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**Pastoral Demand and Burnout among Catholic Priests in Archdiocese of Luanda -
Angola**

By

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore pastoral demand and burnout among Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda. This study used two theories namely: Job demand resources theory, and the Self-determination. Furthermore, the researcher was guided by these specific objectives that are: To assess possible level of burnout among Catholic priests of the Archdiocese of Luanda. To establish the challenges of burnout among Catholic priests of the Archdiocese of Luanda. To assess pastoral demand among the Catholic priests of the Archdiocese of Luanda and to identify on different coping strategies to burnout among the Catholic priests of the Archdiocese of Luanda. The study used questionnaire and interview instruments to collect data in the field. The target population was of 123 respondents from the general population. The researcher used the Census method that targeted all the 123 participants Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda. Based on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25, (IBM - SPSS 25), the quantitative data was analysed using inferential statistics by employing Chi Square, and descriptive statistic in frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation, correlation and regression. The results revealed that there is a moderate (almost strong) positive correlation between emotional exhaustion (burnout) and demand and challenges among the priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda (0.316). Most respondents admitted to be facing most of the indicators of exhaustion either often or very often and they were facing challenges leading to their dissatisfaction. The study recommended that; the archdiocese of Luanda should consider setting up functioning counselling centres where priests and other pastors of different religions can feel free to go and interact with the counsellors in reference to various challenges that they are facing and open up about their level of exhaustion and burnout. Awareness about exhaustion and burnout and various ways with which priests in the archdiocese can cope should be made among the clergy thus reducing the chances burning out while not being aware of it.

Keywords- Work life, Burnout, Pastoral demand, coping strategies

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Background

World Health Organization in 2019 (ICD-11) classified burnout as a syndrome that results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. This includes feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job or a feeling of negativism or even cynicism related to one's job and reduction in professional efficacy. Typically, those who enter the clergy profession do so without anticipating the personal costs (Kara, 2016). LockWood (2020) affirms that pastoring requires great sacrifice, commitment, and fervent prayer and the balance of congregant and community members is influenced by the convictions of the pastor as they seek to build both demographics naturally and spiritually. Priests are often expected to take on more responsibilities and live alone as a result of the dwindling numbers (Isacco, 2016). According to McGarry (2017) as many as eight Irish priests died by suicide over the past decade because of the increase of workload and isolation. While there an improvement of life in the society, on the other hand, according to Wanger, Schaffner and Neckel (2017) the prevalence of exhaustion both as an individual experience and as a broader socio-cultural phenomenon – is manifest in the epidemic rise of burnout, depression and chronic fatigue. Stephens (2020) citing Bardiaux-Huys (2014) acknowledges that 50 percent of clergy members are considering leaving the ministry in USA and their active participation is declining in more than 90 percent of cases. For him many new candidates for priesthood enter congregations with lofty ideals of helping others identifying their membership, and being a resource in the community; however, they later find these grand expectations to be taxing on their physical health, emotional resources and even their family systems. In Brazil it was proven that 242 participant priests experienced clinically significant levels of burnout (Dias, 2019).

Phoseka (2017) in his research acknowledges that priests in Durban Metro, South Africa, have high levels of work engagement and burnout. The last inquiry done by the Catholic Church, through the Episcopal Conference of Angola and Saint Thomas Island (CEAST) reveals that the capital of Luanda has a population of 3,892 with Catholic Christians making up of 73.8percent of the population (Cheney, 2020). There are 123 Catholic priests an average of 20, 368 of Catholic faithful per priest. In contrast, in the diocese of Viana has a Catholic population of 100, 800 in 2017 with a total population of 45 priests, with 2.240 faithful per priest (Cheney, 2020). These numbers have proven that Catholic priests are overworking and there is much need for help. Though the calling on the pastoral ministry brings spiritual satisfaction, it is not so when it comes to human limitations in pastoral demand. Pastoral demand per se is not necessarily related to exhaustion and other negative emotions that cause burnout, as long as there is a proportionate human resource to support the type of work that is in place. Pastoral Demand involves sufficient energy, quality of pastoral activity and to give priests a deserved importance it is worthy. There is a clear correlation between pastoral demand that priests ought to do and emotional and physical dissatisfaction that can cause, to some extent burnout. When the focus is diverted solely to pastoral demand

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the expectations are high to deliver the good results. Unfortunately, the possibility that many priests do not have enough strength to carry on with their task is a reality.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the qualitative service that priests are giving and the prolific nature of their profession, there is a sense that the psychological wellbeing of Catholic priests is less considered in relation to their spiritual wellness. Nevertheless, priests, in the Archdiocese of Luanda, are in many cases exhausted because of their work and rarely look for psychological help - because of the stigma that this professional has - to find out why they feel like that. Most of them burnout and to find remedy they look more for spiritual guidance, getting some rest. But the core of the problem is not resolved and because of this most of the time priests can relapse. The results are, of course withdrawal, irritability mismanagement of parishioners in what concern communication and dialogue. The overload of activities that surpass their human strengths are not balanced when their activities are taken into account.

Given the nature of their work, Catholic priests are required to obey. There are cases of priests dying of heart failure because of exhaustion and distress. If it is applied, the same opportunity given to the lay people, there are challenges when it comes to reasonable recognition for the Catholics priests in what pertains their psychological health. The fact that some Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda are struggling with their priesthood on account of the low level of emotional satisfaction and numerous breakdowns raises questions. Some of them are unable to face the pressure of stress and the demands in their pastoral set up. Often happens that the same priest is at the centre of almost everything: they give retreats, teach, administer the sacraments not only in the parish but also in various places of their jurisdiction, and are involved in social projects. This study is important because it will help priests and other ministers of other denominations including people in a very demanding job to cope with their overload work by knowing their limitations when physical and emotional drain are at stake.

Research Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore pastoral demand and burnout among Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda

Theoretical Framework

This study used two theories namely: multidimensional theory, job demands resources model and self-determination theory;

The Job demands Resource Model on burnout

The model of job demands-resource on burnout was conducted by Evangelia Demerouti, Arnold B. Bakker, Friedhelm Nachreiner and Wilmar B Schaufeli in 2001. According to the modelists Demerouti et al (2001) the model of JD- R include four basic components that are: job demands, job resources, exhaustion and disengagement and this model predicts, that high or unfavourable, job demands are primarily and positively related to exhaustion, whereas job resources are primarily and negatively related to disengagement from work. For Arnold B. Bakker et al (2001) burnout can be found within as well as without human services professions. One important innovation of the proposed model compared to previous models is that it shows the continuous interplay between the organization and individual employees in the burnout process. When job demands increase and persist to be very high, employees may no longer be able to use adaptive self-regulation strategies and may enter a loss spiral of strain

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and health impairment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018; Demerouti et al., 2019). Maslach & Leiter (2016) state that people who are experiencing burnout can have a negative impact on their colleagues, both by causing greater personal conflict and by disrupting job tasks and shows that when employees are confronted with increase job stain, they are more likely to use maladaptive self-regulation strategies, such as coping inflexibility and self-undermining. This maladaptive behavior is caused by relapsing burnout symptoms such as feelings of exhaustion, impaired cognitive functioning, and negative mood (De Vries & Bakker, 2021).

The JD-R model of burnout may be used to establish the relationship between time pressure and burnout because time pressure has been found to be positively related with exhaustion (Baig & Adil, 2018). The reality of pastoral demand in relation to burnout is characterized by the overwhelming disproportionate work that catholic priests are involved. These situations imply a thorough management of people but also of the institution for which the employee is working. Kalkin, (2016) emphasize that priests have so multiple roles to play in the pastoral set up like, counselling, religious celebrations and issues of social justice, that if there is not a balance vision or management of resources that, includes time, space and people it can, in these circumstances burnout. These studies show how challenging burnout can be if there is not awareness of what the priests can do and what they can avoid when the amount of work does not satisfy the level of physical and emotional well-being of the catholic priests.

The Self – Determination Theory (SDT)

The theory of self-determination (SDT) was developed by Ryan and Deci (2017) as an approach of human motivation and behavior change, finding the dominant approaches to these topics focused not only on understanding how organisms naturally learn, develop, and self-organize actions, but on how they could be controlled to behave or change using external contingencies and cognitive manipulations. For Deci and Ryan (2017) the theory examines how biological, social and culture conditions either enhance or undermine the inherent human capacities for psychological growth, engagement, and wellness, both in general and in specific domains and endeavours. According to the researchers Deci and Ryan (2017) this theory is applicable in education, health care, work, psychotherapy, and a consideration of social, political and cultural factors that influence motivations and basic need satisfactions. The advantages of SDT according to Ryan and Deci (2019), is that familial, organizational, historical, economic and cultural context can all be analyses in terms of the degree to which they have been conducive to the fulfilment of basic human psychological needs and one of the SDT goal approach in psychotherapy is to facilitate client's becoming more aware of what is happening, both in therapy and in reality, of life to facilitate integration.

The complementarity between the multidimensional theory of burnout and the self-determination theory emphasizes the human attitudes and behaviours as pre conditions for the psychological well-being of Catholic priests in Angola. Human beings are the center of all activity that is provided in the society. Job demands resource mode on burnout are connected to pastoral demand and it is very much tangible from the human action perspective, specifically for the Catholic priests. These theories have a significant relevance in this study because they deal with inner desire of the human being who seek to fulfill their potentiality to work and to be recognized as the primary beneficiary of what they do in the pastoral work. The values that are proposed by the theory tend to focus more on individualist approach than on communitarian. This approach is adaptable to use in a cross-cultural environment in a group set up or in an organizational structure. These two theories can be useful in very

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universal context because it touches the core of human wellbeing in support of the needs of each individual or a group in their differences.

Review of Empirical Studies

Burnette (2016) states that pastors represent a unique vocation with a unique set of required emotional demands and job skills. Dias (2019) in his survey argues that, both external and internal factors may contribute to the development and maintenance of clergy burnout and that include excessive schedule demands, work overload, difficult parishioners, low social support, institutional structures, lack of personal time and self-care, and being “on call” 24/7. That is why this kind of knowledge brings with it great benefit, but also great sorrow. Murray (2017) found that, Burnout is responsible for pastoral resignations and only a few of pastors who suffered burnout reached out for medical help compared to laymen and laywomen. Only 20 percent of pastors admitted that receiving counsel would have prevented their burnout, compared with 27 percent of laymen and 34 percent of laywomen. Francis and Crea (2015) explored the connection between psychological type and burnout among Catholic priests serving in Italy. Findings showed that at least one in every five priests experienced fatigue and irritation in their daily experience, have been discouraged by the lack of personal support for them in their ministry, and recognize that their humour has a cynical and biting tone. At least one in every 10 priests feel themselves spending less and less time with those among whom they minister, are less patient with those among whom they minister than they used to be, and feel drained by fulfilling their ministry roles.

Hamilton (2017) in his survey of 15 Roman Catholic diocesan priests in the mid-Atlantic area of the United States focused on how priests’ relationship with God and promises of celibacy and obedience influenced their psychological health. This study’s key finding is that the majority of participants highlighted their relationship with God as a dynamic, positive influence on their psychological health and well-being. Participants reported that their relationship with God is mutually beneficial, interactive, unitive, and central to their lives. Raduan et al (2020) in Malaysia found out that job-related burnout may not only cause deterioration in psychological and physical health, it can also lead to poor professional functioning and low job satisfaction.

According to Egunjobi (2019), priests and religious in Africa do suffer physical and emotional exhaustion as a result of demand of the ministry coupled with the felt financial obligation to their family of origin. In South Africa, Phoseka (2017) acknowledged in his finding a high level of emotional exhaustion amongst Catholic priests. Westhuizen and Koekemoer (2015) in South Africa argued that ministers in their job demand apparently cope by using the strategy best related to their profession turning to religion/spirituality, social support and problem solving. Gomez (2016) in Gambia lists some challenges that priests have and states that newly ordained priests are left on their own taking care of parishes, without sufficient training. Gomez continues by saying that finances or financial resources, financial management and fund raising are other challenges that priests encounter in the pastoral set up. Enyinnaya (2015) in Nigeria states that efforts on a critical assessment of ministerial formation at Claretian Institute, has been made to attend to the four core objectives of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. In Kenya Muriithi (2019) emphasizes two coping strategies such as active coping strategy based on problem solving and seeking from social support while the second passive coping where by a nurse may use avoidance of the problem or withdraw from colleagues.. Catholic News service chaired by Vilakazi (2019) while addressing to the bishops of Southern Africa in Angola, Luanda, he noticed that: the fact that the region’s bishops’ conferences have not planned for clergy support causes “lots of

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anxiety among members of the clergy, who more often than not embark on self-help projects to make ends meet.

Conceptual Framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

DEPENDENT

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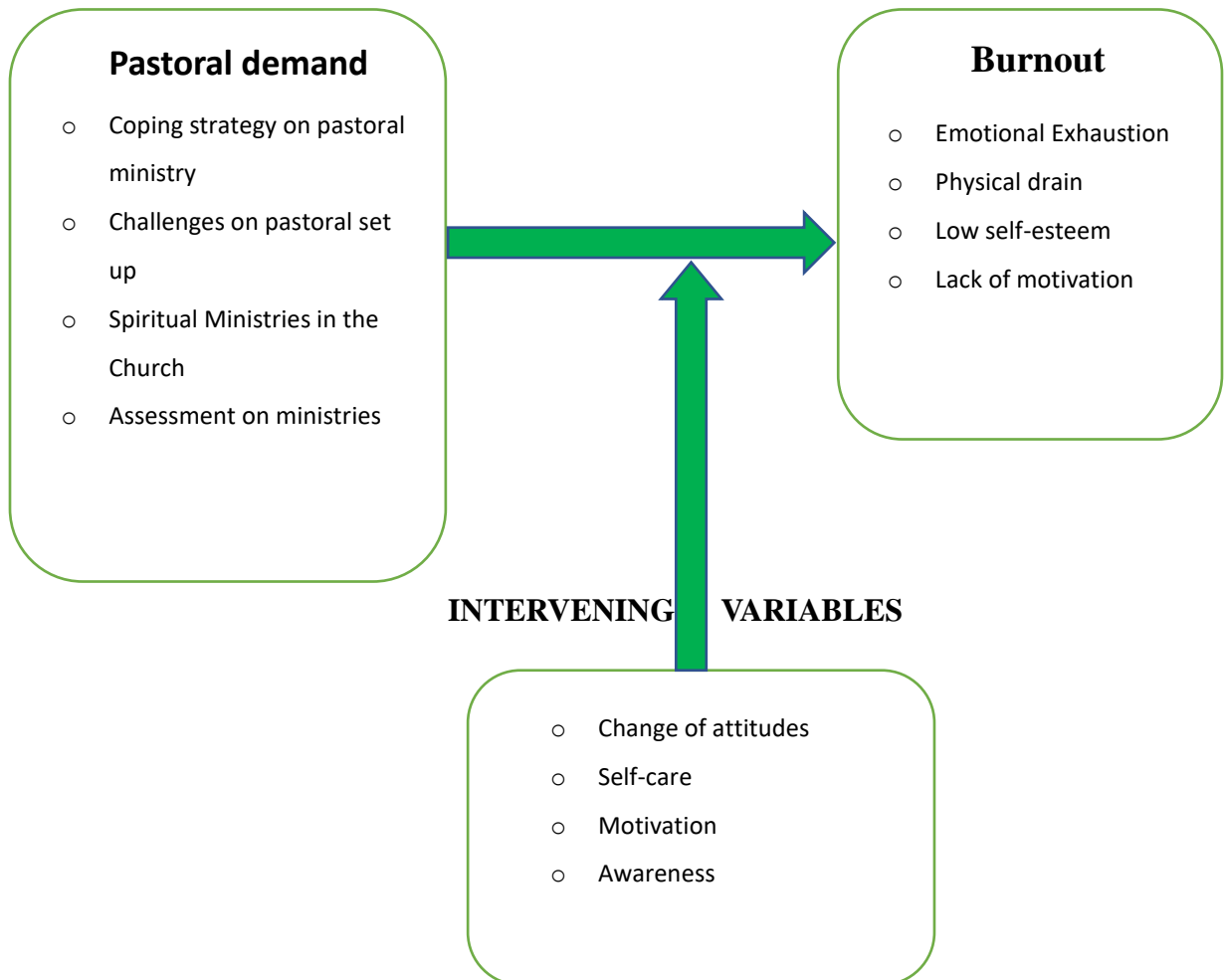


Figure 1: Diagram of conceptual framework that demonstrates the relationship between different variables.

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Research Design and Methodology

This study employed mixed method approach. For quantitative research, the researcher used Census method and Phenomenological research for qualitative research. The target population in this study in the archdiocese of Luanda, will be a total of 123 catholic priests that reside in the archdiocese of Luanda in Angola (Cheney, 2020). The researcher used the Census method whereby the population of 123 Catholic priests was considered as sample size. The study used questionnaires and interview guides. On the questionnaires for the Catholic priests the research used the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) that comprises of two components. Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) and Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) (Francis, Laycock & Christine, 2017). To make sure that the questionnaires based on the interviews onsite are reliable, the researcher conducted pre-test research with 10 respondents. The questionnaire reliability tested using Cronbach’s alpha was 0.84. Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability were used for qualitative data reliability. In this study the researcher used the validity associated with the content technique to measure the effectiveness to which the instrument constitutes in the area of the study, in the Archdiocese of Luanda. Based on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25, (IBM - SPSS 25), the quantitative data was analysed using inferential statistics by employing Chi Quare, and descriptive statistic in frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation, correlation and regression.

Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore pastoral demand and burnout among Catholic priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda. The study adopted the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) which could measure the exact level of exhaustion among the priests. Using a Likert scale of 0 to 5 where 0 represents Never, 1 represents Rarely, 2 represents Sometimes, 3 represents Often, 4 represents Very often, the researcher determined the mean of the data obtained from the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM). The results are as revealed in Table 1.

Table 1: Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional Exhaustion (burnout)						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Emotional Exhaustion	117	1.73	4.55	3.6045	.63752	
Valid N	117					

Source: Field Survey 2021

The mean score of (3.6045) was obtained meaning that most respondents admitted to be facing most of the indicators of exhaustion either often or very often. A standard deviation of (0.637) was obtained meaning that the dispersion between the respondents was linear thus data accuracy.

Using a satisfaction in ministry scale (SIM), the researcher enquired various insights from the respondents which according to the tool measures the respondents’ demand and challenges level. Using a Likert scale of 0 to 5 where 0 represents Never, 1 represents Rarely, 2 represents Sometimes, 3 represents Often, 4 represents Very often, the researcher determined the mean of the data obtained from the satisfaction in ministry scale (SIM) and the results are as shown in the Table 2

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Table 2: Demand and challenges

		Demand and challenges				
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Demands and challenges		117	1.00	4.00	2.1515	.66847
Valid N		117				

Source: Field Survey 2021

The mean score was (2.1515) meaning that the majority of the responses ranged between 1 and 3 with the majority being two. This data can be interpreted as most respondents are not satisfied and are facing challenges leading to their dissatisfaction. With a standard deviation of (0.668) meaning that the dispersion between the respondents was linear thus data accuracy. Findings concurs with Dias (2019) that both external and internal factors may contribute to the development and maintenance of clergy burnout.

The study sought to determine the relationship between challenges and demand and emotional exhaustion (burnout) among the priests towards answering the study questions and obtaining the objectives. The researcher carried out a Pearson's correlation 2 tailed test and the results are as shown in the Table 3

Table 3: Correlation between Emotional Exhaustion and Demand and Challenges

		Emotional Exhaustion	Demands and challenges
Emotional Exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	117	
Demands and challenges	Pearson Correlation	.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	117	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey 2021

The results revealed that there is a moderate (almost strong) positive correlation between emotional exhaustion (burnout) and demand and challenges among the priests in the Archdiocese of Luanda (0.316). This can be interpreted as, with an increase in the level of demands and challenges, there is an increase in the level of emotional exhaustion among the priests. The data was considered statistically significant following the significant value of $p(0.001) < \alpha(0.01)$ meaning that the correlation is highly significant and not just as a result of a function of random sampling error. Priests had felt dissatisfied especially when they accompany groups from different stages, especially young people. In the same way there is a sense of frustration and lack of appreciation and this according to the theory of job demands resource model and burnout by Evangelia Demerouti, et al (2001), it predicts that high or unfavourable job demands are primarily and positively related to exhaustion. Joseph, Luyten, Corveleyn, & Witte (2011) findings on their study to determine the relationship between personality, burnout and engagement among Indian clergy supports this study's findings. In

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their research, they found out that there is a positive correlation between the level of engagement and burnout among the Indian priests.

The researcher also sought to determine the relationship between age and burnout (exhaustion) among the Catholic Priests. A crosstabulation was conducted and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Age Crosstabulation on Emotional Burnout

		Mean Emotional burnout * Age Crosstabulation			Total
		Age			
		25-45 years	46 - 65 years	66 years	
Mean Emotional Exhaustion/burnout	1-1.80	0	1	0	1
	1.81- 2.60	3	4	0	7
	2.61-3.40	8	22	4	34
	3.41-4.20	26	30	1	57
	4.21-5.00	7	10	1	18
Total		44	67	6	117

Source: Field Survey 2021

This is probably as a result of the young priests being more engaged as compared to the older ones. Those between 25 to 45 years and those between 46 and 65 years old get more exhausted and burnt out as compared to the older ones. The distribution is as shown in the table below.

Conclusions

From the entire process of research, the study successfully met its goals and objectives as presented in this chapter. It is thus just to conclude that indeed there is a positive correlation between demand and burnout among the Catholic priests in the archdiocese of Luanda – Angola. The study also provided some of the mitigations and coping strategies that can be adopted in order to reduce the rate at which the priests experience burnout.

Recommendations

The archdiocese of Luanda should consider setting up functioning counselling centres where priests and other pastors of different religions can feel free to go and interact with the counsellors in reference to various challenges that they are facing and open up about their level of exhaustion and burnout. Awareness about exhaustion and burnout and various ways with which priests in the archdiocese can cope should be made among the clergy thus reducing the chances burning out while not being aware of it. The archdiocese management together with the various churches should come up with regular seminars and trainings where the clergy are well trained and engaged as well as being involved in various activities like inter dialogue between various institutions including sports. Priests should interact more among themselves to enable them share their experiences and try and share and in a possible way solve each ones' problems and challenges.

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