THE INFLUENCE OF LEADING ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURAL STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The performance of state owned corporations has been found to be impacted by various factors among them being the management functions of planning, controlling and leading. This research explored the impact of leading on the organizational performance of state maintained corporations with a focus on the state owned corporations in the agricultural subdivision of Kenya. A descriptive research design was used and the target population consisted of 42 agricultural state owned corporations. A purposive sampling procedure was used to select a sample of 30 corporations out of the 42 agricultural state owned corporations in Kenya to enable ease of study and coverage. Data was compiled through administration of a questionnaire which was administered via the 'drop and pick later method'. The questionnaire was divided into six sections to cover the objectives of the study and consisted of structured questions. Data was coded and studied by descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Findings were presented in graphs charts, pie charts and tables. Findings indicated that leading exerts the most positive impact on performance of state corporations, though the influence is minimal in the performance of agricultural state owned corporations in Kenya. This inferred that management in these corporations do not perform the leading function with the requisite professionalism and due diligence. The study therefore recommends the government to ensure that management appraisals are done regularly in every state corporation with a focus on evaluating the management's performance in the key function of leading and to enable leaders have free hands in their leading role.

Key Words: *leading, organizational performance, agricultural, state owned corporations, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

State owned corporations (SOCs) were established in Kenya during the colonial period with the intention of providing services of a monopolistic nature, Africanizing the sector, and redistributing regional income (Mwaura 2007). More specifically, the establishment of state owned corporations was propelled by a national concern to: quicken socio-economic development, address regional economic imbalances, upsurge Kenyan citizens' contribution in the economy, encourage indigenous entrepreneurship, and encourage foreign investment through joint ventures (Kariuki, 2006).

Linyiru (2015) estimated the number of SOCs in Kenya to be 187 even though an inventory of SOCs compiled by government through the Presidential task force in 2013 showed that there were 262 SOCs out of which 42 SOCs belonged to the agriculture, livestock and fisheries cluster (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Many of the agricultural SOCs are mandated to regulate various segments in the sector. For example, the Kenya Dairy Board is delegated to control, develop and uphold the dairy industry in Kenya. Its governing roles are in licensing, inspections and surveillance and certification of locally marketed, exported and imported milk to guarantee buyer protection from physical, biological, chemical or adulteration hazards (Rademaker et al., 2016).

According to Obudo and Wario (2015), SOCS, have come under increasing pressure to increase efficiency and have improved service delivery. Given the importance of state owned corporations in spurring growth in the agricultural sector the need to improve administrative and management functions of these public enterprises is great. These institutions require professionals who can cope with vibrant markets, varying skills and supremacy methods. In practice this refers to defining anticipated results, recommending the best most skillful and gifted persons to guide the SOCs and supervise management and operations, encouraging hard work and good performance, and guaranteeing responsibility for results. The need for a more qualified administrative and management staff for SOCs is urgent bearing in mind the fact that these organizations have performed poorly in their delivery of goods and services due to mismanagement (Mathenge, 2013).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

State owned corporations in Kenya have performed poorly due to poor management practices. This has led to a myriad of problems facing state corporations include corruption, nepotism, and mismanagement. These problems have not only been a concern to the government of Kenya but also to Kenya’s development partners such as the World Bank as many of the reforms which have been proposed both by the government of Kenya and the World Bank have been directed towards improving the management practices of these public bodies. In particular, the World Bank has been preoccupied with the need to implement structural adjustments policies aimed at improving corporate governance and management of state corporations. Since the 1990s, the government of Kenya has been implementing reforms within state owned corporations with the aim of reversing their bad record. In 2003, in particular, the government revealed its economic recovery tactic for wealth and employment generation in which it reiterated the tactics for turning around these public bodies. In spite of these reforms and restricting processes, research states that state owned corporations (SOCs) in Kenya often have issues with management in relation to planning, organization, leading and controlling majorly due to political influence in the recruitment of managers. They face a variety of management-based issues that hinder productivity and performance of their employees and the organization as a whole. These issues include undefined goals and strategies, fraudulent transactions by directors, conflict of interest, lack of good leadership qualities and techniques. Since managers can facilitate or frustrate performance, it is imperative that they possesses or acquire the skill sets to steer the performance of their respective corporations onto a growth trajectory. Issues affecting the performance of state owned corporations can be controlled and even solved by managers adapting the appropriate and right management practices to guide and coordinate all the efforts that employees put to realizing corporation’s goals. Often organizations question how management can affect organizational performance and this research therefore sought to answer this question by exploring the effects of leading functions on performance on state owned corporations in Kenya.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Assessing the influence of leading on organizational performance of agricultural state maintained corporations in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Stewardship Theory promotes the view that a manager or managers of an organization are the stewards (Donaldson 1990a, 1990b). According to this theory, the executive manager, apart from being a resourceful shirker, basically desires to do a decent job, to be a respectable steward of the corporate assets. Thus, stewardship theory embraces the view that there is no inherent, general problem of executive motivation (Barney, 1991). The stewardship theory also embraces the view that performance differences arise based on the physical situation in which the executive finds itself. Thus, the question that begs answers is whether the organization arrangement advantages the executive to convey and implement policies for high corporate performance (Donaldson, 1985). The stewardship theory poses two opposite hypotheses regarding CEO governance: CEO dichotomy leads to advanced return to stakeholders and the optimistic effects of CEO dichotomy are not due to the forged effects of long-term compensation. Stewardship theory of management focuses on leadership philosophies implemented by the owners of a firm. Which grew as a result of the seminal work done by Donaldson and Davis (1991) and was further developed as an ideal where senior executives act as stewards for the organization and in the preeminent benefits of the principals.

The leadership style is precarious to staff performance since leaders' activities are focused to offer the obligatory essential task associated guidance and moral support to staffs. Leadership style can be gauged on the basis of direct and indirect impact on staff performance. The model of the stewardship theory is founded on assumption that managers make choices in the best concern of the firm, positioning communalist choices over self-servicing choices. This type of a manager/leader inspires the organization by doing what's right, because he/she relies on the flourishes of the business eventually. The steward manager exploits the enactment of the organization, working under the premise that both the steward (the manager(s)) and the principal shareholders subsidy from a strong organization (Mullins, 2007). Guided by the stewardship theory, this research studied the impact of management boards on the enactment of state owned corporations in Kenya's agricultural sector. This is important bearing in mind that management boards are expected to perform the monitoring role of the performance of SOCs in the interests of shareholders against the self-interest of executive managers. The study was intended to determine whether the boards of SOCs had a negative or positive influence on performance of these public bodies.

Influence of Leading on Organizational Performance

Samaitan (2014) identifies that leadership has remained as the focus of consideration for over two decades, habitually because of its nature of interdependence with organizational performance. However, leadership stimulates eagerness and commitment, encouraging performance. Various styles of leadership impacts performance since performance cannot be attained in the absence of a leadership that is dynamic and can adjust to the variations and challenges of the environment. Since it is the responsibility of leaders to get stuffs complete via the synchronized efforts of others, it is presumed therefore that leadership skills and strategies often transform into the subordinates' performance.

Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe (2012) found out that leadership styles are key determinants of the achievements or failure of any organization and leadership is very essential for any organization and its significance cannot be underestimated. A leader impacts, directs and motivates others to accomplish exact tasks and also encourage his subordinates for efficient performance to the attainment of the listed corporate goals. Leadership is the heart of any organization. Mills (2005) insists that minus leadership, organizations move too sluggishly, stagnate, and miss their way. Today's corporate leaders face the undertaking of developing and enunciating what the firm is planning to achieve and setting in place applicable and satisfactory procedures in order to guarantee sustainability of the company's objectives and fulfillment of its vision and mission (Calder, 2008). Without leadership individuals frequently fall into quarrels and conflicts, because of the different views towards various solutions to problems.

In recent leadership theories, five leadership styles have been presented, including charismatic leadership, visionary leadership, transactional leadership, cultural-based leadership, and transformational leadership. There are also four types of leadership styles which have been most globally acknowledged and used. These leadership styles, which Centre around Mc Gregor's Theory 'X and Y' assumptions, and are, democratic, dictatorial, laissez faire, and autocratic leadership styles. Here is an examination of some common leadership style dimensions listed above and their potential impression on a group as well as their relative effectiveness. Autocratic leaders are those persons who consult with others and take into account the opinions, suggestions and views of others into their decision. While the dictatorial leaders are the kind who make decisions alone without any consultation. In most cases the word of a dictator is taken as the law and those who disobey are often dealt with harshly (Ngodo, 2008).

Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe (2012) assert that leadership is a dire management skill, relating to the capability to inspire people who work to a common goal. Leadership emphases on the growth of its user's thus suiting their needs. Subsequently, leadership essentially aids followers or users meet their objectives as they work in the business setting; it plays a vivid role in ensuring its users and followers are sensitive and adaptive to new and better practices and changes in the environment (Ghafoor, et al. 2011). Mureithi (2012) studied on tertiary institutions in Nyeri Town and recognized effective leadership and employee job satisfaction as the major factors viewed for fundamental of organizational achievement. Leaders deliver direction for the organization and aid users to attaining anticipated objectives. It was further found out that various leadership styles also affected organizational performance for instance, for organizations to recognize its purposes; there is necessity for the leaders to comprehend the employees' insights of their leadership styles. Hence good leaders cannot treat all the staffs the same since not all styles can fit all levels of employees.

Leadership is among the important determinant forces for enhancing organizational performance. Leaders, as the crucial decision-makers, regulate the attainment, deployment, and development of a firm's resources, and the exchange of these resources into valuable services and (DePree, 2011). Leadership aids firms' accomplish their objectives more effectively by involving job performance to appreciate performance and by guaranteeing staffs to have the resources needed to get the job complete. Leaders also generate the strategic vision of the business, and communicate that vision through framing and modeling the vision by walking the talk and performing consistently, and shape commitment to the vision. Framing is important in leadership since those leaders that can express their information in such a manner as to make sense of events and to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Whenever leaders use framing while communicating, it increases the chances of getting the followers to agree and it leads to higher commitment levels amongst them. Framing is key in changing negative attitudes to positive especially on people who strongly resist change (DePree, 2011).

Kim and Brymer (2011) state that the achievement or fail of any organization relies on its leadership. Corporations fall if the leadership function suffers from weaknesses such as fail to sell its vision to its customers; the incapability to recognize threats; misjudging their capability to regulate the organization's external environment; requiring no boundary amid their interests and those of the firm; confidence that they can respond all queries, eradicating all those who disagree with them and undervaluing problems and depend on what worked in the past.

Leaders who are good at pushing for productivity are skillful at getting people to stay attentive hence work for the maximum precedence goals thus creating values of brilliance for the employees. Leaders who educate their staff with a fixed sense of trend and purpose often have additional content and dedicated work groups. The most prosperous leaders are always emphasizing where the firm is heading and the important ladders that lead to success.

Leaders who endorse a great level of teamwork amongst their staffs, other groups generate a positive and industrious working condition in the organization. While leaders who prove that they can attain goals that necessitate an extraordinary level of intergroup cooperation, synergy is produced and every employee adores the work environment. A leader should always aim to not only support the organizational related tasks but also develop others. Leaders who work with their staff hand in hand and drive them towards developing innovative skills and abilities, resulting to constructing employee satisfaction and commitment. On the other hand, staff who develop new abilities, high performers should be promoted. Effective leaders are delighted by the accomplishment of others. Leaders can uphold better employee progress by generating a conductive environment in which colleagues are stimulated to learn from past experiences. Moreover, taking time to analyze their successes thus appreciating what went well. Leaders who are concerned with matters and concerns of their colleagues in the work group have workforces with better employee satisfaction and commitment (DePree, 2011). Leaders should stabilize fellow colleagues' needs thus encouraging meeting organizational deadlines as a result demonstrating that they value their personnel. They produce strong positive relations with all collages. Furthermore, leaders who observe staff satisfaction and commitment are brave since they do not shy away from conflicts. They compact???? with matters thus when they see first signs of hitches within their teams, they address the problems unswervingly and candidly. Nevertheless, other leaders assume that conflicts work out themselves and the hitches will simply vanish; this is not true. It takes bravery to report matters, resolve conflicts, and maintain on each employee's accountability.

The choices and activities of managers who are leaders have a robust impact on organizational success (Bolton, Brunnermeier and Veldkamp, 2013). According to Bass, proper leadership activities have an influence on workers commitment and satisfaction. In addition, the productivity of a firm depends on the activities of the management. If a firm needs to progress its performance, the leadership style in use ought be evaluated and modified to new necessities (Bolton, et al., 2013). An organization's probabilities of generating a competitive benefit, maximizing wealth, and surviving in the long term rise when the strategic leaders of the organization endlessly support the internal organizational environment with variations taking place in the entire external environment (Karamat, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research assumed a descriptive research design. The study was carried out in agricultural state owned corporations located in Nairobi and the outlying counties. The population consisted of the 42 agricultural state owned corporations in the country. The study adopted a simple random sampling whereby the sample population selected for this study was 70% of the study population. Thus, 30 agricultural state owned corporations were selected for this study. Five employees were sampled from each chosen 30 corporations giving a number of 150 respondents. Questionnaires were used to gather data from the respondents. The response was quite good since majority of the questionnaires (108 in number) were completed and returned. However, some questionnaires (42 in number) were not returned. The data collected in the questionnaires were scrutinized using descriptive statistics method of analysis. Moreover, inferential statistics (Pearson correlations, multiple regression and Analysis of variance) were computed. Graphs, charts, pie charts, figures and tables were used to present the findings. These were then interpreted in light of the study objectives.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Scree Plot

The scree plot is a graph of the eigen values beside all the factors considered. The graph was worthwhile for determining how many factors on leading to retain. The point of attentiveness is where the curve starts to flatten (the Elbow) and where the eigen value is below 1. The scree plot for leading indicates that the curve instigates to flatten between factors 2 and 3. It is also apparent from the curve that factor 5 forward have an eigen value of less than 1, so only four components (1, 2, 3 and 4) should be retained. This means that the four main components in leading have the greatest contribution while the rest contributes little.

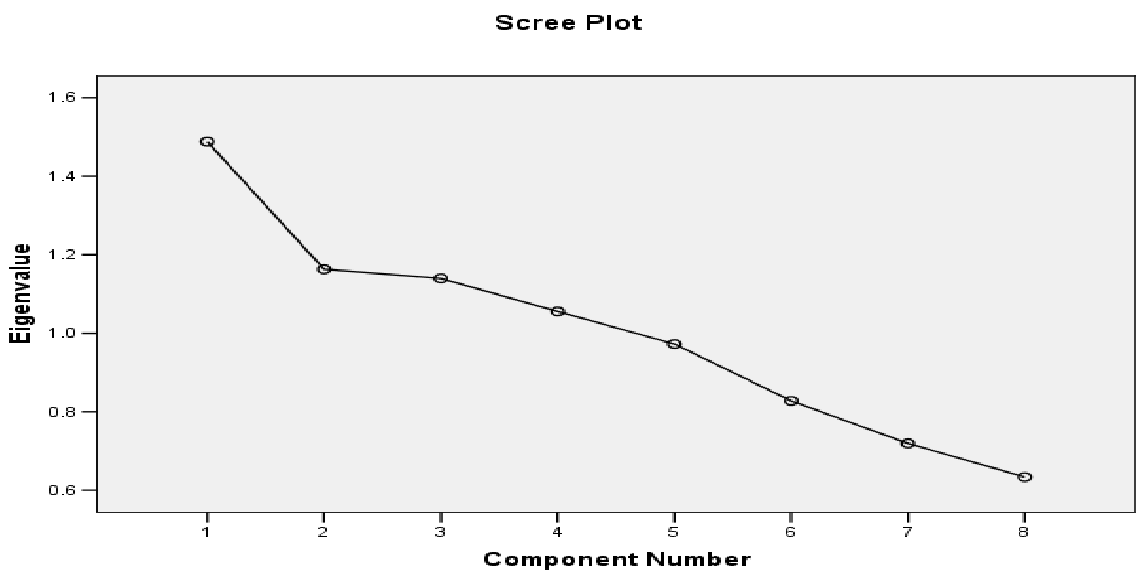

Figure 1: Scree plot graph for leading

Communality

Communality in factor analysis indicates the entire impact on a single detected variable from all the elements related with it. In other words, it demonstrates how ample?? of the variance in the variables has been accounted for by the extracted factors. It is equivalent to the total of all the squared factor loadings for all the factors correlated to the observed variable. The findings indicate that the most influential component for leading was L4 (Leaders in the corporation do not stand wastage of resources) with a communality of 0.745. This means that 74.5% of any change in L4 was accounted for by the extracted factors. The other three influential components for leading were: L13 (Our leaders promote the generation of new knowledge in the organization), L11 (Our Leaders encourage stakeholder involvement to enhance growth) and L15 (Our leaders have established a good mentorship program in the Corporation) with communalities of 0.722, 0.717 and 0.676 respectively. This means that the extracted factors in leading influenced 72.2%, 71.7% and 67.6% of the changes in L13, L11 and L15 respectively.

Financial Perspectives on Leading

The question as to whether there is a clear vision and purpose for the organization had a mean of 4.78 with a standard deviation of 1.43. This mean is average and therefore reflects that leading affects the financial performance of an organization. This concurs with Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe (2012) that leadership is a critical management skill, encompassing the capability to inspire a group of individuals to common goal. Leaders in the corporation strife to keep the operational costs low had a mean of 4.66 with a standard deviation of 1.66 and this concurs with Balotti and Finkelstein (2008) that approaches cannot be articulated and applied to accomplish exceeding average returns deprived of strategic leadership. On the view that leaders scrutinize corporation expenditures had a mean of 4.91 with a standard deviation of 1.88. This mean is high and therefore implies that leadership impacts on the financial recital of the organization. This corresponds with DePree (2011) that leaders, as the crucial decision-makers, regulate the achievement, growth, and deployment of organizational resources, the conversion of these resources into valued products and services.

Customer Perspective on Leading

Leaders' strife for higher customer retention had a mean of 3.79 with a standard deviation of 2.241. This mean is low indicating that strife for customer retention does impact negatively on the performance of an organization. This contradicts with Karamat (2013) that an organization's likelihoods of generating a reasonable advantage, maximizing wealth, and persisting in the long term increase when the strategic leaders of the organization endlessly support the internal organizational environment with changes taking place in the complex external environment (customer dynamism). As for whether leaders encourage stakeholder involvement to enhance growth, a mean of 4.53 with a standard deviation of 2.070 was achieved. This mean is average and it therefore indicates that leadership enhances growth. This result is in line with Bolton, et al., (2013) that if an organization desires to rally its performance, the leadership style in use should be evaluated and modified to new desires.

Learning and Growth on Leading

The perspective that leaders are good at mentoring juniors had a mean of 4.77 with a standard deviation of 1.65. This mean is average and confirms that though a good number of the respondents agreed that leaders in the organizations they were working in were mentoring their juniors, a few still felt that this was not so. This finding is in agreement with that of Ngodo (2008) who perceives leadership to be a mutual procedure of social impact, in which leaders and subordinates impact each other in order to attain organizational goals.

Internal Processes on Leading

The perspective that leaders clarify and gain consensus on the vision and mission of the organization had a mean of 5.08 with a standard deviation of 1.65. This mean is high and therefore leads to the affirmation that leading helps in meeting the vision and mission of the organization. This finding is consistent with that of Nagendra and Farooqui (2016) who views leadership as that kind of trend, which an individual can give to a group of people under him in such a way that these will influence the behavior of another individual, or group. The respondents indicated that leadership has created a common understanding of the corporation's strategic purpose, and that all employees have a clear view of the direction the company is taking. Employees have been made to understand the corporation's strategy, how it is being pursued and what their inputs are towards the overall delivery. Being engaged in dialogue and participation, employees are motivated and made to understand the importance of how their commitment to the company does in delivering the desired outcomes.

INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Correlation Analysis

Variable relationship was based on Pearson correlation coefficient (r). This helped to show the relationship between all the variables under study. The results are displayed in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Correlation matrix

Pearson Correlation	Performance	Leading
Performance	1	-0.0264
Leading	-0.0264	1

Correlation analysis indicated that leading was negatively correlated with performance. This finding is contrary to the expectations that leadership and performance should be positively related. Thus this shows that agricultural state owned corporations do not practice effective leadership.

Regression Coefficient of Determination

From the findings displayed in the table 2 where the results showed that R square was 0.0642 which indicates that Leading influence approximately 6.42% of the change in performance in state corporations. The rest of the changes (that is 93.58%) in performance in state corporations is caused by other factors except Controlling, Planning, Leading and Organizing.

Table 2: Coefficient of determination on organizational performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.25337	0.0642	0.02785	0.75686
Predictors: (Constant), Leading				

Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

At this level F-test was used with Analysis of variance (ANOVA) used to generate the F value. The ANOVA showed relationship in the variables between and within the measure of the dependent variable. It reflects the magnitude the model has on the data compared to those that are not considered in the model (residual). According to the ANOVA results as displayed in the table 3, the probability value for the regression model was 0.141 implying that the model was significant at 95% confidence level. The overall goodness of fit can be summarized by calculating the fraction of total variance explained by the fit which is presented by the R square. Since the level of significance was 0.141, and F Calculated (1.766) was greater than F Critical (1.337) it implies that there was goodness of fit of the model.

Table 3: Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.0475	1	1.01188	1.76642	0.14129
	Residual	59.0025	103	0.57284		
	Total	63.05	107			

Beta-Coefficients

From the standardized Beta coefficients generated from regression analysis, the model was displayed in the table 4 below.

Table 4: Coefficient of leading influence on performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.521	0.867		5.214	0.000		
Leading	-0.030	0.073	-0.041	-0.415	0.679	0.913	1.095

$$\text{Performance} = 4.521 - 0.041\text{Leading} + \varepsilon$$

Performance of state corporations was expressed as a function of leading. To achieve standardized coefficients, all the variables were analyzed using regression tools. From the regression coefficients, the study found that a change in one unit of leading decreases performance in state corporations by 0.041 units while a change in one a unit of controlling increases performance in state corporations by 0.238 units.

CONCLUSIONS

From the breakdown of the data collected on the influence of leading to the performance of agricultural state owned corporations in Kenya, leading influences the performance of these organizations in the following nine ways: by ensuring that there is no wastage of resources, by promoting the generation of new knowledge, by encouraging stakeholder involvement to enhance growth, by establishing a good mentorship program in the corporation, by conducting annual reviews of customers, by scrutinizing corporation expenditures, by giving a clear vision and purpose for the organization and lastly by evaluating systems and structures continuously.

As per the four aspects in the balance score card model, it can be concluded that in terms of financial perspective, leading helps in ensuring that there is a clear vision and purpose for the organization, helps the leaders in the corporation to keep the operational costs low and scrutinize corporation expenditures.

In the customers' perspective, leading encourages stakeholder involvement to enhance growth. On the learning and growth perspective, leading helps in having good mentoring of juniors and in terms of internal process perspective, leading helps to clarify and gain consensus on the vision and mission of the organization. Overall, the study concludes that the performance of agricultural state owned corporations in Kenya is poor due to lack of performing or even under performing on the leading function. From the findings both in literature and analysis of data, it can therefore be concluded that leading is a very important function in the management of any organization and therefore, if the agricultural state owned corporations are to improve on their performance the managers must ensure that they effectively perform this function.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Leaders should be empowered to allocate appropriate resources towards influencing and motivating workers to achieve shared goals. This would enable employees to know where the organization is headed and consequently motivate them to perform. Leaders should also be empowered and supported to create a culture where proper organizational planning can take place. This would encourage everyone feel part of the decision making process, and also feel valued by knowing that their views and contributions are considered by management.

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