaped by the reception, housekeeping, food, beverage, and prices, which are important factors in determining customer loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction and the indirect effect on customer loyalty influenced the researchers to do their studies about the importance of service quality for business performance which has been recognized in the literature through the direct effect on customer satisfaction and the indirect effect on customer loyalty (Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011).

Satisfaction leads to some important outcomes, consisting increased market share, profitability, customer attitude, purchase intentions, and benefits associated with positive word-of-mouth effects. The positive influence of consumer satisfaction on loyalty has been widely supported in marketing literature. Higher satisfied customers are less tending to the competitor. Also, satisfaction can build a long-term cooperation and loyalty between customer and hotel industry. On the other hand, dissatisfaction may lead to unexpected consequent, such as negative word-of-mouth, fewer repatriates or switching to alternative service providers.

While some studies measured customer satisfaction by brand loyalty (Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011) (Malik, Naeem, & Nasir, 2011; So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2013) brand identification on brand loyalty, it can be concluded that customers’ perceptions regarding hotel brand quality dimensions such as "tangibles", "reliability" and "empathy" contributed to building their brand loyalty. Interestingly, favorable perceptions on hotel tangibles predicted relatively stronger brand loyalty than did reliability and empathy perceptions. The effects of physical quality and lifestyle-congruence on brand loyalty are fully mediated by consumer satisfaction, and others in terms of Customer Delight (Magnini, Crotts, & Zehrer, 2011) many travellers generally possess lower expectations of service than the level of service actually received to find that the causes of customer delight among domestic versus international.

Table 1: Comparison between the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer satisfaction</th>
<th>Customer loyalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction is about trying to please existing clients.</td>
<td>Customer loyalty is about trying to develop devoted clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction deals with assuring a successful transaction.</td>
<td>Customer loyalty depends on developing an enduring customer relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied customers leave a completed business deal as happy customers.</td>
<td>Loyal customers keep coming back time and time again, as more than satisfied customers.</td>
</tr>
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Source: adapted from (Gronholdt, Martensen, & Kristensen, 2000)

Customer satisfaction is a mediator the relationship among customer commitment, price, and customer loyalty.

Customer Commitment

Commitment involves the process whereby a customer develops a close relationship with the service provider. Stability and sacrifice are the essences of commitment that produces feelings of affiliation and belonging. As such, commitment is being viewed as the highest level of relational bonding and constitutes a central part of successful relationships (Skarmeas & Robson, 2008). Several authors have observed that building customer relationships and retaining existing customers are some of the key goals in marketing (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, & Kardes, 2009).
Peng and Wang (2006) argue that the strategic focus for businesses is towards keeping existing customers, with the purpose of maintaining sustainable and beneficial relationships. It is costly to attract new customers. Therefore, it is essential to nurture current relationships so that they deepen and continue (Peng & Wang, 2006). In other words, it is cheaper to maintain existing customers than to acquire new ones. Harridge and Quinton (2012) further state that acquisition, retention and nurturing of customer relationships are essential to a business engaging in relationship marketing. To enhance and build a relationship between businesses and customers, the service providers have to encourage a sense of loyalty among their customers so that they achieve an established business objective. Jones, Fox, Taylor, and Fabrigar (2010) argue that modern research has identified that customer commitment is a strong indicator of various measurements relating to customer retention, like to switch or to stay intentions, and repurchase intentions. Most authors and practitioners agree that building long-term relationships with customers is essential as it results in increased profits.

Therefore, customer commitment is a key factor in customer relationships. Jones, Taylor, and Bansal (2009) argue that although commitment is recognized as important, the target of a customer's commitment is often not clearly defined in marketing research studies, nor has potential differences between various targets of commitment been completely explored. Service providers who seek to build a differentiation strategy must focus resources on the development of committed customers who not only continue to request the services of the business but also provide a means of communication and the ability to put in a good word about the service provider's products and services. This can lead to further improvements (Crutchfield, 2008). The next section discusses customer commitment dimensions, which provide credible information on customer commitment relationships as a whole.

It has been argued that commitment is an important factor that may lead to loyalty behavior (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hur & Kang, 2012). Consequently, studies have demonstrated the difference between commitment and loyalty and how increased relationship benefits may lead to increased customer commitment, which in turn enhance loyalty (Agrawal, Gaur, & Narayanan, 2012). Hur and Kang (2012) explain that the combination of particular components of customer commitment that influence customer loyalty behavior. Researchers have treated customer commitment as a mediating variable since it influences future intentions (Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). If commitment increases, it may lead to an increment of customer’s intentions to make their voice hear, such as complaining, which is a common indicator of customer loyalty (Agrawal et al., 2012). As cited by Agrawal et al. (2012), Bloemer and Kasper (1995) also agreed that true loyalty implies commitment towards something or someone and not just a repurchase intention. Consequently, this commitment translates into the desire to repurchase a brand while ignoring other alternatives available (Agrawal et al., 2012). Hur, Park, & Kim, 2010; Wu, Zhou, & Wu, 2012) discuss the different factors needed to create customer loyalty, highlighting that commitment contributes to this creation.

Customer Commitment Dimensions

McCromack, Casimir, Djurkovic, and Yang (2009) specify that customer commitment consist of three dimensions: (1) affective commitment; (2) continuous (calculative) commitment; and (3) normative commitment. Cater (2007) argues that these dimensions of commitment are related to the psychological states of attachment, but each of them is driven by different motivations in maintaining a relationship. Furthermore, it should be understood that affective, continuance and normative commitment are dimensions of commitment and not characteristics of commitment because each dimension can occur at different levels of a relationship.

1. Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, in its simplest form, entails a sense of belonging and involvement with a firm in the eyes of a consumer, not unlike emotional bonding (Mattila, 2007). As service intangibilities---rather than products—are often the source of emotional connections between businesses and their customers, it is reasonable to posit that the implementation of self-service kiosks in hotels may have a substantial affect on customer commitment.

Affective commitment occurs when a customer develops emotional attachment towards the service provider. In other words, the customer has developed an emotional bond towards the service provider and identified himself with the service provider's products and services (McCromack et al., 2009). Affective commitment describes a positive attitude towards the business, and it occurs when a customer shares similar values and identifies with the service provider. This means the customer has become fond of and is satisfied with the service provider (Fullerton, 2005).

Blau and Holladay (2006) claim that since affective commitment is based on values and needs to act in ways that are consistent with being a partner with a particular business, (as compared to other dimensions of commitment), affective commitment...
tends to exhibit positive attachment towards the service provider. Lings and Owen (2007) argue that the length of a customer's involvement with the service provider, his perception of the value or reputation of the service provider, and the frequency with which he partakes with the service provider, increase the degree to which the customer identifies with the service provider, and will, therefore, adopt its norms and values. However, such affiliation and evaluative process give rise to an emotional attachment. A customer is unlikely to accept the norms and values of the service provider without first developing a positive emotional connection with the service provider.

2. Continuous Commitment

Continuous commitment is also an increasingly well-studied construct in relationship marketing, with its roots in lack of alternatives and switching costs. In continuous commitment, a customer tends to commit to the relationship because he or she perceives that they will experience difficulty in finding a new service provider (Fullerton, 2005). Ganesan, Brown, Mariadoss, and Ho (2010) argue that continuous commitment reflects the extent to which a customer recognizes the need to remain with the service provider to avoid switching costs because of leaving. This type of commitment is based on a realization of the benefits of staying, and the costs of leaving. Evanschitzky, Iyer, Plassmann, Niessing, and Meffert (2006) further state that a customer’s desire to remain in the relationship is motivated by the effects of high switching costs or the fact that it will be difficult to replace the existing service provider.

This type of relationship is based on a cost-benefit approach. Hence, you describe continuous commitment as negative compared to the positive motivation associated with affective commitment (Gounaris, 2005). However, Beaton, Coote, and Rudd (2006) stipulate that customers stay with the service provider because of existing perceived costs associated with terminating the relationship. These costs are not only of economic origin but can also include the psychological impact of leaving the current service provider. The perceived effort of looking for a new service provider pertains here. Bansal, Irving, and Taylor (2004) claim that the customer remains with the service provider because he needs to. Changing services providers present some constrained force that develops in the presence of high switching costs or a perceived lack of alternative providers and binds the customer to the service provider.

3. Normative Commitment

Cater (2007) stipulates that normative commitment occurs when a customer is compelled to commit to a service provider due to a perceived obligation, and this occurs as a result of the internalization of normative pressures that the consumers use before or after they enter into the relationship. In other words, a customer is expected by the society to respond morally to a certain situation. Hence, a customer may commit to the service provider due to moral obligations. Jones et al. (2010) argue that these moral obligations usually originate from social pressures. A consumer may decide to commit to a particular service provider because the owner of the business is a friend or a neighbor. This means the customer is obligated to make use of the friend’s services. Very few studies look at the role of normative commitment in consumer behavior. One such method that was acknowledged as a base for normative commitment is the social norm of reciprocity. You find this type of relationship in various committed relationships such as friendship and partnership. Research in this area is influenced by the social bond theory and the strength of the relationship. Customers may display normative commitment in two ways that are reciprocal. Firstly, a customer may reciprocate by paying extra for the service or remaining faithful to the service provider. Secondly, customers may reciprocate by helping other customers (e.g. in the course of kind behavior’s or recommendations) and indirectly benefiting the service provider. The determinants of customer commitment will be explored next.

Price

Pricing was one of the marketing mix dimensions. Price means a total of money or value that can be count as a change to get the product or service. In general, the customer always wants a reasonable price in buying product and services (Kerin, Hartley, & Rudelius, 2009).

Although prior literature found a positive association between price level and perceived quality (Tellis & Wernerfelt, 1987; Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000), the relevant literature does not explore the relationship between price and loyalty. Consumers may use high price as a quality signal to achieve decision efficiency; on the other hand, a low-priced product gives consumers more value regarding the price. Hence, "consumers might be equally aware of both the high-priced product and the low-priced product"(Yoo et al., 2000).
(Dovalienė & Virvilaitė, 2015; Estalami, Maxwell, Martin-Consuegra, Molina, & Esteban, 2007), state that service price increase is more acceptable for customers if a service gives greater satisfaction. Performed scientific research confirms that positive relationship exists between changes in customer's satisfaction and service price increase acceptability.

In marketing literature a price is indicated as the most important factor, conditioning customers' satisfaction, because, if customers estimate the value of obtained service, they usually think of price (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Fornell, 1992; Virvilaitė, 2015; Zeithaml, 1988). Studying price relationship with satisfaction scientists indicated that the level of satisfaction depends on service quality, price, and personal factors. As Estalami et al. (2007) state, earlier empiric research has not examined price factor influence on consumers’ satisfaction. Based on this, Estalami et al. (2007) formed an integrated model of price, satisfaction, and loyalty.

3. Research Framework

![Research Framework](image)

**Figure 1.1: Research Framework**

4. Data Collection

The target population of this study consists of the group will be the customers (guests) regardless their nationality who stayed at 5-star hotels in Jordan. The literature suggests the existence of a positive relationship between the number of items and the sample size, representing a ratio of at least 1:4 or 1:5 (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987). A large sample population is helpful for generating better results from factor analysis. Sampling error is expected to decrease as the size of the sample increases (Uhl & Schoner, 1969). The research used a descriptive measurement method and a survey measurement. This descriptive research is used to describe the characteristics of the hotel industry and customers, which is processed to determine the characteristics answer who, when, where and what kind of problems. Besides, this research is designed to apply a survey method to build questionnaires to get the response and to get more understanding about the customer attitudes and loyalty of the hotel industry in Jordan. According to (Zikmund et al., 1994), the questionnaire is a measurement technique to collect data from a sample of people. Therefore, this survey collect data by using self - administered questions got from the respondents, the questionnaire also been published by link online special five-star hotels in the Jordan.

5. Methodology

This research is based on a quantitative research method, which is the most appropriate research methodology for this type of study. The quantitative method encompasses a system of inquiring clarification through the association between distinct variables, which can be condensed to numerical data, and possibly could be generalized to superior populations (Finnerty et al., 2013).

This type of research focuses on the inputs of the research participants or respondents. Quantitative results are easy to collect, comprehend, and related to the subject matter (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative results are based on the researcher's ability and arguments presented to support the theory and results provided. A quantitative research method is an approach that predominantly uses systematic empirical relationships for increasing information. The quantitative research employs basis and impression philosophy, leading to precise elements, hypotheses and concerns, use of evaluation and surveillance, and the analysis of theories (Creswell, 2013).

6. Pilot Test

A pilot test is a method of testing the design, methods or instrument before conducting the research. It involves an initial test of data collection tools and processes to identify and eliminate errors. According to (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010), pilot test is an experimental testing of a small group of samples, and the results are only preparation. It is also used to help to test the following study design. This test was generated before the following survey. The pilot test enables the researcher to know if any question would make respondents feel uncomfortable. The researcher also finds out how long it would take to complete the questionnaire by the respondents. Furthermore, the pilot test measures the reliability and validity as well as determines the errors of problems in the survey.
the pilot test measures the reliability and validity and determines the errors of problems in the survey. Cronbach’s Alpha was employed to measure the internal reliability of the pilot test.

### 7. Reliability Test

Reliability testing is to test the degree to which extent is consistent and stable in measuring items intended to be measured. At the simply level, the test is reliable if it is consistent in itself and for the whole time. Reliability test is used to measure the internal consistency so that it can determine all projects in the questionnaire whether each variable has highly relevant or reliable. In this research project, the scale items were tested by the reliability test. (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) Mentioned that the reliability coefficient varies from 0 to 1. If the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is less than 0.60, it indicates unsatisfied internal consistency. However, if the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is more than 0.60, it indicates satisfied internal consistency among the reliability of the questionnaire.

The results of the Cronbach’s Alpha on the sample taken at the beginning is shown in Table 1.2 herein below.

#### Table 1.2: Reliability Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>price</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Loyalty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the examination, we have found the variables ratios are consistent with Alpha, as shown in Table 1.2. The result of the reliability test in Jordan. If all the questions are clear to customers regarding meaning where used items are valid to be understood by the customer.

### 8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In summary, this research had attempted to simultaneously test the relationship between customer commitment, price and customer loyalty in hotel industry in Jordan. It was found that the commitment, price, satisfaction provided to hotels acceptable It seems more important to hotel guests, and the loyalty rate high for the Normative commitment in Jordan, while the credibility in Jordan is high so call hotel managers direct the staff to focus on the provision and delivery of services with confidence and accuracy in order to satisfy It consists of loyalty to them. Moreover, it can be one source for hotels in Jordan in providing a good direction for managers to design the marketing strategy especially pricing strategy to attract more customers to stand out of the competitors (Devi Juwaheer & Lee Ross, 2003) Due to measuring the extent of the relationship between customer commitment and customer loyalty in the future, we advise researchers to study the impact of each of the customer commitment and customer loyalty, even more broadly and be clear about the reason for the existence of differences between the commitment, price, satisfaction and loyalty and use another factors in future such as (service quality, trust, convenience, brand image, and perceived value as mediator).

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