Indigenous Knowledge, Human and Natural Endowment as Instruments of National Integration in a Multi-cultural Society: A Study of Chanchaga Local Government in Niger State, Nigeria

By

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Introduction

The greatest yearning and aspiration of all nations including Nigeria is national integration. This aspiration becomes more crucial when a nation is characterized by multi- ethic, multi-cultural, multi- religious groups whose propensities are on most occasion geared towards division and disintegration. Multi- cultural and multi- ethnic societies like Nigeria are often bedeviled by unnecessary cultural crises. Ethnic clashes, religious intolerance, group and inter-community wars, boundary crises and internal wars are common in Nigeria.

These untoward and unpalatable scenarios are now taking more dangerous and devastating dimension than ever in Nigeria. One would wonder why a country that is bequeathed with abundant indigenous knowledge, human and natural heritage would continue to suffer these mishaps. If the human and natural endowment coupled with indigenous knowledge would be used to advantage, the much envisaged national integration and overall development of Nigeria would be realized at a faster rate than could be imagined.

The country called Nigeria is bequeathed with some peculiar characteristic features which appear in form of: diversities, affinities and common heritage. Under normal circumstances, these characteristic features are supposed to be used as avenues of strength rather than being used as agents of disintegration. It should be emphasized that Nigeria is the only country in Africa with a great population of well over 182 million people according to 2016 estimated population by National population commission (NPC, 2016). There are different and well over 270 ethnic groups in Nigeria and over 400 languages are spoken in this country. The dominant groups and the languages that are well spoken by majority of Nigerians and which cut across cross-cultural and cross-ethnic backgrounds are: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages (Elaigwu, 2006, Hilary, 2014; Olanrewaju, Loromeke & Adekoye, 2017).

There are some Nigerians who could speak the three (3) languages fluently. In fact, it is now mandatory for children of school age to learn another native language apart from their mother tongue. A good number of cultural and ethnic affinities exist among the different socio- cultural groups in Nigeria. For example, many Nigerians irrespective of tribal or cultural differences eat similar or same food like: yam 'tuwo', pounded yam, 'amala', 'gaari', 'eba' etcetera. There are some words that are spelt similarly and equally have similar or same meaning among some ethnic groups in Nigeria. For example, the Yoruba call cock, 'akuko', the Igbo call it 'okuko'. Stone is called 'okuta' in Yoruba language and it is called 'okute' in Igbo language. Yam flour is called 'elubo' in Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa call it 'alubo'. Hausa call blessing 'alubarka' Yoruba equally call it 'alubarika'. The word 'baba' means father in Yoruba language. Apparently, it is being used by many tribes in Nigeria now. Yoruba call 'ada' cutlass, while Igbira call it father.

While Yoruba call 'ota' enemy, Igbira call it friend. List of such similarities appear to be endless.

Furthermore, the country is bounded and divided nationally in the Southern and Northern parts by two major rivers which are: rivers Niger and Benue. The confluence of these two major rivers is Lokoja, Kogi State. God has made it so beautiful that the vegetation in the country is varied and diverse. The crops that are grown and the animals that are raised in different parts of the country are diverse equally. Therefore, whatever is not available in one region could be purchased and consumed by other regions that do not have such products.

Equally, God has done it in such a way that when the products of a particular zone are finishing the products of other zones in form of farm products would come out. This means that one region could not do without other. It must be added that the country is equally bequeathed with a list of natural alluvial deposits like: crude oil, gold, manganese, limestone etcetera. Discovery of these products is now in different parts of the nation. Nigerians equally have similar ceremonies like: wedding, naming and burial. It is equally worthy of note to state that Nigerians spend the same currency 'Naira' and 'Kobo'. Apart from common currency, Nigeria has other national symbols which are seen as avenues of unity and strength. They include: national anthem, national flag, national pledge, coat of arm, Independence Day, national monuments etcetera. All these differences and diversities are supposed to be used as opportunities and avenues of growth, cohesion, sustainable development rather than as avenues of division and disintegration. Differently put, the unity of Nigerians and Nigeria as a nation lies in its diversities and balkanization.

Statement of the Problem

Nations of the world including Nigeria are expected to use their multi- faceted socio-cultural diversities as instrument of integration rather than as divisive factors. They are expected to stand in unity and fight all forms of internal wrangling and clashes. In Nigeria, however, especially in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State, rather than using our difference as instruments of strength and cohesion, such differences are often usurped to cause mayhem and threaten common societal bonds. Tribal wars are common. Clashes among farmers and herders are on the increase. Cases of kidnapping are becoming more worrisome. Youth restiveness and joblessness are issues of concern. There can never be any meaningful development in a society that is plagued with these types of upheavals. One would begin to wonder if these menaces could be curbed or reduced to the barest level if indigenous knowledge and human and natural resources are maximally and positively utilized for the national integration of Nigeria.

Research Questions

i. What constitute the indigenous knowledge in Chanchaga Local Government of Niger State?
ii. What are the human and natural endowments that are available in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State?
iii. To what extent could indigenous knowledge; human and natural endowment be used as instruments of national integration in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State?

Statement of Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_{01}. There is no significant relationship among indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowment and national integration in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State.

Review of Related Literature

According to WAEC (2018) National integration is a process of creating a sense of national consciousness, uniqueness of identity and loyalty among people with different socio-cultural identities (racial, ethnic, language, religion, etc.) into a single territorial political society. National integration is mainly the process of bringing the various peoples of different cultural and social background together in a given social context or polity for their collective interests and good (Onyeakazi and Okoroafor 2018). Khurana (n.d) explanation of the concept goes thus: "National Integration is the awareness of common identity amongst the citizens of a country… though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognized the fact that we are all one".

To enhance National Integration the following mechanisms have been adopted in Nigeria since 1914, and they include:

i.   The Amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates
ii. Nigerianization Policy
iii. Establishment of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme
iv. Establishment of Unity Schools across the country
v.   National Language Policy
vi. Federalism, Party Politics
vii. Establishment of Federal Capital Territory in Abuja
viii. Creation of States and Local Governments (Ojo, 2009; Enaruna, 2014).

Closely linked to National Integration is indigenous knowledge (IK). Tharakan (2017) described Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as the cultural and technological product, or knowledge product, from a society or cultures interaction and engagement with daily living. The notion of the static nature of IK has been disproved through numerous examples showing how IK can be changing continuously, especially as a culture or a community develops and grows, and is subject to changing environmental, cultural, physical and economic stressors.

Indigenous knowledge on its part refers to what indigenous people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations; –practices that evolved through trial and error and proved flexible enough to cope with change (Melchias, 2001; Dube, & Munsaka, 2018). Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the dynamic and complex body of know-how, practices, and skills developed and sustained by peoples and communities with shared histories and experiences. It is community-based, culture-specific, and location-specific. It is impressive in content and practical in application, and critical to successful livelihood strategies. Its utility has been extensively documented and researched among small-scale farming communities in the tropics in relation to land management (Barker, 2017). Yemiru, Roos, Campbell and Bohlin (2010) posited that indigenous knowledge has become valuable not only to those who depend on it for day-

to-day survival, but to modern industry. They observed that research libraries have not been particularly active in documenting indigenous knowledge.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019) defined indigenous knowledge as the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For rural and indigenous peoples, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. This knowledge is integral to a cultural complex that equally encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, ritual and spirituality. These unique ways of knowing are important facets of the world's cultural diversity, and provide a foundation for locally-appropriate sustainable development (Indigenous Corporate Training, 2018; UNESCO, 2019).

Application of indigenous knowledge could be in the following areas: Agriculture, Chastity in marriage, Education, Environmental Conservation, Food preparation, Health care, Natural disaster management, Natural-resource management, Poverty alleviation and Transmission of culture (Pidatala & Khan, 2003; Briggs, 2005; Kargbo 2006; Arunachallam, 2007; Mawere, 2010; Chakravarty, 2010).

Eyong (n.d) also identified some examples of Indigenous knowledge systems that correlate with that of Nigerian context such as:

1. Indigenous Healing Practices
2. Knowledge of Plants and Animals and their Uses
3. Indigenous Agricultural Systems
4. Disease Vector Control
5. Food Habits
6. Indigenous Conservation Techniques:
    i. Indigenous Governance
    ii. Sacred Forests
    iii. Cultivation Habits
    iv. Control of Foreign Exploiters
    v. Food Taboos
    vi. Knowledge of Forest and its Resources
7. Indigenous Governance

According to Mapara (2009), these forms of knowledge originate locally and naturally and are usually linked to the communities that produce them from which 'knowing' emanates. Indigenous knowledge systems manifest themselves through different dimensions in areas such as security, agriculture, medicine, zoology, craft skills, linguistics and botany.

From the discussion above, there is no doubt that Niger State is part and parcel of Nigeria. The problems that found expression in Nigeria are equally noticeable in this local government. The study highlighted the indispensability of indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowment to national integration in a multi-cultural society a study of Chanchaga Local Government (CLG) in Niger State, Nigeria. This situation needs to be empirically verified.

Methodology

The research design used for the study was survey. Combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to elicit responses from the participants. The population of the study was 284,000. Two sampling techniques were used for this study. They are

quota and simple random sampling techniques. Different tribes were grouped into quotas. A total of 250 (50%) representing Hausa; 125 (25%) representing Yoruba while 125(25%) representing Igbo respondents were selected from each of the quotas (tribes) making a total sample size of 500 respondents. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in drawing the sample size from each of the tribes/respondents.

Data generated were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Simple percentage was used to analyze the socio demographic information of the respondents. Simple percentage was used to answer research question 1, statistical mean was used to answer research questions 1-3. The criterion mean for research questions 1-3 was placed at 2.50. Four (4) point likert scale was adopted with Strongly Agree (SA-4), Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-2), Strongly Disagree (SD-1) respectively. This implies that any mean that is less than 2.50 were regarded as negative. The Analysis of variance was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Questionnaire Response Rate

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
500	450	90%

Source: Researcher, 2020

A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 450 (90%) were returned. The response rate of 90% was considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60% (Dulle, Minish-Majanja & Cloete, 2010).

Analysis of the Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	206	45.8
Females	244	54.2
Total	450	100.0

Source: Researcher, 2020

From Table 2, it is obvious that there were 206 (45.8%) males while there were 244 (54.2%) females. This implies that there were more females in Chanchaga Local area in Niger State than their male counterparts.

Table 3: Name of Tribes of the Respondents

Ethnicity (tribes)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hausa	217	48.2
Yoruba	121	26.9
Igbo	112	24.9
Total	450	100.0

Source: Researcher, 2020

Table 3 shows that 217 (48.2%) of the respondents were Hausa, 121 (26.9%) of them were Yoruba and 112 (24.9%) were Igbo. This implies that majority of the respondents were Hausa and Yoruba respectively.

Research Question One: What constitute the indigenous knowledge in Chanchaga Local Government of Niger State?

Table 4: Indigenous Knowledge in CLG

Indigenous Knowledge	SA No. %	A No. %	D No. %	SD No. %	Mean	SD
Treating minor sicknesses like headache, cough, malaria with local herbs	151 (33.6)	277 (61.5)	1 (.3)	21 (4.6)	3.25	0.68
Delivering pregnant women at home successful using indigenous knowledge	82 (18.2)	167 (37.0)	113 (25.1)	88 (19.7)	2.54	1.00
Healing mentally derailed and making them normal	169 (37.6)	185 (41.2)	81 (18.0)	15 (3.3)	3.13	0.82
Shooting arrows to people and the people will not see me	97 (21.5)	147 (32.8)	164 (36.4)	42 (9.3)	2.67	0.91
Traditional worship of God	135 (30.0)	167 (37.0)	109 (24.2)	39 (8.7)	2.88	0.94
Getting rich overnight through rituals and not through labour	85 (18.8)	178 (39.5)	141 (31.4)	46 (10.3)	2.67	0.90
Making people miserable through local power	98 (21.8)	183 (40.6)	118 (26.3)	51 (11.3)	2.73	0.93
Travelling long distance within a minute without horse, car but with invisible means	73 (16.3)	125 (27.7)	169 (37.6)	83 (18.5)	2.42	0.97
Working hard, doing profitable jobs that bring riches	207 (46.1)	167 (37.1)	59 (13.0)	17 (3.8)	3.26	0.82
Average Mean						
Criterion Mean						2.84
Average SD.						2.50
						0.89

Source: Field Data 2020

Table 4 shows the Indigenous Knowledge. The result shows that, the average mean of 2.84 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. It can be concluded that the elements which constituted Indigenous Knowledge in CLG is fairly high.

Research Question Three: What are the human and natural endowments that are available in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State?

Table 5.1: Availability of Human Endowment/resources in CLG

Human resources in CLG	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %		
Many intelligent, young men and women are in CLG	167 (37)	261 (58.2)	12 (2.7)	10 (2.1)	3.40	0.62
Many highly skilful, enterprising, industrious Young men and women are in CLG	126 (27.9)	189 (42.1)	104 (23.0)	31 (7.0)	2.95	0.87
Crop of young, middle aged and old men and women who are skilful, talented and hardworking are in CLG	173 (38.5)	246 (54.6)	19 (4.2)	12 (2.7)	3.29	0.67
A good number of ever willing to learn, teachable, reliable, hardworking and productive young men and women are in CLG	173 (38.5)	217 (48.2)	55 (12.1)	05 (1.2)	3.24	0.70
Majority of lazy, idle, indolent young men and women are in CLG	38 (8.5)	69 (15.4)	198 (44.0)	145 (32.1)	2.01	0.91
A good number of violent, terrible and hostile young men and women are in CLG	45 (10.1)	57 (12.6)	205 (45.6)	143 (31.7)	1.89	0.99
Average Mean						**2.80**
Criterion Mean						**2.50**
Average SD.						**0.79**

Source: Field Data 2020

Table 5.1. Shows the availability of human endowment in CLG. The results show that, with an average mean of 2.80 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, it could be concluded that the human endowment are fairly available in CLG for national integration purposes.

Table 5.2: Availability of Natural Endowment/resources in CLG

Natural resources in CLG	SA No. %	A No. %	D No. %	SD No. %	Mean	SD
Versions rich and good soil	167 (37.0)	248 (55.1)	23 (5.2)	12 (2.7)	2.23	1.05
Beautiful vegetation	154 (34.2)	214 (47.6)	34 (79.6)	48 (10.6)	2.93	0.86
Bush animals that serve as income to local hunters	113 (25.2)	229 (50.9)	69 (15.4)	39 (8.5)	3.05	0.92
Fishes in the river for fisher men	60 (13.3)	243 (3.9)	110 (24.6)	37 (8.2)	2.92	0.80
Big river where alluvial deposits are collected and which also serve as source of electric power generation	56 (12.4)	154 (34.2)	173 (38.5)	67 (14.9)	2.44	0.89
Solid minerals	94 (13.3)	257 (53.9)	67 (14.9)	32 (7.0)	2.73	0.79
Hide outs for criminals	38 (8.5)	69 (15.4)	198 (44.0)	45 (32.1)	2.01	0.91
Average Mean						**2.62**
Criterion Mean						**2.50**
Average SD.						**0.89**

Source: Field Data 2020

Table 5.2. Shows the availability of natural endowment in CLG. The results show that, with an average mean of 2.62 which is above criterion mean of 2.50, it could be concluded that the available natural resources in CLG is fairly high and commendable.

Research Question Three: To what extent could indigenous knowledge; human and natural endowment be used as instruments of national integration in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State?

Table 6: Indigenous Knowledge, Human and Natural Endowments as Instruments of National Integration

Indigenous Knowledge, Human and Natural endowments as instruments National Integration	SA No. %	A No. %	D No. %	SD No. %	Mean	SD
Through indigenous knowledge I understand that I cannot achieve much in life without the support of other people	201 (44.6)	241 (53.6)	7 (1.5)	1 (.3)	3.85	0.50
Whenever I have problem in my family, I normally put tribal, religious, social consideration aside and get help from any member of the community	154 (34.2)	279 (62.1)	12 (2.7)	5 (1.0)	03.64	0.56
I understand that I cannot successful train my children alone and for them to be successful I should allow members of the community to correct and show them the right path	167 (37.0)	248 (55.1)	23 (5.2)	12 (2.7)	3.70	0.54
I join clubs and associations and have a lot of friends who are not my tribal or religious groups	123 (27.3)	239 (53.0)	53 (11.9)	35 (7.9)	3.55	0.58
Through indigenous knowledge, I have been taught about communal living, therefore when I harvest my farm products, I normally share a portion to members of the community	142 (31.5)	201 (44.6)	57 (12.7)	50 (11.2)	3.51	0.60
We are each others neighbours during natural or man-made disaster	151 (33.6)	277 (61.5)	1 (0.3)	21 (4.6)	3.58	0.59
Our young men and women are not ashamed of legitimate menial jobs	267 (59.4)	157 (34.9)	16 (3.6)	10 (2.1)	3.60	0.57
I do not restrict myself to government job, I can do some meaningful local crafts like basket weaving that can give me money	157 (34.9)	267 (59.4)	10 (2.1)	16 (3.6)	3.65	0.55
Annual community festival is a melting point for our young men and women who come home for social gathering	238 (53.0)	123 (27.3)	35 (7.8)	54 (11.9)	3.40	0.70
Inter-tribal and inter cultural marriages are encouraged in our community	154 (34.2)	279 (62.1)	5 (1.0)	12 (2.7)	3.82	0.51
Different markets and market days are also points of social contact where different people with different religious, ethnic and cultural affiliations meet	248 (55.0)	185 (41.2)	13 (3.0)	4 (0.8)	3.80	0.52
The presence of many young men and women who are from different ethnic, religious and multicultural background in my local government is a great source of strength, unity and togetherness	157 (34.9)	267 (59.4)	10 (2.1)	16 (3.6)	3.50	0.60
The presence of energetic, strong men and	5	12	279	154	2.44	.89

	(1.0)	(2.7)	(62.1)	(34.2)	
women who are from different ethnic, religious and multicultural background in my local government is a great threat to the unity of the local government					
Average Mean					3.54
Criterion Mean					2.50
Average SD.					0.60

Source: Field Data 2020

Table 6 shows that the extents to which indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowment serve as instruments of national integration. The results show that, with an average mean of 3.54 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, it could be concluded that indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowment are being used as instruments of national integration to a very high extent.

Testing of the Research Hypothesis
Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship among indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowment and national integration in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State.
The results are shown in Tables 7, 8 and 9 respectively.

Table 7: Model Summary Table of Relationship among indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment and national integration

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.122[a]	.015	.012	.84029

a. Independent Variables: (Constant), indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment
Source: Field Data 2020

Table 8: ANOVA Summary Table of Relationship among indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment and national integration

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.563	3	3.521	4.987	.002[b]
	Residual	700.436	992	.706		
	Total	710.999	995			

a. Dependent Variable: National integration

b. Independent Variables: (Constant), indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment
Source: Field Data 2020

Generated by CamScanner

Table 9: Coefficient Summary Table of Relationship among indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment and national integration

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.011	.206		9.779	.000
	Extent of indigenous knowledge	.240	.065	.120	3.680	.000
	human endowment	.084	.042	.066	2.029	.043
	natural endowment	.008	.048	.005	.166	.868

Source: Field Data 2020

From tables 7, 8, and 9, the result of the regression indicated that three predictors explained 15% of the variance (R^2=0.15, F (3,992) =4.987, p=0.02). All the three variables added significantly to the prediction. Indigenous knowledge (β=0.043), human endowment (β=0.002), while natural endowment (β=0.868). The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected at significant level of 0.05. This implies that indigenous knowledge, human endowment, natural endowment and national integration together significantly predicted national integration in a multi-cultural society in the Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State.

Discussion of the Findings

The study found that the characteristics which constituted Indigenous Knowledge in CLG were; treating minor sicknesses like headache, cough, malaria with local herbs, Working hard, doing profitable jobs that bring riches, Healing mentally derailed and making them normal, Traditional worship of God, Making people miserable through local power etc. This study is similar to the findings of UNESCO (2019) which opined that Indigenous knowledge is integral to a cultural complex that also encompasses language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, ritual and spirituality. This finding is in line with that of Mapara (2009) who discovered that the forms of knowledge originated locally and naturally and are usually linked to the communities that produce them from which 'knowing' emanates. Indigenous knowledge happened through different areas such as Healing Practices, agriculture, medicine, security, crafts skills, witches and linguistic/language.

The result of the findings showed that CLG is endowed with both human and natural endowments. Some of the mineral resources include: gold, ion, coal brace, zinc, etc., fertile vegetations (i.e. agriculture products such as yam, rice, beans, corn, guinea corn, millet etc.), industrious youths, tourism, rivers for fishing and they also process herbal medicine for different kind of illness. This study is in line with the study of Pidatala & Khan (2003); Briggs (2005); Kargbo (2006); Arunachallam (2007); Mawere (2010) and Chakravarty (2010) that, the natural and human resources could be in the following areas Agriculture, Chastity in marriage, Education, Environmental Conservation, Food preparation, Health care, Natural disaster management, Natural-resource management, Poverty alleviation and Transmission of culture.

The study showed that indigenous knowledge, human and natural endowments are inseparable factors that enhanced national cohesion in a multi-cultural society like

CLG. In addition, the bond of unity and cohesion among the multi-cultural people in CLG equally helped to strengthen the cords of national integration. This findings equally affirmed the findings of Dube and Munsaka (2018) that, availability of indigenous knowledge, human and natural resources in view of exploring and exploiting them to actualize national integration and overall development of a particular settlement.

Conclusion

It is apposite to conclude that Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State has very rich indigenous knowledge. The knowledge included: agriculture, education, health care, natural resource management, transmission of culture, food preparation etcetera The Local Government is bequeathed with both human and natural endowment which if positively used in conjunction with indigenous knowledge would engender the much envisaged national cohesion and development in Chanchaga Local Government Area of Niger State and in Nigeria at large.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: The elements of indigenous knowledge such as agriculture, education, health care, natural resource management, transmission of culture, food preparation etcetera should be developed to the maximum and harnessed for the anticipated growth and integration of Chanchaga Local Government Area, Niger State. The natural and human potentials that are found should be utilized fully for the overall benefits and development of the Chanchaga Local Government Area. Special and detailed researches should be carried out on the available indigenous knowledge, human and natural resources with the view of tapping and using them to actualize national integration and overall development of Chanchaga Local Government Area.

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