

State of Play of the Environmental Performance of Moroccan Public Universities (Open Access)

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ABSTRACT

Moroccan Higher Education is facing many problems, especially those concerning the quality of its services and its environment. Thus, this sector has continued to experience reform upon reform, but without achieving the expected results. It is therefore necessary to identify its weak points in order to better reform it. One of the objectives of this study is to raise awareness among decision-makers to develop a study on the university environment and performance in academic institutions. Using indicators that measure the impact of the university environment on performance in Moroccan universities.

Keywords: Environment, Performance, Morocco, Higher education.

INTRODUCTION

In an organization such as a university, the environment has a special place. Most debates, conflicts and analyses reflect the changes imposed on universities by their environment (Beaulieu and Bertrand, 1999). Universities are constantly responding to the needs of their environment; in fact, every activity reflects a need in some way. They are generally more reactive than proactive. In this context, universities play an important economic role. They generate jobs, they train workers. They provide regional organizations with access to competent human resources, facilitate access to education and produce research useful for local or national development. In short, they allow the population to benefit from quality services.

1. Materials and methods :

1.1. Elaboration of the questionnaire :

The researcher's experience plays an important role in the question-writing phase. This phase is important; it entirely conditions the success of the investigation. Wrong questions will never give the right answers, Thiétart (2007) points out that developing a questionnaire is a very complex task that many young researchers underestimate. This work covers the writing of questions, the choice of measurement scales and the structuring of the form.

The final questionnaire was then structured as follows: 9 questions.

2. METHOD

The method followed is based on the use of data obtained from a questionnaire sheet (Table I) distributed to 182 managers of open-access institutions (Presidents, Deans, Vice-Presidents, Vice-Deans and Assistant Directors). We therefore chose "managers of open-access academic institutions" as the main actor in this evaluation. Note

Based on our post-positivist epistemological positioning, the design chosen for the study is action research. The objective of our research is to study the impact of the university environment on the performance of open access institutions.

Table 1: Plan and content of the questionnaire conducted in 2018¹

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Q1- Do you consider that your university's performance is dependent on : | | | | | |
| Its size | | | | | |
| His antecedents, his history | | | | | |
| Its geographical location | | | | | |
| Its institutional environment | | | | | |
| Its economic environment | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | |
| Q2- Do you consider that a university must have a critical size in order to be identified or recognized? If so, which of the following is the most appropriate threshold for your institution? | | | | | |
| Less than 5,000 students | | | | | |
| Between 5000 and 10000 students | | | | | |
| Between 10,000 and 20,000 students | | | | | |
| More than 20,000 students | | | | | |
| Other (specify) | | | | | |
| Q3- Do you feel that the management of your university requires | | | | | |
| Scientific and pedagogical skills | | | | | |
| Management skills | | | | | |
| Administrative skills | | | | | |
| Communication and marketing skills | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | |
| Q4- You consider that your function as university president is rather occupied by activities : | | | | | |
| Administrative | | | | | |
| strategic thinking | | | | | |
| communicative | | | | | |
| Pedagogical | | | | | |
| financial and budgetary | | | | | |
| resource management | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | |
| Q5- In your opinion, is the existence of secondary sites at your university : | | | | | |
| may instead adversely affect the overall performance level of your institution. | | | | | |
| may instead enhance the overall performance level of your institution. | | | | | |
| has no effect on the overall level of performance | | | | | |
| Q6- The number of students enrolled represents : | | | | | |
| The most representative indicator of your establishment's performance | | | | | |
| An indicator on which the bulk of your institution's funding resources depend | | | | | |
| An indicator that is too important in the management of your establishment | | | | | |
| Essential identifying information about your facility | | | | | |
| Q7- The quality of your university's local or regional involvement represents : | | | | | |
| an important indicator of its performance | | | | | |
| A difficult indicator to assess | | | | | |
| An indicator that can be measured by the professionalization of your training courses. | | | | | |
| An indicator that can be assessed by the quality of the company/university relationship | | | | | |
| An indicator that can be assessed by the quality of the company/university relationship | | | | | |
| Q8- Would you say that the specificity of your university can be recognized by : | | | | | |
| The diversity of the training courses on offer | | | | | |
| The number of students enrolled | | | | | |
| The quality of scientific research | | | | | |

¹ Meriade, L. (2011). L'évaluation de la performance des universités françaises: entre simplification de la complexité et complexification de la simplicité, Editions universitaires européennes.

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Exam success rate | | | | | |
| Professionalization of training courses | | | | | |
| The quality of the lecturers' curricula | | | | | |
| International relations | | | | | |
| University-business collaboration | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | |
| Q9- Would you say that your university's performance is dependent : | | | | | |
| The dynamism of the economic environment | | | | | |
| The dynamism of the technological and scientific environment | | | | | |
| The dynamism of other higher education structures | | | | | |
| The expectations of the students or their families | | | | | |
| The quality of scientific research | | | | | |
| Your communication policy | | | | | |
| The quality of scientific research | | | | | |
| Other (Specify) | | | | | |

Table 2: List of Moroccan public open-access academic institutions that are the subject of our research

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mohammed V, Rabat | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Agdal/Rabat | | FSJES Souissi/Rabat | | FSJES Salted | | FLSH Rabat | FS Rabat |
| Hassan II, Casablanca | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Casa | FSJES Mohammadia | FSJES Aïn Sebaa Casa | FLSH Aïn Chock Casa | FLSH Ben M'Sick Casa | FLSH Mohammadia | FS Aïn Chock Casablanca | FS Ben M'Sick Casablanca |
| Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah, Fez | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Fez | FLSH Dhar El Mahraz Fez | | FLSH Saiss Fez | | FS Dhar El Mahraz Fez | | FP Taza |
| Cadi Ayyad, Marrakech | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Marrakech | | FLSH Marrakech | | FS Semlalia Marrakech | | FP Safi | |
| Sultan Moulay Slimane, Beni Mellal | | | | | | | |
| FLSH Béni Mellal | | | | FP Béni Mellal | | | |
| Mohammed First, Oujda | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Oujda | | FLSH Oujda | | FS Oujda | | FP Nador | |
| Abdelmalek Essaâdi, Tetouan | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Tangier | FLSH Tetouan | | FS Tetouan | | FSJES Tetouan | | FP Larache |
| Chouaïb Doukkali, El Jadida | | | | | | | |
| FLSH El jadida | | | FS El jadida | | | FSJES El jadida | |
| Hassan I, Settat | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Settat | | | | FP Khouribga | | | |
| Moulay Ismaïl, Meknes | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Meknes | | FLSH Meknes | | FS Meknes | | FP Errachidia | |
| Ibn Tofail, Kenitra | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Kenitra | | | FLSH Kenitra | | | FS Kenitra | |
| Ibn Zohr, Agadir | | | | | | | |
| FSJES Agadir | FSJES Ait melloul | FLSH Agadir | FS Agadir | FP Ouarzazate | FP Taroudant | | |

Source: DSSI (MENFPESRS)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Q1. Do you consider your university's performance to be dependent on :

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Its size | 11 (26,83) | 12 (29,26) | 7 (17,07) | 5 (12,19) | 6 (14,63) | 41 |
| His antecedents, his history | 11 (26,82) | 9 (21,95) | 9 (21,95) | 5 (12,19) | 7 (17,07) | 41 |
| Its geographical location | 10 (24,39) | 3 (7,31) | 8 (19,51) | 12 (29,26) | 8 (19,51) | 41 |
| Its institutional environment | 2 (4,87) | 5 (12,19) | 7 (17,07) | 7 (17,07) | 20 (48,78) | 41 |
| Its economic environment | 1 (2,43) | 2 (4,87) | 4 (9,75) | 11 (26,83) | 23 (56,09) | 41 |

Table (3) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 56.09% (n=23) of respondents disagreed that size is a performance criterion for universities, compared to 26.82% (n=11) who agreed with this classification criterion. However, 17.07% neither agreed nor disagreed. On the other hand, 48.77% (n=20) also do not consider that academic performance is dependent on one's background and history, compared to 29.89% who believe it. While 21.95% did not give a precise "yes" or "no". Thus, for both of these criteria, more than 50% of the interviewers reported performance based on neither the size nor the history of the university.

Nevertheless, the geographical location of the universities, according to the respondents, 31.7% disagreed against 48.77% who answered "yes". In terms of linking performance to the institutional and economic environment, it was noted that the pattern of responses favoured the "agree" choice. In addition, 65.85% responded that they agreed that the institutional environment is a criterion of university performance as well as the economic environment, 83.73% agreed with this.

Q2. Do you consider that a university must have a critical size in order to be identified or recognised

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Less than 5,000 students | 26 63.41 | 2 4.87 | 5 12.19 | 4 9.75 | 4 9.75 | 41 |
| Between 5000 and 10000 students | 20 48.78 | 6 14.63 | 6 14.63 | 6 14.63 | 3 7.31 | 41 |
| Between 10,000 and 20,000 students | 21 51.21 | 2 4.87 | 2 4.87 | 5 12.19 | 8 19.51 | 41 |
| More than 20,000 students | 16 39.02 | 2 4.87 | 3 7.31 | 4 9.75 | 16 39.02 | 41 |

Table (4) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 68.28% (n=28) of respondents disagreed that a critical size of less than 5,000 students is a criterion for identifying universities, compared to 19.5% (n=8) who agreed with this classification criterion. However, 12.19% neither agreed nor disagreed. On the other hand, 63.41% (n=26) also do not consider a critical size of between 5,000 and 10,000 students to be a classification criterion, compared to 21.94% who do. While 14.63% did not give a precise "yes" or "no".

On the other hand, 55.91% (n=23) also do not consider a critical size of between 10,000 and 20,000 students as a classification criterion, compared to 31.70% who do. While 4.87% did not give a precise "yes" or "no".

Therefore, concerning a critical size of less than 20,000 students per university, the majority of the respondents do not consider this as a classification criterion.

Nevertheless, a critical size of more than 20,000 students per university, according to the respondents, of which 43.89% disagreed against 48.77% who answered "yes".

Q3- Do you feel that the management of your university requires

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to likert choice

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Scientific and pedagogical skills | 5 12.19 | 2 4.87 | 2 4.87 | 5 12.19 | 27 65.85 | 41 |
| Management skills | 2 4.87 | 1 2.43 | 1 2.43 | 7 17.07 | 30 73.17 | 41 |
| Administrative skills | 4 9.75 | 1 2.43 | 1 2.43 | 13 31.70 | 22 53.65 | 41 |
| Communication and marketing skills | 5 12.19 | 1 2.43 | 2 4.87 | 16 39.02 | 17 41.46 | 41 |

Table (5) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. In fact, 78.04% (n=32) of the respondents answered **that they agree that the management of the university requires scientific and pedagogical skills** against 17.06% (n=7) who disagreed with this classification criterion. On the other hand, 90.24% (n=37) also consider **that the management of the university requires management skills**, against 7.3% who disagree. While 4.86% did not give a precise "yes" or "no".

In addition, 85.35% (n=35) said that **managing the university requires administrative skills** versus 12.18% (n=5) who disagreed with this criterion.

Similarly, 80.48% (n=33) responded that **university management requires communication and marketing skills**, while 14.62% (n=6) disagreed.

In terms of linking university management with the **need for scientific and pedagogical skills, management skills, administrative skills and communication and marketing skills**, it was noted that the pattern of responses is favourable to the choice "agree".

Q4- Do you consider that the position of university president is rather occupied by activities?

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Administrative | 17 41.46 | 4 9.75 | 7 17.07 | 9 21.95 | 4 9.75 | 41 |
| strategic thinking | 1 2.43 | 1 2.43 | 2 4.87 | 7 17.07 | 30 73.17 | 41 |
| communicative | 6 14.63 | 3 7.31 | 6 14.63 | 10 24.39 | 16 39.02 | 41 |
| Pedagogical | 7 17.07 | 4 9.75 | 11 26.82 | 15 36.58 | 4 9.75 | 41 |
| financial and budgetary | 5 12.19 | 4 9.75 | 2 4.87 | 15 36.58 | 15 36.58 | 41 |
| resource management | 4 9.75 | 6 14.63 | 3 7.31 | 13 31.70 | 15 36.58 | 41 |

Table (6) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 51.21% (n=21) of respondents disagreed that the role of **university president is more likely to be occupied by administrative activities** compared to 31.7% (n=13) who agreed with this activity. On the contrary, 90.94% (n=37) consider that the **function of university president is rather occupied by strategic thinking activities** against 4.86% who do not consider it. However, the percentage of respondents who do not have an opinion on this subject remains low at 4.87%.

Furthermore, the percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the fact that the **position of university president is rather occupied by communication activities** is 63.41% (n=26) against 21.94% who answered "no".

Similarly, 46.33% (n=19) of respondents agree that the position of university president takes care of pedagogical occupations, compared to 26.82% who deny this.

Concerning the occupations of the university president by financial and budgetary activities and resource management activities, the percentages of respondents who agreed on these two occupations are respectively 73.16% (n=30);68.28% (n=28).

Thus, with regard to the occupations of the university president, the majority of interviewees reported that these occupations essentially concern strategic thinking, communication, pedagogical, financial and budgetary activities, and resource management.

Nevertheless, the administrative occupations, according to the respondents, of which 51.21% disagreed against 31.7% who answered "yes".

5- According to you, the existence of secondary sites in your university :

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | Total |
|---|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| May instead affect the overall performance level of your establishment | 7 17.07 | 6 14.63 | 10 24.39 | 7 17.07 | 11 26.82 | 41 |
| May instead enhance the overall performance level of your establishment | 3 7.31 | 2 4.87 | 10 24.39 | 10 24.39 | 16 39.02 | 41 |
| Has no effect on the overall performance level | 19 46.34 | 2 4.87 | 8 19.51 | 5 12.19 | 7 17.07 | 41 |

Table (7) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 43.89% (n=18) of respondents agreed that the **existence of secondary sites at the university** may actually undermine overall institutional performance, compared to 31.7% (n=13) who disagreed. However, 24.39% (n=10) neither agreed nor disagreed.

On the other hand, 63.41% (n=26) also consider that the **existence of secondary sites in the university** can rather favour the overall performance level of the institution, compared to 12.18% (n=5) who do not believe in it. While 24.39% (n=5) did not give a precise "yes" or "no". Thus, with respect to these two data, more than 50% of the interiors reported that the **existence of secondary sites at the university** may rather hinder the overall performance level of the institution and may rather favour the overall performance level of the institution.

Nevertheless, the **existence of secondary sites at the university** has no effect on the overall level of performance, according to the respondents, 51.21% (n=21) of whom disagreed against 29.62% (n=12) who answered "yes".

6- The number of registered students represents :

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | Total |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| The most representative indicator of your establishment's performance | 19 46.34 | 8 19.51 | 6 14.63 | 5 12.19 | 3 7.31 | 41 |
| An indicator on which the bulk of your institution's funding resources depend | 4 9.75 | 6 14.63 | 6 14.63 | 12 29.26 | 13 31.70 | 41 |
| An indicator that is too important in the management of your establishment | 5 12.19 | 3 7.31 | 6 14.63 | 11 26.82 | 16 39.02 | 41 |
| Essential identifying information about your facility | 6 14.63 | 9 21.95 | 6 14.63 | 11 26.82 | 9 21.95 | 41 |

Table (8) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 65.85% (n=27) of respondents disagreed that the **number of students enrolled is** the most representative indicator of the institution's performance, compared to 19.5% (n=8) who agreed with this criterion. However, 14.63% (n=6) neither agreed nor disagreed. On the other hand, 36.13% (n=15) also do not consider the **number of students enrolled to be** the institution's essential identification information, compared to 48.77% (n=20) who do not believe this, while 14.63% have no opinion on this subject.

Nevertheless, the **number of students enrolled represents** An indicator that is too influential in the management of the institution and An indicator on which the bulk of your institution's funding resources depend, according to respondents, 65.84% (n=27) and 60.96% (n=25) respectively.

The number of students enrolled therefore **represents** two essential indicators that are indicators on which the bulk of the institution's funding resources depend and indicators that are too over-emphasized in the management of the institution.

Q7- The quality of your university's local or regional involvement represents :

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| an important indicator of its performance | 1 2.43 | 6 14.63 | 3 7.31 | 12 29.26 | 19 46.34 | 41 |
| A difficult indicator to assess | 7 17.07 | 8 19.51 | 6 14.63 | 11 26.82 | 9 21.95 | 41 |
| An indicator that can be measured by the professionalization of your training courses. | 6 14.63 | 2 4.87 | 7 17.07 | 13 31.7 | 13 31.7 | 41 |
| An indicator that can be assessed by the quality of the company/university relationship | 2 4.87 | 2 4.87 | 5 12.19 | 9 21.95 | 23 56.09 | 41 |

Table (9) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. Indeed, 77.59% (n=32); 75.66% (n=31); 63.4% (n=26) of respondents agreed that the **quality of the university's local or regional involvement represents respectively** An indicator that can be evaluated by the quality of the company/university relationship, an important indicator of its performance and An indicator that can be measured by the professionalization of your training courses.

On the other hand, 48.77% (n=20) also consider the **quality of the university's local or regional involvement to be** an important indicator of its performance, with a correlation coefficient of $r=+0.9$, as well as a positive correlation with ($r=+0.88$) for **The quality of the local or regional involvement of the university** as an indicator that can be assessed by the quality of the company/university relationship.

Q. 8- Would you say that the specificity of your university can be recognized by :

Table 10: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| The diversity of the training courses on offer | 1 2.43 | 3 7.31 | 5 12.19 | 12 29.26 | 20 48.78 | 41 |
| The number of students enrolled | 7 17.07 | 7 17.07 | 12 29.26 | 10 24.39 | 5 12.19 | 41 |
| The quality of scientific research | 1 2.43 | 4 9.75 | 3 7.31 | 8 19.51 | 25 60.97 | 41 |
| Exam success rate | 5 12.19 | 6 14.63 | 13 31.70 | 11 26.82 | 6 14.63 | 41 |
| Professionalization of training courses | 1 2.43 | 2 4.87 | 7 17.07 | 11 26.82 | 20 48.78 | 41 |
| The quality of the lecturers' curricula | 1 2.43 | 2 4.87 | 6 14.63 | 16 39.02 | 16 39.02 | 41 |
| International relations | 2 4.87 | 2 4.87 | 5 12.19 | 18 43.90 | 14 34.14 | 41 |
| University-business collaboration | 1 2.43 | 5 12.19 | 3 7.31 | 12 29.26 | 20 48.78 | 41 |

presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. In fact, 78.04% (n=32) of the respondents agreed that the **specificity of the university can be recognized by the** diversity of the training courses offered, 80.48% (n=33) agreed that **the specificity of the university can be recognized by** the quality of scientific research, 75.6% (n= 31) agreed that the **specificity of the university is recognized by** the professionalization of the training courses, 78.04% (n= 32) agreed that the **specificity of the university is recognized by** the quality of the courses of the lecturers, 78.04% (n= 32) agreed that the **specificity of the university is recognized** through international relations and 78.04% (n=32) agreed that **the specificity of the university is recognized by the** collaboration between the **university** and the company, therefore concerning the **specificity of the university**, more than 70% of the respondents reported the **last to the** six following criteria (The diversity of the training courses offered, The quality of scientific research, The professionalization of the training courses, The quality of the lecturers' curricula, International relations and The collaboration between the university and the company), against 11.8% who have no opinion on the criteria mentioned.

Q. 9- Would you say that your university's performance is dependent :

Table 11: Distribution of respondents according to Likert choice

| | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | Total |
|--|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| The dynamism of the economic environment | 2 4.87 | 3 7.31 | 5 12.19 | 12 29.26 | 19 46.34 | 41 |
| The dynamism of the technological and scientific environment | 2 4.87 | 4 9.75 | 5 12.19 | 11 26.82 | 13 31.70 | 41 |
| The expectations of the students or their families | 3 7.31 | 4 9.75 | 9 21.95 | 12 29.26 | 13 31.70 | 41 |
| The quality of scientific research | 4 9.75 | 8 19.51 | 14 34.14 | 13 31.70 | 2 4.87 | 41 |
| Your communication policy | 1 2.43 | 2 4.87 | 6 14.63 | 4 9.75 | 28 68.29 | 41 |

Table (10) presents the results of the distribution of respondents according to the "likert" choice. In fact, 12.18% (n=5) of respondents replied that they did not agree that the dynamism of the economic environment is a performance criterion for universities, compared to 75.60% (n=31) who agreed with this classification criterion. However, 12.07% neither agreed nor disagreed. On the other hand, 14.62 (n=6) also do not consider that university performance is dependent on the dynamism of the technological and scientific environment, as opposed to 58.52% (n=24) who do. While 12.19% did not give a precise "yes" or "no".

Thus, concerning these two criteria, more than 60% of the respondents reported performance in terms of the dynamism of the economic environment and the dynamism of the technological and scientific environment of the university.

In addition, 60.26% (n=25) reported university performance in meeting the expectations of students or their families compared to 21.95% who neither agreed nor disagreed, while 17.06% denied this performance criterion.

As regards the link between academic performance and communication policy, it was noted that the tendency of the answers is in favour of the choice "agree" 78.04%.

On the other hand, for the relationship between university performance and the quality of scientific research, we noted almost an equality between the yes, no and no opinion responses, i.e. 36.57%, 29.26% and 34.14% respectively.

CONCLUSION

The study assessed the environment of Moroccan universities between the different variables of the research model using quantitative analyses. The analysis of the questionnaire was carried out on the sample of 41 observations, which led to quite different results.

Indeed, from an initial analysis of the results obtained using the questionnaire we found that the relationship between performance and the university environment is very significant.

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