

## Motivation through Self-leadership: An emerging trend of the leaders of private universities

Mahbub Parvez\*

Mohammed Masum Iqbal\*

**Abstract:** To lead others one has first to lead oneself. In describing leadership as a “process of influencing others,” self-leadership can be seen as a process of “influencing ourselves.” This influencing behavior, in our view, can be described as a learning behavior and is the very heart of leadership development. The keystone of self-leadership is to know what one wants to become or achieve. Leaders of an organization play the vital role to achieve organizational goal. With the emergence of Private Universities in Bangladesh a change has been taking place in the field of higher education. Within a very short span of time these universities played a significant role in the higher education market of Bangladesh. Conventionally every university has a hierarchical structure. Apart from this traditional hierarchy there are some patterns of leading people which involve honoring each other, friendship and respect, different touch of motivational factors, self assessment and self leadership judgment. Leaders motivate themselves first to motivate others. This paper tries to identify the level of self leadership in the private universities of Bangladesh and it is observed that 80.12 percent leaders of the private universities motivate themselves through self-leadership process. 7.57 percent leaders are in neutral position and 12.30 percent leaders are not much concerned about the process of self-leadership.

**Keywords:** Self-leadership, Motivation, Personal goal setting, Self-monitoring, Self-reinforcement.

### 1. Introduction

This is not an article about the leadership of others. Instead, it is about something more fundamental and more powerful---self-leadership. It is about the leadership that we exercise over ourselves. In fact, we argue that if we ever hope to be effective leaders of others, we must first be effective leaders of ourselves. To better understand the process of self-leadership and how we can improve our capability in this area, we should first explore the meaning of the word "leadership."

There are a seemingly endless number of definitions and descriptions of leadership---largely as a result of the vast number of persons who have researched and written on the subject (and their equally vast and differing viewpoints). All of these descriptions have some merit. However, in focusing on the idea of self-leadership, perhaps the most useful definition of leadership is simply "a process of influence."

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\* The authors are Assistant Professors of Business Administration, Faculty of Business and Economics, Daffodil international University.

This short definition is actually quite broad and meaningful. It recognizes not only the importance of human influence in the determination of what we are and what we do, but also the complex nature of leadership (that is, influence is not an isolated event, but a process involving many parts). The existing literature on leadership is almost universally focused on influence exercised by one or more persons over others (in other words, influence exercised by "leaders" on "followers"). In taking an initial step toward understanding and improving our own self-leadership, we must first recognize that leadership is not just an outward process; we can and do lead ourselves. Indeed, as the opening quotation suggests, our greatest potential source of leadership and influence comes not from an external *leader*, but from within ourselves!

It is known that Leadership is the process of influencing people to follow their leaders to achieving the organizational goal. So, Leadership is obviously a subject of extreme importance in management. The contingency leadership theorists argue that the effectiveness of leader behavior is contingent upon organizational situations (Richard,1999, p. 93). In order to be effective, a leader must be sensitive to the organizational situation. We can best understand an organizational leadership by examining its era and the ways it interacts with other components of its situation.

Most literature on workplace motivation assumes that companies must do things to motivate employees. Yet the truth is that upper level employees motivate themselves most of the time. The emerging view is that employees can take care of themselves. Self-Leadership is an emerging organizational behavior concept that captures the psychological perspective of employee motivation and performance. Self-leadership refers to the process of influencing oneself to establish the self direction and self-motivation needed to perform a task (Neck and Manz, 1996, p. 445).

Employers in the past had no systematic program for managing or evaluating their business. Even their simple rules exerted a powerful influence on the organization. Many of the old rules are now out of date. Instead of trust, belief, dedication and honesty, managerial efficiency and effectiveness are considered important in measuring performance. With the emergence of Private Universities in Bangladesh a change has occurred in the field of higher education. In a country where only about 30 percent of those who qualify for university admission actually gain admission into public universities, the need for private sector participation cannot be overemphasized. (Hua Du, Country director, ADB, May-2006). As most of the employees are highly educated in this sector, they treat each other with consideration. There is a harmony between words and deeds. Some people have the charismatic power of motivating people and obviously there are other factors that help every employee to motivate himself or herself and this helps him or her to achieve the goal. The concept of a private university is somewhat

different from that of a public university. There is no scope of monopoly as 54 private universities are currently operating in the country and another 10 are waiting for approval. So there is a competition among the universities and the criteria that are set for comparing are nothing but the quality education, quality of teachers, infrastructure, cost of education, scholarship, collaboration with other universities of the world, extra curricular facilities etc. Also this is a place where someone feel free to open his mind. Considering the business rules, objectives and formal system each and every university must follow a hierarchy structure. According to that structure the top management plays the vital role to manage both administrative and academic personnel. But there are patterns of leading people, which involves honoring each other, friendship, respect, different touch of motivational factor, self assessment and self leadership judgment. Private universities are taking there position from 90's onward. Gradually the concept of private university in Bangladesh is rapidly changing according to the requirements of the society. As this concept is related to higher education, control and service is concentrated on better performance. The underlying assumptions behind this performance is self-leadership where people are responsible, capable and able to exercise initiative without the external constraints of bosses, rules or regulations. Top managers, who are given proper support can monitor and control their own behavior. So this paper tries to explore at what level the top management of the private universities of Bangladesh motivate themselves through self-leadership practices. The first section of this study states what to expect from this paper. The second section gives a theoretical overview on motivation through self-leadership and the last chapter gives the finding of the study.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The study has been carried out with the following objectives.

- a. To explain the concept of self - leadership.
- b. To identify the level of self leadership practice by the top management of the private universities in Bangladesh for their self-motivation.

## **3. The study methods**

**3.1. Data collection:** Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. In getting primary information face-to-face interaction with Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dean and Registrar of different private universities will play a significant role. Besides this the specific 5-point scale questionnaire gives the idea whether the targeted group is interested to develop or to maintain the self-leadership process. There will be some questions that would be related to their emotions, family background, knowledge, experience as an administrator and academician to identify their view points.

Besides the primary data, secondary information would be collected from books and published materials. Referred text books would be taken into consideration.

**3.2. Data analysis:** After gathering the data (primary) from respondents, we summarized the data in the table. Mainly descriptive statistics is followed for analysis. In some cases commonality is done by calculating the percentage point for each response in terms of total numbers of respondents. Final analysis is based on these responses and corresponding percentage calculation.

**3.3. Sampling plan:** The Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dean of different faculties and Registrar of the eight private universities were taken as sample. Most of the universities are top ranked according to the report of University Grants Commission.

**3.4. Sample size:** Total number of respondents is twenty nine. The respondents, who are the key position holders in different private universities, are shown in the following table.

Sl #	Name of the University	VC	Pro-VC	Deans/ Directors	Registrar	Total
1	North South University	----	1	2	1	4
2	East West University	----	1	3	-----	4
3.	American International University –Bangladesh	1	1	1	1	4
4.	Independent University Bangladesh	----	-----	3	1	4
5.	Daffodil International University	1	1	1	1	4
6.	Eastern University	1	1	1	1	4
7.	United International University	1	-----	1	1	3
8.	Stamford University Bangladesh	----	-----	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>						<b>29</b>

## 4. Literature review

### 4.1 Leadership defined

Leadership is both a process and property. Leadership is an important aspect of managing because of the critical roles leaders play in group and organizational effectiveness. But there is no single well-accepted theory of leadership. In his survey of leadership theories and research, Ralph M Stogdill pointed out that ‘there are as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define it.

An effective leader is one who has the ability to effectively lead his people towards the accomplishment of organizational goals. The main theme of leadership is the followership. It is the willingness of people to follow that makes a person leader. Leadership involves other people, employees or followers.

There are some basic ingredients leadership: for example: (a) The ability to use power effectively and in a responsible manner. (b) The ability to comprehend that human beings have different motivation forces at different times and in different situations. (c) The ability to act in a manner that will develop a climate conducive to responding to and arousing motivation.

If management is defined as a process of making the most effective use of available human and material resources for the achievement of the specified goals, then leadership may be described as the component of management that is most concerned with the use of human resources.

#### **4.2. Self-leadership defined**

Self-leadership is defined as the process of influencing oneself to establish self-direction and self-motivation needed to perform (Peter 1996). Self-Leadership involves "leading oneself" via the utilization of both behavioral and mental techniques. Behavioral self-leadership techniques involve self-observation, self-goal-setting, management of antecedents to behavior (e.g., cues), modification of consequents to behavior (e.g., self-reinforcement, self-punishment), and the finding of natural rewards in tasks performed. Mental self-leadership techniques involve examination and alteration of self-dialogue, beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery, and thought patterns (habits in one's thinking) (McCall and Flyers, 1998). It is important to note that effective self-leadership is not founded on narcissistic or "blindly" independent employee behaviors with total disregard to the work group or organization. Rather, effective self-leadership involves a coordinated effort between the employee and the group and/or organization as a whole. Implicit in this view is a potential trade-off or balance between the self-leadership of an individual employee and the self-leadership of the work group and/or organization as a whole. This suggests that effective self-leadership involves achieving equilibrium between focusing on the cohesiveness of a work group and/or organization and focusing on the value and identity of each individual employee. Thus, self-leadership does not require entirely autonomous behavior without regard to the team or organization. Nor does it require that the identity and value of each individual employee be entirely put aside in favor of the work group or organization. Rather, an effective self-leadership perspective would encourage individuals to find their own personal identity and mode of contribution as part of establishment of a group or organization that produces synergistic

performance. Based on various researches (Charles C. 1992) showed that that the practice of effective self-leadership by employees can lead to a plethora of benefits including improved job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and mental performance.

#### **4.3 Some rules for self– leadership**

The following self-leadership rules have been developed by Charles C Manz & Christopher P. Neck (1998).

1. Set goals for your life; not just for your job. What we think of as “meaning of life” goals affect your lifestyle outside of work too, and you get whole-life context, not just work-life, each feeding off the other.
2. Practice discretion constantly, and lead with the example of how your own good behavior does get great results. Otherwise, why should anyone follow you when you lead?
3. Take initiative. Volunteer to be first. Be daring, bold, brave and fearless, willing to fall down, fail, and get up again for another round. Starting with vulnerability has this amazing way of making us stronger when all is done.
4. Be humble and give away the credit. Going before others is only part of leading; you have to go with them too. Therefore, they’ve got to want you around!
5. Learn to love ideas and experiments. Turn them into pilot programs that preface impulsive decisions. Everything was impossible until the first person did it.
6. Live in wonder. Wonder why, and prize “Why not?” as your favorite question. Be insatiably curious, and question everything.
7. There are some things you don’t take liberty with no matter how innovative you are when you lead. For instance, to have integrity means to tell the truth. To be ethical is to do the right thing. These are not fuzzy concepts.
8. Believe that beauty exists in everything and in everyone, and then go about finding it. You’ll be amazed how little you have to invent and much is waiting to be displayed.
9. Actively reject pessimism and be an optimist. Say you have zero tolerance for negativity and self-fulfilling prophecies of doubt, and mean it.
10. Champion change. As the saying goes, those who do what they’ve always done, will get what they’ve always gotten. The only things they do get more of are apathy, complacency, and boredom.
11. Be a lifelong learner, and be a fanatic about it. Surround yourself with mentors and people smarter than you. Seek to be continually inspired by something, learning what your triggers are.
12. Care for and about people. Compassion and empathy become you, and keep you ever-connected to your humanity. People will choose you to lead them.

#### 4.4 Motivation through self-leadership

It is almost in every organization of Bangladesh that they use monetary benefit to motivate employees, or very much busy to finding new ways to motivate employees.

Most literature on workplace motivation assumes that companies must do things to motivate employees. Yet the truth is that employees motivate themselves most of the time. Considering this the Self – Leadership concept is highlighted, either it is practiced in the private university sectors, if so, then how and the level is what?

#### 4.5 Elements of self -leadership process

Self- leadership is the process of influencing oneself to establish the self-direction and self-motivation needed to perform a task, including personal goal setting, constructive thought patterns, designing natural rewards, self-monitoring, and self – reinforcement.(McShane, 2000, P.119). Overall, self –leadership takes the view that individuals mostly regulate their own actions specially in the private universities through these behavioural and cognitive (thought ) activities.

Although we are in the early stages of understanding the dynamics of self leadership, according to Steven L. McShane, Graduate School of Management, University of Western Australia (UWA), there are five main elements of the Self- Leadership process. These elements, which generally follow each other in a sequence are given below.



*Source:* McShane, Steven L. and Von Glinow, Mary Ann. (2000). *Organizational Behavior*, Irwin, McGraw-Hill, Boston.

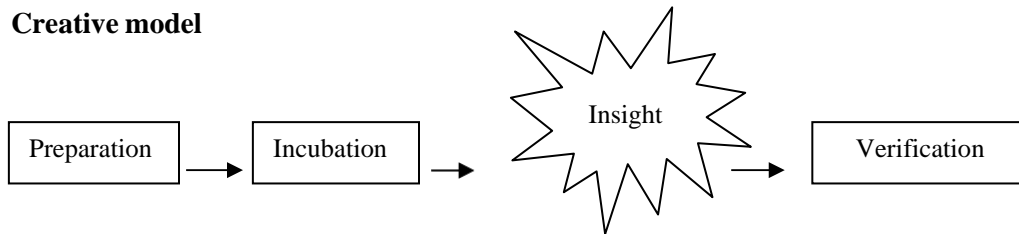
### 5. Analysis and findings

#### 5.1 Cognitive abilities and creativity

Cognitive abilities are an individual's power to think intelligently and to analyze situations and data effectively. Intelligence may be a precondition for individual creativity- although most creative people are highly intelligent, not all intelligent people necessarily are creative. Creativity is also linked with the ability to think ***divergently and convergently***. Divergent thinking is a skill that allows people to see differences between situations, phenomena, or events. Convergent thinking is a skill that allows people to see similarities between situations, phenomena or events. Creative people are generally very skilled at both divergent and convergent thinking.

Through our survey it was found that 79.3 percent leaders of the total respondent are both divergent and convergent in thinking. Whereas 13.79 percent leaders are convergent and 6.89 percent leaders are divergent.

### Creative model



*Source:* McShane, Steven L. and Von Glinow, Mary Ann. (2000). *Organizational Behavior*, p.350, Irwin, McGraw-Hill, Boston.

Though creativity is a part of most non-programmed decisions, but Mcshane (2000) identifies creativity as a process to find problems, search alternatives and implement solutions.

**Preparation:** Table 1: indicates that creativity is not a passive activity; rather, the leaders gather the necessary information and concentrate on the problems or issues. That's way the process begins with a period of preparation. The leaders of the private universities scored 111 out of 145 (76.55 percent) under the criteria that formal education and training are usually the most efficient ways of becoming familiar with this vast amount of research and knowledge.

**Incubation:** This is the stage of reflective thought. 74.48 percent leaders put the problem aside (sometimes out of frustration), but their mind is still working on it unconsciously. Some rely on physical activity such as swimming or jogging to provide a 'break' from thinking.

**Insight:** Usually occurring after preparation and incubation, insight is a spontaneous breakthrough in which the creative person achieves a new understanding of some problem or situation. These flashes of inspiration are fleeting and can be lost quickly if not documented. Leaders scored 125 (86.20 percent) to hold a notebook nearby at all times, so that they can jot down their fleeting ideas before they disappear.

**Verification:** Once an insight has occurred, verification determines the validity or truthfulness of the insight. For many creative ideas, verification includes scientific experiments to determine whether or not the insight actually leads to the results expected. 94 .48 percent leaders of the private universities who are in the top management position are very much conscious about the validity and truthfulness of the idea, before sharing that with their subordinate or superior.



**Table 1: Variables of creative model and their assessment**

Variables	N	5	4	3	2	1	Min	Max	Highest Weight	Weighted Score	In %
Preparation	29	8	16	0	2	3	1	5	145	111	76.55
Incubation	29	8	12	4	3	2	1	5	145	108	74.48
Insight	29	18	7	1	1	2	1	5	145	125	86.20
Verification	29	23	5	0	1	0	2	5	145	137	94.48
<i>Average</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>1.25</i>	<i>1.75</i>	<i>1.75</i>					
<i>Std. Deviation</i>		<i>7.5</i>	<i>4.97</i>	<i>1.89</i>	<i>0.96</i>	<i>1.26</i>					
<i>Variance</i>		<i>56.3</i>	<i>24.7</i>	<i>3.58</i>	<i>0.92</i>	<i>1.58</i>					
5= Agree, 4= Partially agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Partially disagree, 1= Disagree											

Also, Table 1 indicates that on an average 14 personnel are creative and 10 personnel tried to maintain the creative model. Below 5 personnel are not interested or not conscious about how to follow the model. Their view on creativity is something separate from regular decision making.

## 5.2 Individual elements of the self-leadership process practiced by the leaders of private universities

**Personal goal setting:** This first step in self-leadership is to set goals for own work effort. The difference between personal goal setting and the companies goal setting is that goals are set alone, rather than assigned by or jointly decided with a supervisor. (Saks, 1996, pp. 81-91).

37. 93 percent leaders of the private universities start their daily schedule by formal preparation and fix a target at the beginning of the day. 55.17 percent leaders don't follow but believe that, those who start their daily schedule by formal preparation and fix a target are always successful at the end of the day. Only 3.44 percent leaders depend on organization rather than set goals for their own work effort. According to the self-leadership literature by Sims & C.C. Manz, (1996) effective organizations establish norms whereby employees have a natural tendency to set their own goals to motivate themselves.

**Table 2: Awareness and assessment of self-leadership elements**

Value	Personal Goal Setting (f)	Constructive Thought Pattern (f)		Designing Natural Rewards (f)	Self-monitoring (f)	Self-reinforcement (f)	Total (f)
		Self-talk	mental imagery				
5	11	10	10	5	10	18	64
4	16	12	3	2	7	7	47
3	1	3	3	4	5	0	16
2	0	3	7	16	3	2	31
1	1	1	6	2	4	2	16
<b>N</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>174</b>

**Table: 3 Value achieved by each element of the process through respondents' comments**

Personal Goal Setting	Constructive Thought Pattern		Designing Natural Rewards	Self-monitoring	Self-reinforcement	Total	
	self-talk	mental imagery					
55	50	50	25	50	90	320	Practiced part
64	48	12	8	28	28	188	
3	9	9	12	15	0	48	Neutral
0	6	14	32	6	4	62	Non practiced part
1	1	6	2	4	2	16	
<b>123</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>634</b>	

**Constructive thought pattern:** Before beginning a task and while performing it, employees should engage in positive (constructive) thoughts about that work and its accomplishment. Theoretically employees are more motivated and better prepared to accomplish a task after they have engaged in **self-talk** and **mental imagery**. Self-talk refers to any situation in which we talk to ourselves about our own thoughts or actions. its ethics and values for the purpose of increasing self-efficacy and navigating through the decisions required to get the job done effectively (McShane,2000,P.120). In other words, self-talk creates a 'can-do' belief and thereby increases motivation by raising the expectancy. Self-talk also affects how well we figure out the best way to accomplish new or complex tasks. 'Self – statements affect our self-efficacy, which in turn can influence our behaviour and performance in a particular situation (Neck and Manz, 1996, pp.445-467)'. 34. 48 percent leaders fully agree with this statement while 41.38 percent leaders

partially agree. People who tell themselves “ I can do this job well; I’ve got the necessary skills!” are more effective at navigating through the decisions required to get the job done effectively. In contrast, 10.34 percent leaders are in neutral position, 10.34 percent leaders partially disagree and 3.44 percent disagree with the statement and prefer to talk with others rather than their own thoughts or actions for any complex tasks or for any situation.

Mental imagery is mentally practicing a task and visualizing its successful completion. Mental imagery has two parts. One part involves mentally practicing the task, anticipating obstacles to goal accomplishment, and working out solutions to those obstacles before they occur. Mental imagery suggests that we need to mentally practice a task and visualizing its successful completion. “I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it”. Self-leadership takes the opposite view. It suggests that we need to mentally practice a task and imagine successfully performing it beforehand. This process is known as mental imagery (Neck, Stewart and Manz,1995). 48.27 percent leaders fully disagree with this concept, they want a formal preparation for any type of future work, mentally practice the task, anticipating obstacles to goal accomplishment, and working out solutions to those obstacles before they occur. In contrast 44.82 percent are ready to solve the problem when come and are reactive. Rest 10.34 percent depends on the situation and the type of work they are going to solve. By mentally walking through the activities required to accomplish the task, we begin to see problems that may occur. We can then imagine what responses would be best for each contingency. (Driscoll, Cooper and Moran, 1994. p. 481)

**Designing natural rewards:** Self-leadership recognizes that leaders can find ways to make the job itself more motivating (Neck, Stewart, & Manz,1995). One way is to think about how the work affects co-workers, customers and others. There are other way to build natural rewards into the job. One strategy is to alter the way a task is accomplished. People often have enough discretion in their jobs to make slight changes to suit their needs and preferences. You might prefer to drop by a co-worker’s office to discuss an issue rather than to send him or her an e-mail (McShane, 2000,p.120).

Faculties who give lessons into the class keep in mind that providing lessons properly ensures students learning process. Not only into the class but also students carefully follow the movements of every faculty outside class rooms. That’s why they think about how the work affects students, co-workers, clients and others. By consciously thinking about the effects of one’s work, leaders can increase the perceived task significance of their work. 55.17 percent leaders use verbal communication to deliver any new idea, they think that this type of communication fulfils social needs. 17.24 percent leaders use multimedia to make their idea more interesting and want to capture the audience

effectively. 6.89 percent uses OHP, 13.79 percent distribute handouts and only 6.89 percent do not concern about their idea, they simply asked their subordinate to prepare a presentation program.

**Self – monitoring:** Self –monitoring is the process of keeping track of one’s progress toward a goal. It includes the notion of consciously checking that naturally occurring feedback at regular intervals. It also includes designing artificial feedback where natural feedback does not occur. The concept of private university is different from public university. Students feedback plays a vital role to evaluate the performance of a teacher. But the faculties who are in the management position they also monitor their own works. 58.62 percent management personnel who are also in the leading position maintain or try to maintain the daily achievements of the works and mark on errors for their own satisfaction, but they are not going to disclose these errors or achievements to their superior. 13.80 percent are confident about their work and not willing to maintain any error book. 27.58 percent leaders believe on artificial feedback systems like they might arrange to receive quarterly or semester basis reports regarding the performance or achievements.

**Self-reinforcement:** Self-leadership includes the social learning concept of self-reinforcement. Self-reinforcement occurs whenever an employee has control over a reinforcer but doesn’t “take” the reinforcer until completing a self-set goal (Logue, 1995). Self-reinforcement also occurs when you decide to do a more enjoyable task after completion of a task that you dislike (Mcshane, 2000,p.122). 86.20 percent leaders are ready to continue or try to continue a boring job until finish when it is known to them that a more enjoyable work is waiting for them. They believe on work but not onto the nature of work. Sometimes they feel bored to conduct classes, to prepare exam schedule or to check exam papers. They are not in a position to avoid all these works.

13.79 percent leaders partially or fully disagree with the concept of self –reinforcement and always try to go for enjoyable work. They are not ready to continue the boring job and sometimes miss the classes as they don’t have any support from their mind to conduct class at that time.

### **5.3 Levels of self-leadership practices**

Table: 3 shows that the respondents who are fully and partially practicing the self-leadership process achieved the value of 508, which means 80.12 percent leaders of the private universities motivate themselves through self-leadership process. 7.57 percent leaders are in neutral position and 12.30 percent leaders are not well concerned about the process of self-leadership.

## 6. Conclusion

Clear intention (meaning knowing your purpose); skillful means; and affirmation (meaning personal vision and work must not clash with individual values.) are the basics for the success of an organization which are highly involved with leadership and self leadership. Indeed Self – leadership plays the key role to achieve the goal. One of the advantages of self leadership is that it can be learned. Training programs have effectively improved self-leadership skills in those with lower conscientiousness scores. Overall, self-leadership promises to be a valuable concept and practice for improving employee motivation and performance. As the private university concept changes rapidly, and influences the society as a lot, it is expected to be a decent and accepted leadership pattern should follow in these universities.

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