The Relationship Between Job And Career Satisfaction Among Healthcare Workers: The Mediating Effect Of Work-Family Conflict

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ABSTRACT

A major problem that confronts organizations such as healthcare institutions is employees' satisfaction with their jobs and their internal and external aspects. In addition, work-family conflict management is another important topic within the domain of organizational behavior and human resources. Hence, it was important to clearly delineate the relationships between job and career satisfaction and work-family conflict. This study examined the relationships between job and career satisfaction and work-family conflict among healthcare workers. Consistent with hypotheses, career satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction, and the mediators (i.e., work-family and family-work conflict) were significantly and negatively correlated with job satisfaction. In addition, work-family conflict partially mediated the relationship between career and job satisfaction. The results highlight the importance of identification of the factors that affect job and career satisfaction and can help managers make informed decisions about interventions that aim to improve the emotional responses of employees.

Key words: Job Satisfaction, Career Satisfaction, Work-Family Conflict, Healthcare Worker, Structural Equation Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

The most fundamental resource of today's organizations is human resource and the efficient use of human resources is one of the most significant determinants of their success or failure. Thus, organizations invest substantial amounts of effort and resources in their workforce and seek to use human resource management techniques that are effective and in accordance with their goals. However, another equally important element is employees' perceptions of and emotional responses to their jobs and what their jobs provide. Therefore, it is necessary for organizations to carefully assess their employees and their emotions.

According to Frederic Taylor, traditional managers and psychologists are primarily concerned with increasing productivity by making necessary changes to the physical environment than in enhancing the psychological wellbeing of individuals. However, the Hawthorne experiments, which began in the 1920s, gained historical importance in the field of organizational psychology because they demonstrated that "job satisfaction leads to increased productivity and human relationships in organizations are the key to job satisfaction." In accordance with this new outlook that had been introduced by the Hawthorne experiments, Hoppock (1935) published his famous monograph, which is considered to be the first large-scale study on job satisfaction. He contended that "if the presence of a variable in the work situation leads to satisfaction, then its absence will lead to job dissatisfaction, and vice versa". This is regarded as the conventional approach to the enhancement job satisfaction. However, Herzberg (as cited in Gruneberg, 1979) objected to the conventional perspective that human relationships are of critical importance to job satisfaction and contended that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two ends of a continuum. Herzberg introduced the famous two-factor job satisfaction theory and advocated that satisfaction and dissatisfaction entail different reasons. According to Herzberg, factors that are related to the need for development, the nature of the job, and achievement contribute to job satisfaction. On

the other hand, factors that are related to the context of the job (e.g., pay, supervision) are linked to job dissatisfaction (Gruneberg, 1979). At present, it is accepted that working conditions, social relationships, pay, supervision, and numerous other variables affect employees' emotional responses; however, no generalization can be made without paying due attention to individual differences.

2. A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Job and Career Satisfaction

A qualified and motivated human resource is indispensable to the health system of each country. The emotions of employees are even more important in labor-intensive service industries (e.g., health, education). This variable is defined as "the extent to which people like their jobs" or the emotional response of an employee to his/her job within an organization (Lambert et al., 2004). Job satisfaction determines the quality of the service that is provided by healthcare workers. Negative work attitudes among healthcare workers have been linked to poor performance, decreased patient safety, and lower quality of care (Perreira et al., 2018). They experience difficulties in meeting the needs of patients when their own needs are not met and are dissatisfied (Linn et al., 1985), and there may be decreases in financial performance and increases in employee turnover (Ford et al., 2006). For this reason, managers are responsible for both their healthcare staff and patients.

The job satisfaction of employees is ascribed as much importance as the products and services of an organizations. The management of an organization is responsible for improving the quantity and quality of products and services that are provided by the organization as well as the job satisfaction of employees. This is because job satisfaction is related to many outcomes (job performance, social withdrawal life satisfaction) that are important to individuals and organizations. In particular, job satisfaction has been found to affect the job performance of employees who work in healthcare organizations (Sevinc Altas & Kuzu, 2016), and it is related to turnover intention (De Milt et al., 2011). Some factors that affect the job satisfaction of employees in the healthcare industry include job rotation and stress (Ho et al., 2009), alignment with internal organizational factors (Ford et al., 2006), the main determinants of job satisfaction (Davidescu et al., 2016), and empathy (Ozdemir et al., 2016).

Studies that have been conducted in healthcare organizations as well as in other industries (e.g., Lambert et al., 2004) have shown that job dissatisfaction leads to negative attitudes toward one's job and in turn to turnover intention and actual turnover. However, another predictor that may play a stronger role in such decisions is career satisfaction (Nauta et al., 2009). Overall job satisfaction is contingent on appraisals of one's job or work experiences. On the other hand, intrinsic and extrinsic factors (e.g., pay, opportunities for development and advancement) are related to career satisfaction (Judge et al., 1995).

Although it may appear that Max Weber's bureaucracy theory was the first attempt to conceptualize career within the framework of modern organizational theory, many turning points in the history of modern research on career originated from the United States of America (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). According to Judge et al. (1995), a career is a sequence of work-related positions that a person occupies throughout his/her life. Career satisfaction refers to one's own appraisals of his/her career, and the criteria for such appraisals entail two dimensions: subjective and objective criteria. While the objective aspects of career success is comprised of factors that can be observed by anyone, namely, official duties, changes in pay, formal constructs, and titles, subjective aspects are self-evaluations of success, and it includes both career and job satisfaction (Judge et al., 1995).

Career satisfaction is derived from career development and advancement (Greenhaus et al., 1990), and it depends on "professional achievements, general professional goals, income-related goals, professional advancement, and acquisition of new skills" (p. 64). A review of past studies on career success and satisfaction revealed that researchers have focused mainly on objective criteria. However, as a result of inter-organizational competition and institutional uniformity, organizations became increasingly similar in their objective criteria. Consequently, subjective criteria gained prominence in individual appraisals of their career satisfaction (Avci & Turunc, 2012). Similar to job satisfaction, career satisfaction is related to certain organizational outcomes such as turnover intentions (Kang et al., 2015), an organizational learning culture, and a performance goal orientation (Joo & Park, 2010). Job and career satisfaction have been empirically found to be independent constructs (Judge et al., 1995).

Job satisfaction is related to variables such as the nature of the job, working conditions, job security, salary, promotion prospects, the structural and managerial characteristics of the organization, and relationships with

colleagues. In other words, job satisfaction depends on variables that affect career satisfaction, whereas career satisfaction is expected to be positively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: Career satisfaction will be positively related to job satisfaction.

2.1. Job Satisfaction, Career Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict

The conflict between work and family life, which are two very important aspects of one's life, and the means by which this conflict must be managed are important topics in the domain of organizational behavior and human resource management. Organizations try to help employees maintain a balance between their work and family life; therefore, there has been an increase in the number of studies that have examined work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Li et al., 2017; Martins et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2018; Tasdelen-Karckay & Bakalim, 2017).

The conflict between work and family is a bidirectional one. An individual may experience a work-family conflict as well as family-work conflict. Work-family conflict refers to conflict between role pressures in work and family domains, and it can be of three different types (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when one is unable to perform role-specific tasks due to the time that is devoted to activities that another role entails. Strain-based conflict occurs when one projects the stress, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, and apathy that results from work roles onto one's family members. Behavior-based conflict occurs when the behavior patterns of two roles are incompatible. Allen et al. (2000) conducted an in-depth review of the outcomes of work-family conflict and introduced a typology. Specifically, they classified the outcomes into 3 categories: stress-related (i.e., substance abuse, general psychological strain, work-related stress, somatic/physical symptoms, family-related stress, depression, and burnout), work-related (i.e., turnover intention, job satisfaction, absenteeism, organizational commitment, career satisfaction, career success, and job performance), and nonwork-related (i.e., family, leisure, life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and family performance) outcomes. Similarly, the effect of work-family conflict on different organizational outcomes has also attracted the attention of various researchers from different disciplines.

The negative outcomes of work-family conflict or family-work conflict are not confined to the family domain. Relationships between family and work may significantly affect job and career satisfaction through support or conflict. Work-family conflict has been found to be negatively related to career (Martins et al., 2002) and job satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Yuksel, 2005). Work-family conflict not only negatively affects physical and psychological well-being, familial relationships, and quality of life but also leads to outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions. Consistent with these findings, work-family conflict was expected to be negatively correlated with career and job satisfaction and mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and career satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Work-family conflict will be inversely related to career satisfaction

Hypothesis 3: Work-family conflict will be inversely related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between career and job satisfaction.

3. METHOD

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This study was conducted among full-time healthcare workers who were recruited from 10 public hospitals in Kocaeli, Turkey. After permission to collect data was obtained from the Hospital Board of Directors, a link that redirected participants to the website on which the survey was hosted was sent to all the healthcare workers of the institution. The study sample consisted of 351 healthcare workers. Their mean age was 33.94 years (SD = 7.37). The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 351)

Demographic characteristics	Category	*n*	*%*
Gender	Female	275	78.3
	Male	76	21.7
Educational level	Vocational and technical secondary Education/general secondary education	56	16
	Vocational college	74	21.1
	Undergraduate degree	186	53
	Master's degree	33	9.4
	Doctoral degree	2	0.6
Occupation	Nurse	232	66.1
	Midwife	52	14.8

Marital status	Health officer	67	19.1
	Married	256	72.9
	Single	81	23.1
	Divorced	14	4

Variable		*M*	*SD*	Range
	Years at work (years)	12.30	8.23	1–45
	Number of children	1.05	0.94	0–5

3.2. Measures

The Career Satisfaction Scale that has been developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) and translated into Turkish by Avci and Turunc (2012) was used to measure career satisfaction. This scale consists of five items that measure career satisfaction (e.g., "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career," "I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for income"). Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (score = 1) to "strongly agree" (score = 5). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was .88 in Greenhaus et al.'s (1990) study and .91 in Avci and Turunc's (2012) study. In the present study, the scale yielded acceptable model fit indices (chi-squared statistic: $\chi 2$ = 6.63, degrees of freedom: df = 3, ratio of the chi-squared statistic to degrees of freedom: $\chi 2/df$ = 2.21, goodness-of-fit index [GFI] = .99, normed fit index [NFI] = .99, comparative fit index [CFI] = .99, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .06) and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86. These results support the one-factor structure of this scale.

The five-item scales that have been developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) and translated into Turkish by Efeoglu (2006) were utilized to assess work-family and family-work conflict. The Work-Family Conflict Scale has been widely used in research studies on work-family conflict (e.g., Efeoglu, 2006; Tasdelen-Karckay & Bakalim, 2017). Respondents are required to indicate the extent to which they agree with each item (e.g., "My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my family duties," "Family related strain interfere with my ability to perform job related duties") on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (score = 1) to "strongly agree" (score = 5). Higher scores are indicative of higher levels of work-family and family-work conflict. Netemeyer et al. (1996) and Efeoglu (2006) have found that the Cronbach's alpha of this scale can range from .83 to .89 and from .83 to .88, respectively. In the present study, the scale yielded acceptable model fit indices ($\chi 2$ = 18.11, df = 7, $\chi 2/df$ = 2.59, GFI = .98, NFI = .98, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .06) and Cronbach's alphas of .90 and .87 for the work-family and family-work conflict scales, respectively.

The 6-item Job Satisfaction Scale that has been developed by Rice et al. (1991) was used to measure employee job satisfaction. Responses to each item (e.g., "How do you feel about your job overall?") are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale was translated into Turkish by Efeoglu (2006). Rice et al. (1991) and Efeoglu (2006) reported high reliability coefficients of .83 and .85, respectively. In the present study, the scale yielded acceptable model fit indices ($\chi 2$ = 71.41, df = 33, $\chi 2/df$ = 2.16, GFI = .96, NFI = .96, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .07) and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89.

3.3. Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) were used to conduct statistical analyses. Relationships between each of the study variables were examined using Pearson's correlational analysis. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the direct, indirect, and mediating effects of the study variables. We used the bias-corrected bootstrap method to calculate confidence intervals (CIs) in order to test the hypothesized mediation effects. First, the ratio of the chi-squared value to degrees of freedom was used to assess the fit of the CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) model. Values that are < 3 are indicative of a good model fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Additional fit indices, namely, GFI, IFI, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR were also used to examine model fit. According to Beauducel and Wittmann (2005), GFI, IFI and CFI values between that are .90 and .95, RMSEA values that are close to .06, SRMR values close to .05 are indicative of a good model fit. We used the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and expected cross-validation index (ECVI) values to compare models. Finally, we conducted multigroup analysis to examine gender differences in the pattern and magnitude of the relationships between work-family conflict and job and career satisfaction.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Preliminary Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of independent-samples *t*-tests, which were conducted to examine gender differences in the study variables and Pearson's correlational analyses that were conducted to examine

relationships between each pair of the study variables. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant gender difference in any study variable except work-family conflict. Specifically, women obtained significantly higher scores ($p < .05$) than men on the measure of work-family conflict. Furthermore, career satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction, whereas the mediators, namely, work-family and family-work were significantly and negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Career satisfaction was significantly and positively related to work-family conflict but unrelated to family-work conflict.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alphas, and Correlation Coefficients for the Study Variables (N = 351)

Variable	*Female*M	*Female*SD	*Male*M	*Male*SD	*t*	1	2	3	4
CS	12.66	4.54	12.22	4.33	.752	.86			
WFC	18.07	4.95	16.54	5.24	2.36*	-.352**	.90		
FWC	11.06	4.40	11.07	3.86	-.037	-.099	.253**	.86	
JS	17.98	5.70	18.50	5.99	-.693	.526**	-.523**	-.134*	.89

CS=career satisfaction; WFC=work-family conflict; FWC=family-work conflict; JS=job satisfaction; M=mean; SD=standard deviation; Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the operationalization of each variable are presented along the diagonal. **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$.

4.2. Structural model

In order to test the structural relationships between the study variable, SEM was employed. The direct path from the independent variable (i.e., career satisfaction) was expected to predict the mediators (i.e., work-family and family-work conflict), which in turn were expected to predict job satisfaction. The results showed that a partial mediation model were considered mediocre fit for the data ($\chi^2 = 453.274$, $df = 182$, $\chi^2/df = 2.49$, $p < .001$, GFI = .89, IFI = .90, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07, SRMR=.10). However, the paths from career satisfaction to family-work conflict and from family-work conflict to job satisfaction were not significant. This result indicated that family-work conflict was unrelated to both the independent and dependent variables. Thus, family-work conflict was omitted from model 2, and it included only one mediator (i.e., work-family conflict). The partial mediation model, which consisted of career satisfaction (independent variable), work-family conflict (mediator variable), and job satisfaction (dependent variable), was reanalyzed. The results showed that model 2 was also a good fit for the data ($\chi^2 = 231.123$, $df = 98$, $\chi^2/df = 2.36$, $p < .001$, GFI = .92, IFI = .96, CFI = .96, SRMR=.04, RMSEA = .06). All the paths that were included in model 2 were significant. Further, model 1 and 2 were compared by inspecting the ECVI and AIC values. The values were higher for model 1 (ECVI = 1.575, AIC = 551.274) than for model 2 (ECVI = .877, AIC = 307.123).

The effects of career satisfaction on work-family conflict ($\beta = -.41$, $p < .001$), work-family conflict on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.44$, $p < .001$), and career satisfaction on job satisfaction ($\beta = .44$, $p < .001$) were significant. Consequently, the parameter estimates indicated that the coefficients for all the direct paths were significant (Figure 1). These results indicated that the model was a good fit for the data and that work-family conflict partially mediated the relationship between career and job satisfaction.
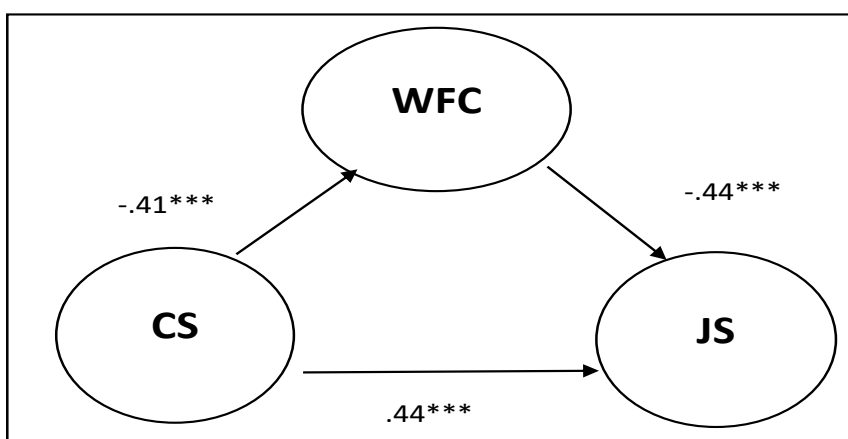
Figure 1. Standardized path coefficients for the partial mediating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between career and job satisfaction (CS=career satisfaction; WFC=work-family conflict; JS=job satisfaction. ***$p < .001$)

4.3. Mediation Analysis

The bootstrapping estimation procedure in AMOS was used to test the hypothesized mediation effects. According to MacKinnon et al. (2004), the most accurate CIs for indirect effects are produced by the bootstrap method. A total of 2,000 bootstrap samples and their associated 95% CIs were generated from the dataset. The

results of bootstrapping analysis revealed that the indirect effects of career satisfaction on job satisfaction through work-family conflict was statistically significant (Table 3).

Table 3. Estimates and Confidence Intervals for the Direct and Indirect Effects of Career satisfaction on Job Satisfaction through Work-Family Conflict

Effects	Point estimate	95% CI
Direct effect	.43	.30−.55***
Indirect effect	.17	.12−.25***
Total effect	.60	.49−.70***

CI= bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals with 2000 replications. ***$p < .005$.

4.4. Multigroup analysis

Multigroup analysis was used to examine the pattern and magnitude of the relationships between work-family conflict and job and career satisfaction. We also used this analysis to examine gender differences in path coefficients. First, the sample was subdivided into two groups: men and women. Subsequently, we confirmed that the measurement models were consistent between the two genders. The analytic results revealed that the χ^2/df values ranged from 1.34 to 1.82. However, the results of the chi-squared difference test revealed that there was no significant difference between the two models $(\Delta\chi^2 = 25.077, df = 16, p > .05)$. This result indicated that the structural paths of the partial model were not different between the two genders.

5. DISCUSSION

Optimal productivity of human resources and their commitment to an organization depend on numerous factors that are embedded in today's highly dynamic organizations. A review of recent findings reveals that job satisfaction and career satisfaction and their effects on employees' organizational behaviors are prominent factors. The emotional responses of healthcare workers, which can have significant effects on the quality and cost of the services that are provided, and other possible elements that may affect these responses are even more important.

It is important for organizations that seek to develop motivated and committed workforces to understand the factors that affect employee career satisfaction (Judge et al., 1995; Martins et al., 2002). In this study, career and job satisfaction were positively correlated among healthcare workers. Therefore, identification of the factors that affect job and career satisfaction may provide useful information that managers can use to make effective decisions about interventions that aim to improve the emotional responses of employees. Indeed, studies have shown that the implementation of interventions that address issues such as career management (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Kong et al., 2015), supervisory support (Kang et al., 2015), creation of an organizational learning culture and performance goal orientation (Joo & Park, 2010), and organizational support to promote career development (Barnett & Bradley, 2007) have a positive effect on the career perceptions of employees.

One factor that has gained prominence in the existing literature on career is work-family conflict (e.g., Judge et al., 1995; Martins et al., 2002). In this study, work-family conflict was found to affect job and career satisfaction. At present, employees cope with excessive workload by either carrying their work home and neglecting their families or neglecting their work due to numerous responsibilities at home. This can lead to negative outcomes such as poor quality of life, which results from excessive stress (Deveci & Avcikurt, 2017), and may even lead to resignation (Carikci & Celikkol, 2009), particularly in labor-intensive industries such as healthcare. On the other hand, organizational efforts to promote work-family balance has been found to reduce work-family conflict (Yuksel, 2005).

The present study examined whether work-family and family-work conflict mediates the relationship between career and job satisfaction. However, the paths from family-work conflict to both the independent and dependent variables were not significant. These findings indicate that work-family conflict was more predominant than family-work conflict among healthcare workers. Further, these findings are also consistent with past findings (e.g., Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Martins et al., 2002; Tasdelen-Karckay & Bakalim 2017). According to Cullen and Hammer (2007), safety compliance is unrelated to work-family conflict among healthcare workers. However, safety compliance is associated with family-work conflict through familial factors and relationships. In this context, the direct focus of many studies was work-family conflict (e.g., Guille et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2018).

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, our findings supported the partial mediating role that work-family conflict played in the relationship between career and job satisfaction. This indicates that the impact of work-family conflict is stronger in the

family domain than in the workplace domain among healthcare workers. This effect may be attributable to the properties and requirements of job behaviors that are necessitated by the healthcare industry. For instance, unlike other industries, healthcare industries do not afford their employees flexible working hours because healthcare services are time-sensitive. This inevitably exacerbates work-family conflict and negatively affects career and job satisfaction. Thus, studies that examine the mediating effects of career-related variables must include work-family conflict as one of the potential mediators.

Bagdadli and Gianecchini (2019) have contended that the main aim of career management practices in organizations is to increase productivity and professional development and that subjective career success is a byproduct of this process. However, our findings suggest that organizations must first research and implement career development and support systems to improve employee career satisfaction. It is important to reduce the negative work attitudes and behaviors that result from work-family conflict to a minimum in order to enhance both organizational efficacy and the health and wellbeing of employees. Therefore, the management of an organization must pay attention to the development and implementation of tools and methods that allow employees to cope with work-family conflict and provide opportunities for facilitation (e.g., facilitation of work-family balance).

Concurrently, guidance and counseling units must be instituted in workplaces because they can play an effective role in providing solutions to the problems that employees face both in the workplace and at home. They can also contribute to the wellbeing of employees in private and family domains by helping them fulfill their familial responsibilities (e.g., by organizing programs that minimize the personal and interpersonal problems that result from shift work, providing daycare opportunities to parents of preschool-aged children).

The adverse consequences of work-family conflict cannot be minimized by solely considering the perspectives of employees. As Wayne et al. (2007) have noted, organizations as well as employees should be considered as the units of analyses in efforts that aim to address work-family conflicts. In this regard, the managerial behaviors of those who occupy management positions must also be considered. As Li et al. (2017) have observed, very few studies have identified the determinants of managers' leadership behaviors and the consequences of work-family conflict. Therefore, future research studies must pay due attention to these issues.

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