

# Theories and Practices Developed on Well-Being in the Organizational Environment

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## Article Info

## Abstract

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*Being healthy in all areas throughout life and maintaining a state of well-being is a psychological state that is not under the direct control of individuals. This is also true for an individual's business life. Due to stress and health problems, negative working conditions in the workplace and systematic problems arising from the structure of the organization, it is not always easy for the individual to protect his/her physical and mental health. When well-being is defined as a healthy lifestyle, the behaviors that provide it gain importance. These behaviors are summarized as having adequate and balanced nutrition habits, managing stress well, doing regular physical activity, activities that support spiritual growth, keeping interpersonal relationships alive and taking responsibility for these issues. In this study, the practices that should be done within the framework of well-being studies for the well-being of individuals working in the organization are summarized, taking into account the quality of life. Some suggestions are presented regarding the behaviors that individuals can do within the framework of managing and controlling the stress and health problems that arise as a result of conflicts they encounter in their work environment. In this study, based on the literature review, the concept of well-being in the organizational sense was investigated, and it was aimed to contribute to the field of organizational management by presenting suggestions for managers.*

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## Introduction

General thinking about "well-being" reveals an explanation in the form of "well-being" and "well-being in mental and/or psychological conditions" at the conceptual level. In psychology, the concept of "happiness" is often associated with subjective well-being (Luthans, 2002; Diener, 2000), which expresses the cognitive and affective evaluations of individuals' lives (Diener, 2000). When it is moved from the social level to the individual level, the concept of "well-being" corresponds to the individual's "satisfaction" with life. In the dictionary meaning of well-being, "as the condition of being comfortable, healthy and happy" (oxforddictionaries, 2023), however, the subjective perception on this subject differs depending on certain conditions existing at a point, especially as a result of long-term evaluation. "Therefore, is necessary to approach this aspect from an objective point of view. There may be variations depending on cultural differences: depending on certain conditions, on overall health status –for example, obesity is perceived differently according to the social norms. Similarly, there may be differences between population groups depending on their social expectations. Specifically, the approach from the subjective point of view is necessary, along with the traditional objective assessment" (Sfeatcu, et al., 2014: 124).

Social scientists have been doing large-scale population studies for years and trying to measure how satisfied individuals are with their lives in general. Many philosophers and thinkers have defined happiness as the purpose of life. However, with the rise of behaviorism in the early 20th century, skepticism emerged among economists and psychologists that emotions could and should be measured.

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Instead, the use of objective social progress measures such as GDP has been preferred, and in recent years, the state of happiness and happiness among academics from different disciplines, those involved in administrative processes and policy makers has been the subject of research again.

Being healthy in all areas throughout life and maintaining a state of well-being is a psychological state that is not under the direct control of individuals. This is also true for an individual's business life. People spend most of their lives at work. Therefore, the events they experience in the workplace, their relationships with the teams they are with and others, can directly affect both the work life and practices of individuals, as well as the time and activities spent outside the workplace. When individuals feel happy, peaceful, healthy and safe in their working environment, their productivity in the working environment increases. Today, most of the organizations are aware that they can have a more sustainable productivity thanks to their happy and peaceful employees in their workplaces. However, it is important not only to examine, identify and reveal the elements and strategies on how this awareness can increase the happiness of individuals in the workplace, but also to implement them regularly. The concept of "workplace happiness" has also been strengthened by the theoretical work of Martin Seligman, the pioneer of positive psychology, in which he revealed the principles of happiness. According to Seligman (2019: 32), "Emotions are a situation, a momentary event, and they are not necessarily recurring features of personality. Unlike situations, traits are our negative or positive sides that recur over time and in different situations, and the sense of well-being and strengths and virtues are our positive sides that are the source of contentment. Traits are tendencies that make momentary emotions more likely". The general happiness level of individuals also affects their work life positively. Therefore, the individual will be able to maintain the balance between work and daily life more easily with positive emotions. For this reason, organizations also strive to increase workplace happiness in order to have highly motivated employees, taking into account the excess of time they spend in the work environment.

After the Industrial Revolution, mechanization and business practices that were moved to the factory environment have undergone serious transformations until today. Especially with the development of the services sector after the 1980s, the human-to-human engagement has gradually increased. The stressful business environment has taken its place among the leading problems for businesses that try to maximize their profits and ensure their sustainability in harsh competitive conditions. Stress-related health problems have turned into an important situation that the employee has to struggle with. Due to the negative working conditions in the workplace and the systematic problems arising from the structure of the organization, it is not possible for the individual to protect his physical and mental health at all times. When well-being is considered as a "healthy lifestyle", it turns into an important condition that businesses need to regulate. In terms of businesses, well-being stands out as having adequate and balanced nutrition habits in the context of employees, managing stress well, performing regular physical activities, activities that support spiritual growth, keeping interpersonal relationships alive and taking responsibility in these matters. In this study, what should be done within the framework of well-being studies for the well-being of individuals working in the organization, taking into account the quality of life, is discussed. It has been tried to reveal the negative consequences of the conflicts that individuals face in their working environment, what they can do within the framework of managing and controlling stress and health problems, by examining the relevant literature.

### **Well-Being and Wellness: General Definitions of Concepts**

The fact that the concept of well-being has been frequently mentioned and focused on human life in recent years has brought about the focus on the well-being of today's modern people, especially in the business environment. Well-being is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as "the state of feeling healthy and happy" (cited in Baltas, 2021). In another definition, well-being is the ability to realize one's own abilities, cope with the stress of daily life, work efficiently and contribute to the society in which one lives (WHO, 2014); It refers to the state of having positive emotions (hedonia) and positive psychological and social functionality (eudemony) in one's life. The concept of well-being means "an individual's

evaluation of his/her own life and judgment. Life satisfaction includes many variables such as family satisfaction, absence of depression and distress, positive affect and mood” (Kangal, 2013: 216). Evaluation on life is basically the whole of the existence of cognitive judgments such as life satisfaction and family satisfaction, positive emotions such as pleasure and enjoyment, and negative emotions such as depression, pain and grief. In this context, the individual's well-being is concerned with how and why he or she evaluates and should evaluate his life in positive ways.

It suggests coexistence and common business practices in individual and society interaction processes. The individual's work, daily and private life can reveal various stressful events and situations. Well-being, as an approach that considers the life of the individual holistically and aims to support mental and physical health, points to the goal of developing an organizational culture where employees are happy and peaceful and synergy prevails in the workplace. The health of the World Health Organization in 1948 was not merely the absence of disease and infirmity; at the same time, wellness, which he defines as "a state of complete well-being" physically, mentally and socially, has carried the state of being a happy person to a much more advanced level (WHO, 2017).

Well-being, in other words “wellness”, is a goal to be achieved; It includes body-mind-spirit-emotion integration, which is the expression of holistic health. In this context, wellness is a lifestyle and development awareness. It is a dynamic process on the way of change and growth; It has the function of increasing the quality of life of the individual and society and ensuring that the individual is happier and more satisfied in every field he is involved in. Healthy life primarily refers to the state of being physically and mentally healthy, and in this context, issues such as the individual's physical well-being, nutrition, and sleep patterns come to mind. In this context, the lifestyle and practices that emphasize the self-respect of the individual come to the fore. The World Health Organization defines wellness as “a conscious, self-directed and evolving process for reaching full potential” (WHO, 2017). In this context, wellness can be expressed as an active process shaped by healthy living, behavior and choices. “Well-being” is the state of being physically, mentally and emotionally well. It is a state of well-being in all emotional and mental processes, such as an individual's positive outlook on life and a positive perception, being happy, satisfaction in relationships, and even feeling beautiful (WHO, 2017). Well-being is about how satisfied an individual is with life, but also how comfortable he is in his current situation. In this context, individuals who are in contact with the environment and interactions with these individuals are also effective in the process. In this context, well-being is a multidimensional phenomenon that has no boundaries and varies according to individuals and cultures. It is fed by many micro-scale factors such as the personality, character and temperament of the individual as well as many factors such as time zone, living conditions, geography, cultural practices, business processes. Definitions and ways of approaching the subject reveal how necessary and comprehensive the concepts of well-being and Wellness are for human life. Today, with the decrease in the state of well-being in working environments, many organizations are taking precautions by developing different approaches.

## **Models and Components of Well-Being**

As with Well-being, there are various models in the literature; It was determined that nine models of well-being were handled comparatively in Roscoe's study (2009) and thirteen well-being models in Miller and Foster's study (2010). The Wellness Star Model developed by Korkut-Owen and Owen (2012: 27) is among the leading studies. The dimensions included in these studies were (a) physical well-being; This dimension, which touches on the physical aspects of being healthy, includes items related to a healthy lifestyle, such as a balanced diet, being physically active, regular sleep, and fulfilling physical health-oriented behaviors such as doctor control. (b) Emotional well-being; It is the dimension of being healthy, which is more related to internal experiences and includes features such as being able to notice/control one's emotions, and to look at himself, life situations and conflicts as realistic, positive and developer. (c) Social well-being; This dimension, which shows the quality and degree of the individual's interaction with other individuals, society, environment and nature, also includes the perceived social support given by family, friends and other important people. (e) Cognitive well-being;

There are features such as liking to be intellectually active, using their knowledge for themselves and the society, being open to learning. (f) The good state of making sense of life and being goal-oriented; In this dimension, there are features such as searching for the purpose and meaning of life, setting goals and making decisions.

The components of well-being have been studied by different scientists and various models have been created. Models that will create a wide-ranging perspective from the perspective of individual and organizational applications have made significant contributions to the applications in the field. These models can be listed as follows:

(i) Ed Diener's Three Dimensions Model: This is a model for subjective well-being. Ed Diener and Gallup research company define happiness as a process in the model they have created as a result of their studies and accept it as the science of subjective well-being. Happiness results from certain internal and external causes and in turn affects the way people behave and their physiological state. In the model, some of the main determinants of subjective well-being are expressed as a person's innate temperament, the quality of their social relationships, the societies in which they live, and their ability to meet their basic needs. People with high subjective well-being seem to work healthier and more effectively than people who are chronically stressed, depressed, or angry. Thus, happiness not only makes you feel good, but also contributes to people and those around them. In this model, Diener reveals three main types of happiness: (a) high life satisfaction (good income, reaching goals, high self-esteem, etc.), (b) frequent positive emotions (enjoying life, loving others, being loved, etc.) and (c) infrequent negative emotions (rare anxiety, rare sadness, anger, etc.)

(ii) Carol Diane Ryff's Six Factor Model: Professor Carol Ryff, in this model; Six elements that make up psychological well-being were listed and a scale measuring them was defined. These elements also cover the difficulties individuals face while trying to use their full potential and realize their talents. Ryff took into account two important issues while creating his model. First, the theory of psychological well-being must be scientifically valid, reliable, and empirically testable. Second, his model will not be limited to biological or medical definitions only. Rather, it would include philosophical implication about the true meaning of a happy life. Ryff succinctly outlined six factors: (a) self-acceptance, (b) positive relationships with others, (c) autonomy in thought and action, (d) environmental mastery, (e) purpose in life, and (f) personal growth.

(iii) Corey Keyes' Growth/Shine Approach: According to Professor Corey Keyes, well-being has three dimensions: (a) emotional or subjective well-being, (b) psychological well-being, and (c) social well-being.

(iv) Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology Approach and PERMA Theory: Seligman is an American scientist who carries out important studies on the development of positive psychology. The interest of positive psychology, eudomonium (good life), focuses on the most valued, contributing and satisfying issues in life. Martin Seligman defines the good life as authentic happiness and endless gratification created by using strengths every day. Seligman's PERMA model is expressed as multidimensional well-being. Seligman included this concept in his book "Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being", which he wrote in 2011, taking into account other studies. According to Seligman, happiness is a "thing" and well-being is a "structure". This structure is not something in itself like air or freedom, but a form that emerges with different components that contribute to it. Therefore, it can be explained as a structure formed by different components. The initials of these components form the name of the model: (a) Positive Emotions, (b) Engagement, (c) Positive Relationships, (d) Meaning, and (e) Accomplishment.

(v) According to Westgate (1996), well-being is a process of self-care that includes the individual's understanding of his emotional and physical needs and regulating his lifestyle to satisfy these needs. In another definition, well-being is to lead a life that is oriented towards being healthy at an optimal level, integrates body, mind and spirit, aims to have individual goals and to live a more meaningful life, and

is functional in all areas socially, personally and ecologically (Myers, Sweeney et al. Witmer, 2000). In definitions, well-being is often a choice, a process, a way of life; Although it is multidimensional, it has a holistic structure; it is about balance; It is emphasized that it is subjective, perceptual and relative and is based on the characteristics of healthy people (Miller & Foster, 2010).

Well-being practices are becoming increasingly important today in order to adapt more easily to our changing work and living conditions with the pandemic and to maintain a healthy life balance (PERYÖN, 2021). Corporate well-being is a set of practices that make employees happy in many ways, aiming for mental and physical well-being and therefore a holistic state of health and happiness. It has been determined that institutions that want to have more efficient and productive employees should invest more in human well-being during the pandemic period. Situations that can be defined as "conflict" such as incompatibility and disagreement in the workplace can cause serious problems in the health of employees. This negatively affects well-being. Conflicts can lead to many problems such as stress, heart diseases, high blood pressure, nervousness, fear, hatred, alienation from work, reluctance to come to work, and poor performance. "Lack of well-being increases conflict, conflicts negatively affect well-being, and the lack of well-being in employees can be the cause of conflicts in institutions. Employees who do not have a sufficient level of well-being, have mental, mental or physical health problems, and are not sufficiently satisfied with issues such as fringe benefits and wages may be more nervous, anxious and reactive in the face of possible conflicts in the workplace" (PERYÖN, 2021).

In summary, well-being and conflict are interdependent in all circumstances. In both conditions, controlling and improving well-being, creating a peaceful environment in the workplace and having people working with high performance are considered as an important expectation/condition in the organizational environment.

## **Well-Being in Organizational Environment**

Today, "being happy and well" in organizational environments comes to the fore as one of the most needed phenomena depending on the level of stress and depression experienced. "Stress can affect not only physical and psychological health, but also the daily attitudes and behaviors of individuals positively or negatively. Stress should not always be considered as a negative factor for the organism. Stress conditions can prevent the individual's capacity, but on the other hand, they can also enable him to reveal his capacity. Mild stress can be stimulating for the person, activating and motivating the person" (Kaba, 2019: 64). Considering the organizational behavior and management disciplines, which have been emphasized in recent years, this concept can be considered as an important goal that human behavior wants to reach as a result of their efforts and efforts. In today's business practices and managerial processes, where competition is at a high level, the basic expectation of organizations is to increase the contribution level of employees to increase their competitive power. Target-oriented training programs in organizations encourage the human mind to use the "caring about their own wishes" motive more accurately and professionally. "Individuals may pursue different goals throughout their lives" (Locke & Latham, 1990) -While individuals' happiness levels should increase if these goals are realized, mental and physical fatigue triggers the feeling of dissatisfaction. This situation leads to the emergence of situations such as loss of motivation, unhappiness, depression and anxiety in the individual.

Subjective "well-being" underlines once again that individuals may not be happy when they are told to "be happy", so that happiness differs from individual to individual and, in Aristotle's words, happiness is a virtue (as cited in Myers & Diener, 1995). According to Martin Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology (2002); What individuals have the most difficulty with is controlling their negative emotions, and this will be possible by highlighting the individual's strengths. Seligman (2002); In his book titled "Authentic Happiness", he draws attention to the importance of revealing positive emotions and gaining skills in this direction in behavioral expressions aimed at increasing individuals' feeling positive emotions and experiencing these emotions frequently. As a matter of fact, the difficulty of

developing a common understanding or standard on this issue is that well-being is variable and works depending on different conditions. "The sources of happiness that people eat differ from each other. While some people perceive happiness as enjoying life, some individuals may perceive happiness as 'searching for meaning' (Peterson et al., 2005).

As the studies in this field show in the literature; When the concept of "well-being" is taken into consideration from the workplace, it means that "happy employees are productive in the workplace and this creates a positive atmosphere that increases workplace productivity" (Wright and Staw, 1999; Gregory, 2011). In the current century, the focus of the studies is on the concept of "well-being" and the results are that happy employees increase workplace productivity (Wright and Staw, 1999; Judge et al., 2001; Quick and Quick, 2004). The concept of corporate well-being can be considered as a comprehensive help that professional companies have received for their employees in recent years, so that employees can work in a more peaceful, healthy and productive way in the workplace environment (Abacıoğlu, 2021).

### **Evaluation on Well-Being and Conflict**

Addressing the deterioration of well-being for various reasons in the business environment, Marmara University faculty members Prof. Dr. Güler İslamoğlu and Prof. Dr. Deniz Börü, in his article titled "Well-being and Conflict Handling Style" published in 2007, made the following determinations: (a) Being in conflict can threaten one's self-esteem; Cognitive methods should be used to cope with this situation. (b) Conflicts stress; Stress causes the immune system to deteriorate. This causes employees to be more open to factors such as viruses, bacteria and parasites and to get sick more often. (c) Conflicts within the organization can lead to alcohol dependence, psychosomatic complaints, and burnout. Therefore, the commitment to work decreases. This leads to results such as being late for work, absenteeism and leaving work. (d) Emotional support and encouragement are essential to well-being. The relational conflict between the manager and the employee can be devastating because this perceived situation also negatively affects the support of the institution.

Situations that can be defined as "conflict" such as incompatibility and disagreement in the workplace cause serious problems in the health of employees. This negatively affects well-being. Conflicts lead to many problems such as stress, heart diseases, high blood pressure, nervousness, fear, hatred, alienation from work, reluctance to come to work, and poor performance. Employees who do not have a sufficient level of well-being, who have mental, mental or physical health problems, who are not sufficiently satisfied with issues such as fringe benefits and wages, are more nervous in the face of possible conflicts in the workplace; as the state of being depressed and low-spirited increases, cooperation and reconciliation decrease.

There is a serious interaction between well-being and the way of handling conflict in the workplace. In the study conducted by İslamoğlu and Börü in the 2000s, two conclusions were reached between well-being and conflict resolution: (a) If well-being is good, conflict is handled more positively within the institution. (b) Employee well-being is ensured through positive handling of conflicts.

In order to compensate for the negative conditions revealed by the pandemic in 2020, many institutions have tried to allocate budgets for well-being practices. In organizations, it is aimed to improve the health behaviors of employees, to support them in order to realize themselves and to reveal the "good life" potential in them. Rewarding employees for taking 10,000 steps a day, organizing sports activities such as yoga and pilates, doing breathing exercises, learning healthy eating protocols, smoking cessation programs, offering alternative transportation options such as cycling, sending healthy food packages to homes, remote dietitian and psychologist support applications such as providing distance education and even organizing distance education for the children of the employees come to the fore. Free fitness classes are offered online to help those working from home stay healthy and active. In order not to neglect personal development, free memberships are offered from education applications (PERYÖN, 2021: 6, 7).

Well-being practices in institutions can be an effective tool for controlling the workload, reducing the stress experienced, and therefore protecting heart health (Turfan, 2021). Practices such as sports, good nutrition, motivation, stress control, breathing exercises, which are among the well-being programs offered by institutions, can help alleviate the pressure on heart health. Evaluating well-being practices in institutions on the axis of healthy life, work, stress, nutrition and sports, cardiologists stated that factors such as workload and prolongation of working hours that affect the health of employees even before the pandemic caused a stress response in the body and deterioration of heart health. In the researches; "The World Health Organization recently made a statement with the data of 2016; Those who work 55 hours or more per week are at higher risk of heart attack and stroke than those who work 40 hours. In another study by the World Health Organization, it was concluded that working late or at night causes hypertension, metabolic problems and heart diseases (WHO, 2017). "Physical exercise or sports are known to reduce stress, anger, tension and depression and make people feel better. However, physical exercise also reduces the physiological and mental consequences of stress that cannot be managed or managed" (Kaba, 2019: 70).

Stress has been an important risk factor for heart health, even in the so-called "old normal" times. Added to the cognitive, neurological and hormonal changes caused by stress; poor diet, sedentary life, increase in smoking and alcohol consumption create adverse conditions for cardiovascular health (Turfan, 2021). For employees who have to struggle with all these, well-being practices in institutions offer employees an important way out for a healthier life. Particularly, practices that support sports and good nutrition affect heart health positively and directly. Considering all these, the creation of a well-being culture in the workplaces varies according to the general climate and style of the organizations.

## **Healthy Organizational Environment**

For the principle of "healthy life" to become an organizational culture, it is necessary to adopt a culture of well-being at every step of the hierarchy. In this context, there are some strategies that increase the well-being culture of organizations in terms of working environment, technology, management philosophy and office tools: (a) A Comfortable Working Environment; Paying attention to the aesthetics of designs and tools in workspaces makes a big difference in both productivity and happiness levels. Minimizing distractions, providing natural light, using comfortable office furniture and inspiring color schemes make it easier to improve mood and focus the mind (Turfan, 2021). (b) Promotion of Sport and Healthy Living; Creating gym-like spaces at work is one of the most tangible ways to support healthy living. Since there is no one type of exercise suitable for everyone, different methods can be used to encourage employees to live a healthy life. Discounted gym memberships, yoga classes, outdoor activities or fitness applications are among the popular applications that motivate employees to live a healthy life (Turfan, 2021). (c) Regulation of sleep times (circadian rhythm); Since a balanced sleep pattern reduces stress, it also positively affects nutritional habits and the digestive system. In addition, optimal sleep increases the secretion of the growth hormone GHA, which is secreted by the body, and DHEA, which allows us to cope with stress (Şinik, 2018). (d) Manage stress; Diaphragm breathing exercises are the best step to improve the ability to manage stress. Correct breathing ensures that all our body functions work in balance. Breath is the primary detox system in the human body and when used correctly, it creates balance, peace, joy and health in the physical, mental and spiritual body (Şinik, 2018). (e) Meditation and Mindfulness Practices; Creating awareness areas for various mental health practices that help employees get away from the burden of life by taking a short break makes an important contribution to the improvement of mental health by making use of technology (Şinik, 2018). (f) Employee Recognition and Reward; reward plans are used to build employee engagement and help retain talent. As the internal motivation of the employees who feel supported and appreciated increases, their welfare level increases at the same rate (Yazgan, 2021). (g) Digital Workload Management Tools; Various applications designed to alleviate the workload of employees help reduce stress as they improve task and time management. (h) Outreach Programs; It supports building trust among

employees, connecting organizations with society and creating opportunities for critical thinking (Yazgan, 2021).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a close relationship between individuals' healthy lifestyle and well-being; In fact, it has been determined that this state of happiness continues in the daily lives of people who are happy in the workplace environment. For this reason, teaching and disseminating life-long well-being-enhancing activities is seen as the basic building block for the dissemination of healthy lifestyle behaviors. Employees' focus on developing more positive strategies, both physically and emotionally, both increases organizational performance and supports employee morale and motivation. "Stress and intense anxiety cause excessive energy consumption. Because of this, after a while, the individual may feel himself weak, weak, experiencing intense anxiety for an unknown reason, unable to sleep well, tense, angry, and quickly excited" (Kaba, 2019: 72). In this context, it is important to develop ways to cope with stress at the individual and team level. Well-being practices provide important contributions for organizations and individuals. Decreased sick leave and absenteeism rates, improvement of employees' sense of organizational belonging, increased productivity due to highly motivated employees, and having a physically and mentally healthy workforce contribute to both organizational culture and individual happiness and well-being.

The concept of well-being, which contributes to the well-being and well-being of the employee and positively affects a person's job, general health and happiness, has attracted attention as the subject that organizations are most interested in increasing their performance in recent years. Considering the welfare and well-being of the employees in the organization is among the indispensables for the sustainability of the institutions. In this context, it should be noted that well-being practices are effective in terms of employee retention, loyalty and business success. This atmosphere within the organization –well-being, well-being, high morale, productivity and motivation, high participation, reduced vacation days– creates a strong employee profile.

With modern approach methods becoming more popular in today's organizations, managers have begun to give more importance to their employees. In this context, institutions should be sensitive about creating yoga and exercise rooms in their working environments in order to develop well-being practices, putting flexible rest breaks between working hours in order to meditate, and getting more conscious help in the preparation of menus. Professional help should be sought from psychological counselors or well-being specialists in order to control stress levels within the organization.

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