Task And Relationship Orientations Of Vietnamese Educational Institutions: The Interplay Impact Of Demographics On A Collective Culture

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Abstract This research attempted to explore Vietnamese respondents' task and relationship orientations working in educational organisations. Respondents working at educational institutions in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh cities were surveyed to identify their orientations. The data were investigated by Paired Samples T-test and Univariate analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) regarding age, gender, and working experience as independent variables. The result indicated that Vietnamese respondents were more task-oriented than relationship-oriented. However, the influences of age, gender, and working experience did not have a significant impact on task and relationship orientations. Similarly, the interactions among age and working experiences; age and gender; working experiences and gender were also insignificant.

Keywords: Culture, organisational culture, task orientation, relationship orientation, Vietnam.

Introduction

Personal behaviour and expectation are impacted by culture. Hofstede (1993) showed that managerial operation and organisational culture characteristics are significantly influenced by national culture. Schein believes that people have various fundamental values and norms based on culture (1992). In today's globalised world, understanding different subordinate behaviours in many nations is among the primary objectives that superiors and leaders are expected to reach. This research aims to explore the organisational culture of Vietnam educational organisations depending on age, gender, and work experience. More positively, this study aims to answer the main research questions: Are Vietnamese working adults focused on more relationship-oriented or task-oriented? Do age, gender, and work experience interact in organisational culture? In this study, the Organisational Culture Questionnaire (OCQ), provided by Van Muijen (1999), is used to collect a typical profile of individual behaviour concerning task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles.

Many such debates exist on the significance of country culture in managing management values and shaping employees' behaviour (Deal and Kennedy, 1999: Hofstede 1993). Various research has adapted Hofstede's cultural study to compare the feature of culture in Vietnam and several countries (Nguyen et al., 2013a; Nguyen et al., 2012, Nguyen et al., 2013b). Vietnamese organisational culture does not seem to meet quickly globally acknowledged practice. The description of a thriving organisational culture in Vietnam is impacted by historical and cultural characteristics of the country and is influenced by social features in transformation.

The author selected Vietnam for two reasons. Firstly, in contrast with the characteristic profile of poor and underdeveloped countries destroyed by the war, current Vietnam has recovered from the wars with France and America a few decades ago and become one of the fastest developing and most potential economies in Asia as the average GDP rose to 7.6 per cent from 2000 to 2009 (Business Monitor International, 2011, p. 13). Though Vietnam's economy has been negatively influenced by the worldwide crisis, which has

reduced its GDP development rate to lower than 7 per cent from 2009 to 2011, the national economy has recovered as the GDP in 2013 increased to 5.42 per cent to reach $358.9 billion (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). The fast-growing rate was derived from the economic reform in 1986 called "Doi Moi," which transformed the economic structure from a state-planned centralisation to globally marketed sectors, resulting in the booming of privatised enterprises in almost areas, expecting for military and energy fields.

Secondly, although several papers contribute to the cultural impact on subordinates' behaviour in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2012), all papers only investigated the outcome between cultural aspects and leadership. Thereby, the contribution of the relationship between social behaviours and organisational culture in Vietnam is questionable. In conjunction with the development of educational institutions in Vietnam, the call for attention to studies relating to organisational culture and individual behaviours are requisite to local subordinates and superiors as these studies support them to work more effectively. The author predicts that organisational culture and demographic distinction share the manager and employee's behaviour concerning task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles. The author firmly believes that this research plays an integral part in predicting the responsibility of demography concerning task and relationship orientation in successful management in Vietnamese educational organisations.

The context of the research is structured as follows. The next section will reveal a literature review on Vietnamese culture, task, and relationship orientations. The methodological part will be displayed in the third section. The following section will indicate the discussion and implication, and the last section will highlight the limitation, recommendation, and conclusion.

Literature review

Vietnam and the culture

Vietnam, a socialist country in South-East Asia, has approximately 100 million people, and two-thirds are working adults (18 – 60 years old). This country has three main cities, namely Hanoi (the capital) (the North), Da Nang (the Middle), and Ho Chi Minh (the South). The roles of each city are defined when Hanoi is defined as the political and historical area, Da Nang is targeted as a traveling place, and Ho Chi Minh is a financial and business area. Vietnamese is the primary language, followed by English and Chinese, regarded as the official second and third languages.

Vietnam has a complicated history when Western and Asian countries have colonised them for thousands of years. China occupied this country for over 1000 years before getting independence in the 10th century (Karnow, 1994). In the following centuries, Vietnam continued to be occupied by Japan, France, and the United States until fighting for total independence in 1975 (Tran, 2013; Tran, 2019; Tran, 2020). The communist party in Vietnam's North has united the entire country until the current time.

According to Tran (2021a), Vietnamese culture is a combination of Chinese, France, and American cultures. In detail, the cultural values of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism have pervaded Vietnam since the 1st century and have become the traditional culture in Vietnamese society (Tran, 2020). In addition, the values of freedom, individualism, and liberalism penetrated Vietnam in the 19th century; as a result, Vietnamese society is ready to accept new, creative, and innovative ideas. As Hofstede (2001) pointed out, the cultural aspects of Vietnam are defined in Figure 1 as follows:

Figure 1. Vietnam's cultural dimensions (Source: Hofstede, 2001)
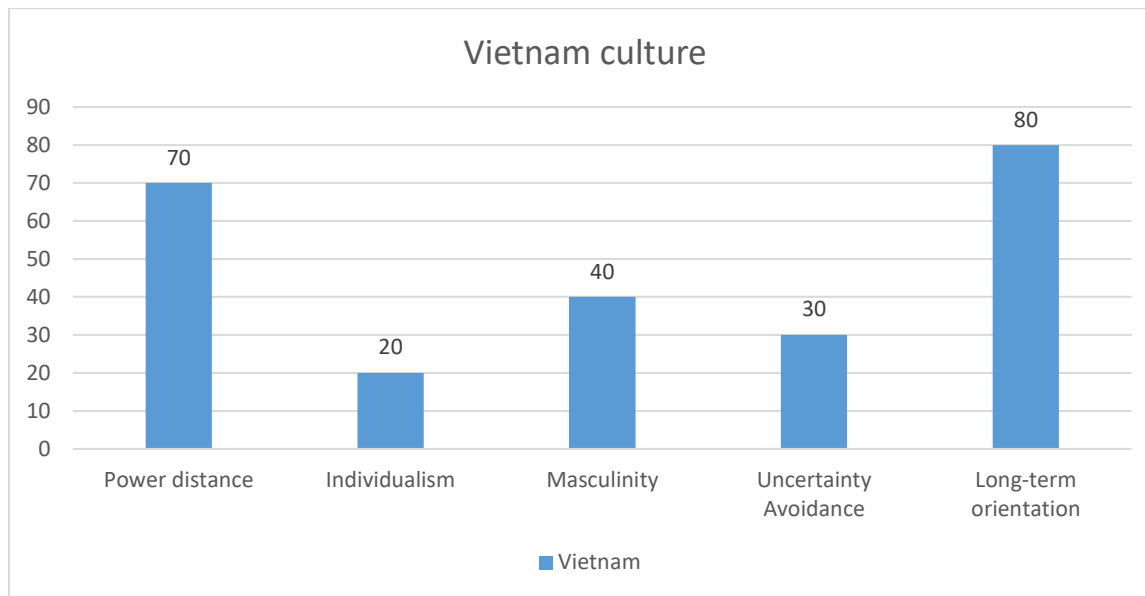
1. **Power distance (PDI):** This dimension concerns the level of power within each country as it refers to the degree to which individuals in society deal with authority and power distinction and how they value position and hierarchy. As a high result of 70, Vietnam agrees that people are unequal as they satisfy a social order where citizens accept the top-down structure and are reluctant to challenge it. Power often focuses on the higher categories of the hierarchy, and subordinates are expected to receive orders and directions from their superiors. High power distance supports an organisational culture that is highly structured, and Vietnamese people deal with this apparent manager-employee connection.

2. **Individualism/collectivism(IDV):** This dimension refers to the level of interdependence a country preserves within its people. In individualist societies, the relationship among people is united as they are reluctant to be dependent and value themselves rather than others. They get to work individually and become more determined and affirmative. In contrast, in collectivist societies, individuals tend to have a significant relationship and confidence in cohesive groups. Being recognised as an "in-group" member, people have strong faith, and in return, the group will protect them. As such, they are more likely to work with others in groups and become less determined and affirmative.

As a low result of 20, Vietnam is labelled as a collectivistic country. This means that local people consider themselves a component of a collective group where there are divergent hierarchies and positions. Inequality, status differences, and pressure to follow convention are the standard criteria in an in-group. A person is reluctant to raise their voice in such a setting. Most Vietnamese people have mixed networks among family, colleagues, and friends, which expect a solid personal tie. As such, the success of each person and business interactions is much based on whether they are defined to be "out-group" or "in-group" (Watkins and Liu, 1996). People only have a proficient tie after successfully creating group cohesion and persuading others that they are all in one group. In summary, as Vietnam is high on power distance and

collectivism, structure and inequality between superiors and subordinates would be requested, which is in line with most collectivistic countries.

3. Masculinity/femininity (MAS): This dimension concerns how a country follows masculine or feminine characteristics as it emphasises the gender order in a society. A high result on the former exerts that the community values contention and self-confidence. In contrast, a profound effect on the latter displays that the community emphasises interdependent sensitivity, involvement in others, and life balance. As a result, Vietnam is labelled as a feminine society as people seem sensitive and concerned for others. The country is moderately feminine because of the role of more female in the community, and this is reasonable as Confucius's value in Vietnam guides them to coordinate and be concerned for others in society. Individuals cooperate to gain harmony, even if they are required to sacrifice their feeling and thinking. As a result, the mutual relationship is an essential factor in business and everyday life success.

4. Uncertainty avoidance (UAI): This dimension reveals the extent to which individuals in a society approve of risk and ambiguity. It indicates how significantly people confide that they can manage and organise the future. As a result, Vietnam has a low priority in refraining from uncertainty. In this country, individuals are likely to have comfort, and breaking the rule is tolerated and forgiven. Instead of fearing ambiguous situations, Vietnamese people try to overcome them through compromise.

5. Long-term Orientation (LTO): This dimension exerts the level at which a society values a short-term or long-term future. Thereby, Vietnam is a long-term orientation society, which means that their life is shaped by know-how, loyalty, and rationalisation.

The result displays that Vietnam indicates a community with a pragmatic long-term perspective.

Organisational culture

Culture has been immersed in people's thinking, values, and behaviours over generations (Lewis, 2000). Its meaning has interested scholars since the 1970s, encouraging them to conduct studies on different definitions of culture and explore new concepts in organisational and managerial theories (Mujtaba, 2014). The most popular meaning of culture is the combined scheme of thinking and behaviours that differentiate people from others (Hofstede, 2001; Tran and Tran, 2020).

Several authors have studied the meaning of organisational culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1999; Scholz, 1987; Schein, 1990). Deal and Kennedy (1999) considered organisational culture controlling how people think and behave in their workplace. As Scholz (1987) pointed out, organisational culture is regarded as the intangible, informal, and essential values within a corporation that shapes employees' behavior. Also, Schein (1990) indicated that organisational culture is considered a code of conduct that supports organizational workers to perform in such a suitable setting. In typical, organisational culture is a mixed number of beliefs, values norms shared by people inside a corporation, which back superiors to control and provide tasks rationally.

It should be noted that culture plays a principal part in shaping organisational culture, as Schein (1992) also indicated that it brings up the intangible norm for subordinates to follow. Culture is defined as a mix of various factors, including education, religion, politics, and economy, so superiors are expected to create a specific organisational culture linking them. Thus, national culture organises the degree of

expectations and recognition of duties people are assumed to acquire in a corporation.

Task and relationship orientations

Javidan and House (2001) indicated discussion for the indispensability of worldwide superiors to have a cultural understanding or to be reactive to cultural distinction. Early scholars revealed that the organisational culture and the behaviour of superiors and subordinates were conducted based on task and relationship orientations (Fleishman, 1967; Halpin and Winter, 1957; Trompenaars and Turner, 2012).

As Trompenaars and Turner (2012) pointed out, organisational culture can be categorised into task and relationship orientations. In the former, it concerns the achievement of tasks and fierce competition. As an organisation immerses in this orientation, employees are assumed to work hard to maintain their work or compete with colleagues to reach a higher status. On the other hand, the latter values maintaining personal relationships to create a close working environment. The corporation is regarded as a "second family," and employees are expected to receive intangible rewards (e.g., compliments and permission) more than tangible rewards (e.g., cash and status).

Several scholars divide worker behaviours into task and relationship orientations. Bass (1990) indicated that relationship orientation is in conjunction with employee satisfaction, and task orientation positively relates to group achievement. On the other hand, Bass also displayed that relationship orientation is positively linked with group achievement. As Sherwood and DePaolo (2005) pointed out, task context comprises practices that define how the superior will achieve work and in which recognition is displayed by both the employees and managers of the job at hand. These practices may include preparation, work cooperation, and implementation. Also, this orientation has a high

propensity to organise conversation, control interactions, and straight task fulfilment (Cruz et al., 1999). A task-oriented superior assigns each subordinate to a dependent task, smoothing the way for them to follow the leader's order before doing the task. Since task orientation emphasises task fulfilment, abilities and expertise are necessary for employees to achieve work-loads in a particular domain. In contrast, a relationship-oriented superior attempts to create a close and friendly relationship with subordinates through situations such as informal discussion, praise, and recognition.

As culture affects organisational culture and people behaviours, this study explores whether Vietnamese people are more task-oriented or relationship-oriented. It also further investigates whether gender, age, and working experiences are factors that impact organisational culture. The detailed hypotheses for this research are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Vietnam respondents have significantly different task scores than relationship scores.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a significant divergence in the task and relationship scores within the age of Vietnamese respondents.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a significant divergence in the task and relationship scores within the gender of Vietnamese respondents.
- Hypothesis 4: There is a significant divergence in the task and relationship scores within the working experiences of Vietnamese respondents.
- Hypothesis 5: There is significant interaction between gender and age in the task and relationship scores.
- Hypothesis 6: There is significant interaction between gender and working experiences in the task and relationship scores.

- Hypothesis 7: There is significant interaction between working experiences and age in the task and relationship scores.

Methodology

This study explores whether the Vietnamese educational institutions are more task-oriented or relationship-oriented. It investigates whether age, gender, and working experiences are significant components in task and relationship orientations. Van Muijen's (1999)'s Organisational Culture Questionnaire is used to find a standard description of a working adult's behaviours concerning task- and relationship-oriented styles. In the questionnaire, the respondents were requested to answer the degree to which they agree or disagree with the stated practice. In detail, they were asked to answer the statements on a 10-score scale, with a result of 1 meaning "Totally Disagree" while a result of 10 meaning "Totally Agree ."The basic questionnaire was translated by the scholar, a bilingual speaker of Vietnamese and English, and then back-translated into English by another English-Vietnamese expert who did not know about the original version. The back-translated text was sent to several experts to test whether the meaning was still the same. As a result, they all confirmed that its purpose remained unchanged in the Vietnamese version.

The survey was issued as a hard copy sent to participants directly by the author. The targeting respondents were people working in educational organisations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh cities, two megacities in Vietnam. As the capital and the oldest city, Hanoi is Vietnam's historical and political area. In contrast, Ho Chi Minh is a young, dynamic and creative city that attracts talents from the whole country to live. Finally, 600 surveys were collected from respondents, both men, and women, who have worked in educational institutions in two cities. After removing 234 invalid surveys, 366 valid surveys were accumulated, with a response rate of 61%. Of 366 respondents, 189 were female, and 177 were male, which accounts for 51.6% and 48.4%, respectively. In addition, 165 participants (45.1%) lived in Ho Chi Minh city, and 201 participants (54.9%) lived in Hanoi city. Regarding educational qualification, 1.6% of respondents graduated from high school, 3.2% qualified with a college degree, 82.4% of respondents graduated with a bachelor's degree, 10.4% and 1.4% qualified with master's and doctorate degrees. 294 respondents (80.3%) had working experience from 1 to 10 years, whereas 72 respondents (19.7%) had at least 11 years of work.

Since the survey was translated into Vietnamese, factor analysis is used to test its validity. The author challenged sampling proficiency and sphericity to evaluate whether it is valid for the research. According to Kaiser (1974), Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) is helpful to test whether the variables in the study are valuable to correspond. The rule of thumb is that a KMO result is expected to be above 0.5, and in this study, the score is 0.854, confirming the variables' validity. Also, the analysis is valid in that only statements indicated loading higher than 0.4, and its loadings must be at least double the other factors. As a result, 13 statements are conducted in factor analysis, as below in Table 1:

Table 1. The results of factor analysis: The Vietnamese sample

Statements	Factor Loadings	
	1	2

People are acknowledged for their excellent work	0.701	
The goals of the organisation are known	0.680	
New employees are adopted quickly	0.560	
The information required is accessible to everyone	0.616	
Everyone has freedom of activity	0.539	
Positive changes take place constantly	0.627	
People's welfare is thought of	0.580	
Everyone performs his/her tasks well	0.621	
Tasks are explained clearly	0.735	
People think more about their own needs than of the goals of the organisation.		0.560
People feel ashamed while talking about their job		0.771
People come to work unwillingly		0.615
Many people would like to change their job		0.713

SPSS (version 22) is used to test exploratory factor analysis, and the factor loadings in Table 2 satisfy the essential demand for the study. The first factor comprises statements concerning job fulfilment and how an organisation backs task accomplishment. As such, it is labelled as task orientation. The second factor relates to negative emotions, feelings, and the connection between superiors and subordinates in the workplace. Therefore, it is labelled as a relationship orientation. The two factors have a significant coefficient (0.134, p = 0.026). For the reliability testing, the Cronbach Alpha must be higher than 0.6 to guarantee the rationality of the factor loadings. As a consequence, Cronbach's scores of task and relationship orientations are 0.841 and 0.761, respectively. These results indicate that surveys are acceptable in social science research.

Results

Firstly, a paired sample T-Test is used to explore whether Vietnamese respondents are more task-oriented or more relationship-oriented styles. Secondly, the scholar selected two-way ANOVA, including the dependent variables (e.g., task and relationship orientations), and three independent variables, including gender, age, and working experiences. The results are displayed in subsequent sections separately.

According to Table 2, the average scores of Vietnamese respondents for task-oriented style (M=7.402) is higher than that for relationship-oriented style (M=5.536). This difference is significantly interactive (t = 14.705, p = 0.000). As such, hypothesis 1 can be supported as there is a significant divergence between task and relationship orientations. Vietnamese respondents are more task-oriented than relationship orientation.

Table 2 Task and Relationship orientation scores of Vietnamese respondents

Dimensions	Mean (SD)	Number	Paired sample T-test	Mean (SD)	t	df	p
Task orientation	7.402 (1.381)	366	Relationship & Task orientations	2.166 (2.447)	14.705	275	.000
Relationship orientation	5.536 (2.213)	366					

According to Table 3, there is no statistical differences in age (F=0.387, p=0.534), gender (F=1.92, p=0.126) and working experiences (F=0.459, p=711) in task and relationship orientation scores. Thereby, hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 cannot be supported. Table 4 also displays no significant coefficients between age and gender (F=0.789, p=0.501), age and working experiences (F=1.16, p=0.324), gender and working experiences (F=0.498, p=0.737) on task and relationship orientation scores. As such, hypotheses 5, 6, and 7 cannot be supported.

There would be 9.5%, 49.5%, and 14.2% to explore significant differences in task and relationship orientation results for age, gender, and working experiences, respectively. Also, there would be 21.9%, 31.1%, and 16.8% to determine the significant correlations between age and gender, age and working experiences, gender and working experiences on task and relationship orientation results, respectively.

Table 3 Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
Corrected model	83.412a	19	4.390	.889	.597	.062	16.890	.658
Intercept	1329.44	1	1329.4	269.	.000	.515	269.194	1.000
Age	1.914	1	1.914	.387	.534	.002	.387	.095
Gender	28.534	3	9.511	1.92	.126	.022	5.778	.495
Working Experiences	6.804	3	2.268	.459	.711	.005	1.378	.142
Age*Gender	11.692	3	3.897	.789	.501	.009	2.367	.219
Age*Working experiences	17.238	3	5.746	1.16	.324	.014	3.490	.311
Gender*Working experiences	9.845	4	2.461	.498	.737	.008	1.994	.168
Error	1254.40	254	4.939					
Total	8816.62	274						
Corrected Total	1337.82	273						

Notes: a R Squared = 0.062 (Adjusted R Squared = -0.008); b Computed using alpha = .05.

Discussion and implication

It is hypothesised that Vietnamese respondents have a statistically different scores for task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles, and the result supports the first hypothesis. Vietnamese respondents are higher task orientation than relationship orientation. However, this research does not explore significant divergences in the task and relationship orientation scores based on gender, age, and working experiences. Similarly, the relationship between age and gender, age and working backgrounds, and gender and working backgrounds in task and relationship orientations are not supported in this research.

This study hypothesises that demographic information (e.g., gender, age, and working experiences) enhances organisational culture. However, the results ignore this assumption when these components cannot impact organisational culture. As a collectivist culture, Vietnam respects conventions, norms, and traditional values (Tran, 2019; Tran, 2020). Thereby, Vietnamese individuals are educated to behave responsibly and socially (Hofstede, 2012; Tran, 2022).

However, in contrast with China and Japanese corporations, task orientation is currently the prevalent organisational culture in Vietnam. This finding is in line with the results of previous research about the popularity of the task-oriented style in Vietnam (Quy, 2011; Tran, 2019; Tran, 2021a). As the Vietnamese economic reform was officially established in 1986, it has led to a transformation in economic structure from state centralisation to market and manufacturing centralisation (Tran and Tran, 2020; Tran, 2021b). This transformation also shifted organisational culture from relationship orientation to task orientation. The explanation would be that the state-centralised system is organised in a command-style with a bureaucratic structure based on the in-group relationship. In contrast, the market centralisation economy

currently values flexibility and goal fulfilment. Therefore, task orientation is a proficient choice.

Limitations and Recommendations

All research has limitations, and the scholar acknowledges that task and relationship orientations are well-known constructs in the Western context, but their implication in the South-East Asian context is questionable. The author suggests some values to researching these orientations in Vietnamese culture. Further research might compare two orientations in Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries. As the author does not find any differences in the two orientations in terms of age, gender, and working experiences, as well as their interactions, further studies might continue to find their differences. Also, many scholars comprehend that people can be transformed from task to relationship orientation and vice versa (Mujtaba, 2014; Tran, 2019; Tran, 2021b). However, in this research, the author considers their dispositions, and people cannot change their orientation. On the one side, this assumption is correct in this study, but on the other side, scholars might check this assumption in the future.

As the cultural dimension of national culture and the behavioural approach to organisational culture might strongly influence the business outcome, competitiveness, and employee morale, the author believes the research is essential for better comprehending the working process. The author generally displays that organisational culture and people's behaviour are relevant to management and working attitudes. This study distributes proof to corporations for employee development, managerial and leadership training, and career path. As such, corporations should create an organisational culture that supports operational productivity. In Vietnamese educational organisations, superiors should foster a workplace towards task orientation to maximise the corporation's benefit. The values of the results in this research are in line with the

practical situations happening in Vietnamese educational institutions, but as situations changes in the future, their effects are expected to challenge again.

Conclusion

As task and relationship orientations in organisational culture can facilitate superiors to manage their employees effectively, this research aims to determine the difference between task and relationship orientations of Vietnamese educational organisations. It further explores more empirical results concerning two orientations of Vietnamese respondents in terms of age, gender, and working experiences and their interactions. As a result, this research confirmed that Vietnamese respondents are more task-oriented than relationship oriented. However, the author did not find any significant difference in single variables of gender, age, and working experiences as well as their interactions.

The research distributes various practical implications in setting up a business or working with Vietnamese educational institutions that practitioners, scholars, superiors, and managers can benefit from. In conclusion, when dealing with business in Vietnamese educational institutions, it is recommended that this paper supports readers to comprehend Vietnam's organisational culture and behavioural orientations.

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