

A Comprehensive Model for Identifying and Explaining Factors Affecting Burnout

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Abstract. This study provided a comprehensive model for identifying and explaining factors affecting burnout of faculty members. In this study, a descriptive-exploratory method with in-depth interviews were used. It was an applied, quantitative and non-experimental research. The instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire whose items were identified based on the review of secondary sources as well as semi-structured and structured interviews. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze findings. The results showed that all identified factors included emotional exhaustion, decrease in success, depersonalization, organizational factors, demographic factors, individual factors, organizational indifference, quality of working life, organizational commitment, occupational performance and flattening had an effect on burnout. The results showed that among the identified factors, emotional exhaustion had the most effect on the burnout of faculty members.

Keywords: Burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Decrease in Success, Depersonalization.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, importance and role of a job in different areas of human life is evident. In addition to providing living expenses, the job has a direct relationship with physical and psychological health of a person and satisfies many of his non-material needs (Nayeri, 2000). The health of individuals is one of the most important and effective features of organizations and human relationships. Today, job burnout is one of the causes of job stress, which is a major factor in reducing the efficiency and loss of manpower (Banaem, 2012). Job stress is a kind of psychological stress that causes job dissatisfaction and negatively affects personal, social and family life (Jonathan & Dohee, 2008). Due to the extent and importance of this, many researchers have focused on the issue of burnout in the last three decades (Avaesin et al., 2011; Arshadi, Piriya, 2014; Sultan Ahmadi et al. 2010; Sina et al., 2010; Baker 2006; Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Maslach et al. 2001; Pico, 2006; Alarcon, 2011). In the human environment, there are physical, social and psychological factors, each of which plays an important role in human health. Every day, people spend a large part of their daily lives working. Due to various reasons, in many organizations, there are various degrees of neuropsychiatric pressure; one of the major occupational issues that usually occurs as a response to occupational and organizational stress among employees of various organizations, is the phenomenon of "burnout" (Islami and Valian, 2016). Occupational burnout is one of the disorders that imply a fundamental response to stress (Maslach et al., 2001; Ahola and Hakannen, 2007; Cooper et al., 2001), emotional pressures (O'Neill & Ziaw, 2010), and emotional exhaustion and pessimism (Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Sadeghi, 1382), and are derived from interactions in the workplace (Piko, 2006). Research results showed that a significant percentage of active people suffer from this complication (Tabarsa, 1393; 110; Grunfeld 2000). The reason for this claim is the increasing use of sedative medications and a high percentage of people who are under stress (Tsai, 2004). On the other hand, educational institutions, especially higher education institutions and universities, which are responsible for the training and provision of highly qualified and efficient human resources, require people who are motivated to achieve a continuous improvement. In order to improve the

quality of the human resources of these institutions, only specialized training is not enough, but it is necessary to improve attitudes and adjust the values of individuals (Valipour et al., 2014). In educational institutions, due to the inadequacy of communication networks, lack of research, lack of awareness of managers with stressors, burnout plays a very important role in the decline and prevention of progress of university professors and lack of motivated human resources that has many consequences such as inefficiency and low productivity and damages caused by errors of employees (Saheb Zamani et al, 2009). The faculty members of the university are occupied with long hours of contact with the people, and, so, gradually feel under pressure and their emotional reserves are reduced (Bairami et al., 2011) . Research has shown that exacerbated fatigue is due to the high volume of work and job stress factors among academic jobs. Excessive fatigue is more common in the last decade which is considered to be a serious occupational hazard (Banaem., 2012). It has consequences such as evading labor, occupational mobility, poor performance and health analysis (Saber et al., 2008). Therefore, recognizing and preventing burnout in this institution can be effective in improving the mental health of individuals and improving the quality of services provided.

2. Literature review

Burnout has been used for about three decades ago, and several scientific articles have been published for it. Perlman and Hartmann (1982), for example, made it clear that by 1982, 48 papers had been published on burnout. It was reported in 1994 that more than 300 articles have been published on burnout (Dequette et al. 1994). Occupational burnout was first introduced by Herbert Freonberger (1974), who described it as a work-related negative psychological state, including a set of symptoms such as physical exhaustion, emotional exhaustion, and motivation loss (Jary et al., 2012).) In 1975, occupational "burnout" was used as its current theme and was considered as a form of emotional and physical exhaustion that derives from conditions in the workplace (saatchi, 1393). Occupational burnout is an inevitable part of professional life and emanates from job-related practices (Live, 2006). It is more often experienced in jobs that people spend a lot of working hours in close

contact with other people (Almasian and Rahimikia, 2011). In fact, job burnout is a kind of person response to interpersonal stressors in the workplace where there is contact over the capacity of a employee with colleagues, presidents, audiences, clients, and others. This causes a change in attitude and behavior toward them (Rashidi and others, 2012). Occupational burnout is considered as a phenomenon related to work and working environment related to factors that increases the chances of burnout, and their absence leads to a reduction or non-emergence of burnout (Safari and Goodarzi, 2009). Others identify the causes of burnout among the three main categories of organizational factors, interpersonal factors, and intrapersonal factors (Rahimnia and Hasanzadeh, 2012). Organizational factors are role ambiguity, role conflict, job expectations, which, according to Jackson (1987), cause job burnout due to the two types of expectations from the organization: 1- Expecting development 2- organizational expectation. Another factor is organizational working hours, which includes qualitative and quantitative components. Quantitative working hours involves excessive demands that have little time to handle them and qualitative constraints relate to job complexity (MacGergor, 2008). The other factor is interpersonal factors including support in stress and burnout (Hueber, 2000). The third factor in burnout is the internal factors that are the lack of job preparation, demographic variables (such as age, sex, marital status) and personality traits of individuals (Shakerinia, 2012). Motamedi (2011) found that 34.8% of teachers had burnout regarding emotional exhaustion, 14.6% regarding depersonalization and 76.6% regarding lack of individual performance. Wiryathi et al. (2014) found that emotional intelligence had a weakening effect on role ambiguity, role conflict, and increased role on burnout among auditors of Indonesian accounting institutions. Kohpayezadeh et al. (2011) found that burnout in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization was low and in the level of personal adequacy was high. Staff with less work experience showed higher levels of burnout. Pyamibusari (2002) found a relatively strong and direct relationship between anxiety trait and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and an inverse relationship with the individual sense of success. Also, there was a significant relationship between the employment status and the frequency of emotional exhaustion. Ghorpade

et al. (2007) found that the educational process plays an important role in personality development and burnout of students. Also, emotional exhaustion was negatively associated with extroversion and positive relationship with neuroticism and openness to experiences. There was a positive correlation between the depersonalization and neuroticism, and there is a negative relationship with the characteristics of task and consistency. Finally, there is a positive relationship between the deficits of individual success with the neuroticism and the negative and significant relationship with the characteristics of extraversion, conscientiousness, and commitment.

3. Method

In this study, a descriptive-exploratory method with in-depth interviews were used. It was an applied, quantitative and non-experimental research. In order to account for effective factors and presenting the pattern of burnout, we first reviewed the secondary sources (articles and books) and analyzed the indicators with respect to the literature review. Then, semi-structured and structured interviews were used to explore the new components and notarizing the patterns for the organization. After determining the indicators, evaluating and prioritizing each of the indicators of burnout, a final questionnaire was prepared. In this section, a closed questionnaire was used to collect more data and information. The statistical population of the present study included all faculty members of Azad University in Khorasan Razavi, North and south province. They are assistant professors, associate professors and professors and are engaged in full-time activities. The number of faculty members were 1114 individuals. To determine minimum sample size, the Cochran formula was used. According to this formula, the minimum sample size required from the faculty members of Azad university in Khorasan Razavi, North and south province was 286 people. It should be mentioned that sampling method was stratified random sampling due to the fact that the statistical population had three classes (assistant, associate and professor) and also there was a need for normal data.

4. Findings

Descriptive statistics of respondents' age showed that about 1.4% of respondents were under the age of 30, 32.6% were in the 30-40 age groups, 37.2% were in the 40-50 age group and 28.8% had more than 50 years old. The results of service experience showed that 12.4% of respondents had less than 5 years old, 29.1% had between 5-10 years old, 38.9% had between 10 and 15 years old, and 19.6% of respondents had more than 15 years old. The academic rank of most respondents was trainer (44.9%) and the lowest was full professors with 1.1%.

Figures 1 and 2 show the model in the t-value range. This model tests the actual matrices of the measurement equations (factor loads) and structural equations using the t-test. According to this model, the path coefficient and factor load was above 1.96. It is safe to say that these coefficients are significant at 95%. Table 1 summarizes the model of occupational burnout.

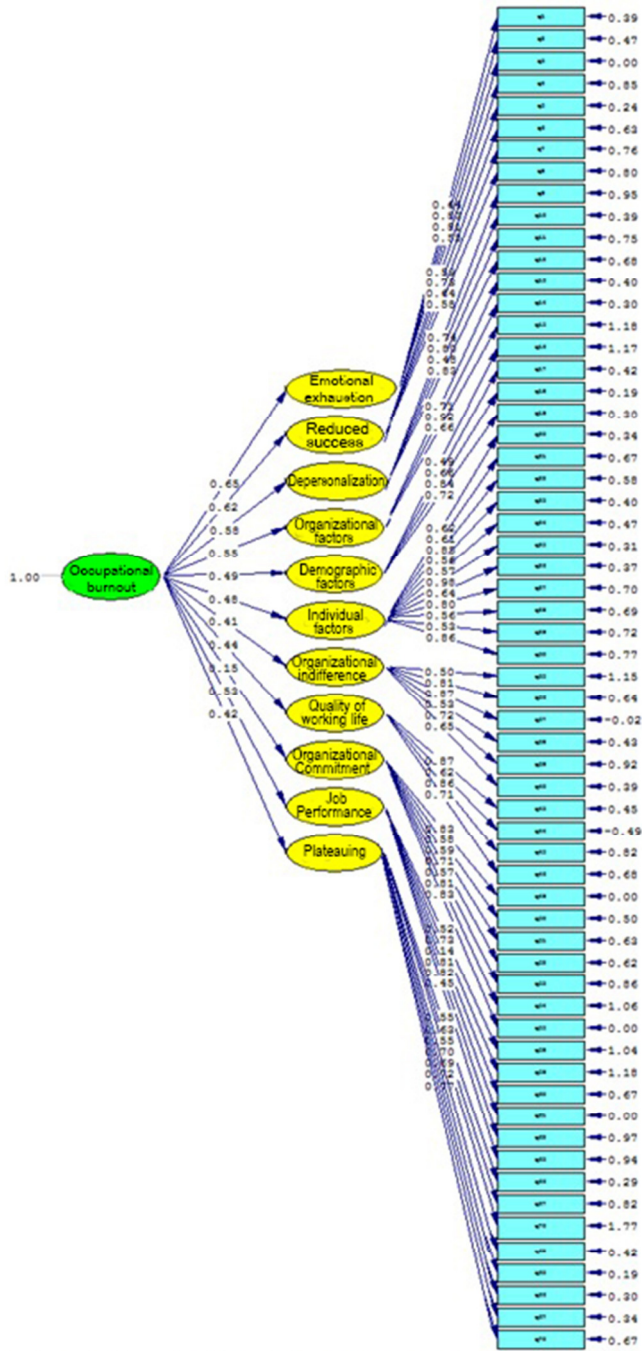


Figure 1. Burnout model in the estimation of standard coefficients

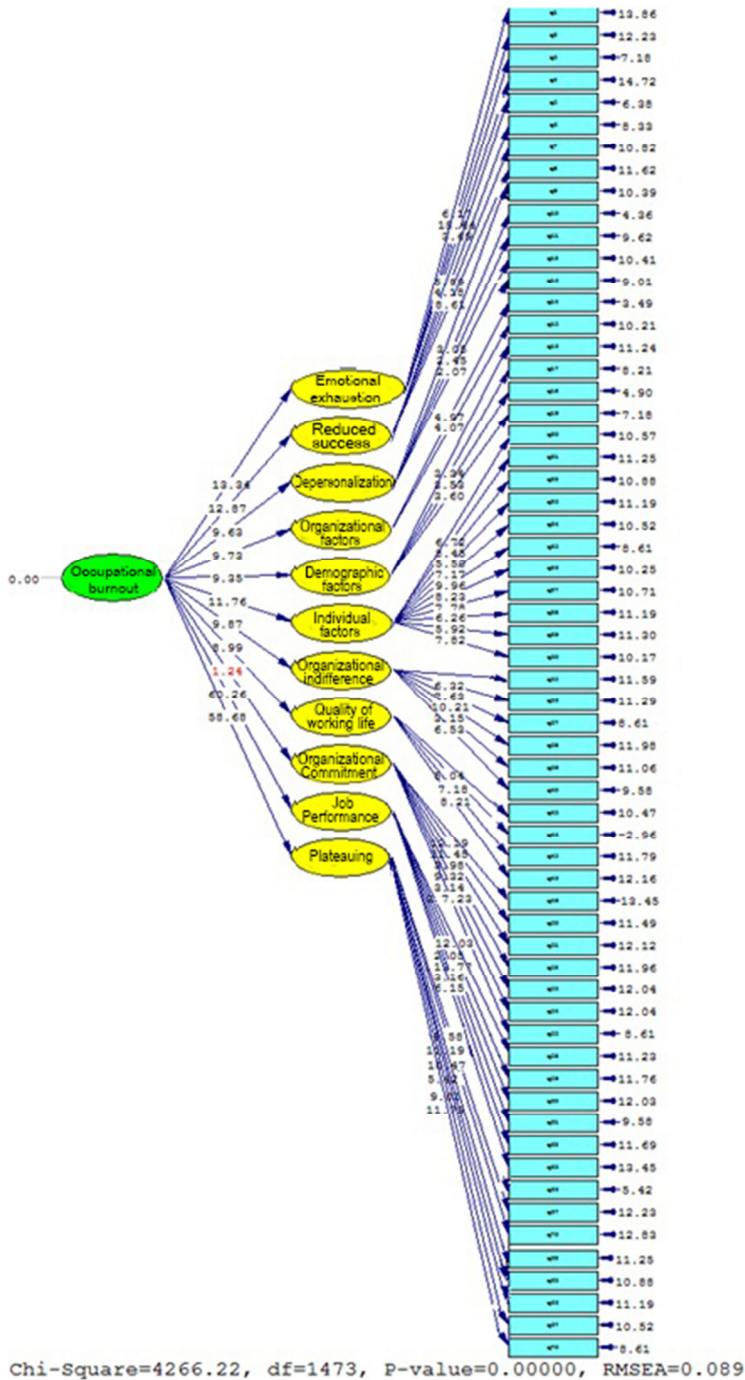


Figure 2. Burnout model in the significance of coefficients

Table 1. Results of structural equation modeling

| Variable | Factors | Path coefficient | R2 | t-Value | Rank |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------|---------|------|
| Occupational burnout | Emotional exhaustion | 0.65 | 0.42 | 13.34 | 1 |
| | Reduced success | 0.58 | 0.34 | 11.76 | 3 |
| | Depersonalization | 0.62 | 0.38 | 12.87 | 2 |
| | Organizational factors | 0.48 | 0.23 | 7.18 | 7 |
| | Demographic factors | 0.41 | 0.17 | 4.9 | 10 |
| | Individual factors | 0.55 | 0.30 | 9.87 | 4 |
| | Organizational indifference | 0.49 | 0.24 | 8.33 | 6 |
| | Quality of working life | 0.44 | 0.19 | 6.38 | 8 |
| | Organizational Commitment | 0.15 | 0.02 | 1.24 | 11 |
| | Job Performance | 0.53 | 0.28 | 8.68 | 5 |
| Plateauing | 0.42 | 0.18 | 5.42 | 9 | |

According to the table 1, the path coefficient between emotional exhaustion and occupational stress was 0.65 and the t value was 13.33. The results also showed that the path coefficient between these two variables was equal to 0/58 which is a positive value and the value of t was equal to 11.76. The results showed that the path coefficient between depersonalization and occupational burnout was equal to 0/62 which is somewhat positive and the value of t was 12.88. Moreover, the results showed that the path coefficient between organizational factors and job satisfaction was equal to 0.48, which was somewhat positive and the value of t was equal to 7.8. The results also showed that the path coefficient between demographic factors and occupational burnout was 0.41, which is somewhat positive and the value of t is 4.9. The path coefficient between individual factors and occupational burnout was equal to 0.55, which is a positive value, and the value of t was equal to 8.87. The path coefficient between organizational indifference and occupational burnout was equal to 0.49, which is somewhat positive and the t value of was 8.38. The path coefficient between the quality of working life and occupational burnout was 0.44 and the value of t was 6.38. The results of the above table also showed that the path coefficient between organizational commitment and occupational burnout was 0.15 and the t value was 1.24. The path coefficient between occupational performance and occupational burnout and the value of t was 8.88. The path coefficient between the plateauing and occupational burnout was

0.42 and the value of t was equal to 5.42.

Table 2. Validity and reliability indices of burnout model

| Variables | Cronbach Alpha | CR | <i>AVE</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------|------------|
| Emotional exhaustion | 0.786 | 0.851 | 0.503 |
| Reduced success | 0.882 | 0.912 | 0.507 |
| Depersonalization | 0.703 | 0.815 | 0.506 |
| Organizational factors | 0.778 | 0.816 | 0.514 |
| Demographic factors | 0.748 | 0.813 | 0.501 |
| Individual factors | 0.894 | 0.923 | 0.502 |
| Organizational indifference | 0.719 | 0.826 | 0.509 |
| Quality of working life | 0.768 | 0.853 | 0.520 |
| Organizational Commitment | 0.788 | 0.893 | 0.538 |
| Job Performance | 0.709 | 0.798 | 0.525 |
| Plateauing | 0.789 | 0.834 | 0.508 |

As shown in Table 2, since the AVE value is greater than 0.5, the measurement instrument has a good fit. Cronbach's alpha index has a composite reliability (CR) of more than 0.7, showing validity of the measurement instrument.

Table 3. Indicators of model

| Test | Estimated value | Limited value |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| χ^2 , <i>df</i> | 2.896 | 3< |
| RMSEA | 0.089 | 0.1< |
| GFI | 0.095 | 0.9> |
| RMR | 0.074 | 0.1< |
| NFI | 0.97 | 0.9> |
| CFI | 0.93 | 0.9> |

According to Table 3, the RMSEA value was less than 0.1, the mean square error of the model was appropriate and the model was acceptable. Moreover, the chi square had a degree of freedom between 1 and 3, and the GFI, CFI and NFI indices are also more than 0.9, indicating that the model for measuring the variables of the research was a proper model.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

According to the results, emotional exhaustion has a significant effect on burnout. The results of this study was consistent with Sina et al. (2014)

which showed that there is was negative and significant relationship between quality of working life and two dimensions of occupational burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization), Vahdani et al. (2012) showed that individuals with higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of extroversion, consistency, responsibility, and openness to more experiences are exposed to burnout. The results of this study was consistent with Maslach (1998) which showed that burnout is more likely to occur among people who have an external source of control (Maslach, 2001) and Alarcon et al. (2009), which, in a meta-analysis, showed that desirability is associated with occupational burnout. Mills and Huebner (1998) also showed that neuroticism and introversion are associated with three factors: occupational burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, individual success).Based on the results, it was determined that depersonalization has a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of this study were consistent with Lingard (2003), which found that extraversion as a factor in maintaining mental stability has a positive relationship with two variables of burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) in a sample of nurses. Mills and Huebner (1998) showed that neuroticism and introversion are related to three factors of occupational burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, individual success).Based on the results of this study, it was found that organizational factors have a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of this study were consistent with Wierschi et al. (2014), which showed that emotional intelligence is a weakening factor in the role of ambiguity, role conflict, and increasing role on the burnout of auditors in Indonesian accounting institutions. Somia and Panchantam have shown that job burnout is considered as a consequence of organizational policies due to various independent variables such as job attitudes, job engagement (occupational involvement), and so on. Based on the results of the research, it was determined that demographic factors have a significant effect on the degree of burnout. According to Maslach (2001) and Ghobari Banat and Khazae (2004), among demographic characteristics, age has the most stable relationship with burnout. That means younger and less elderly people feel higher burnout. This conclusion was obtained by examining Purdanova and Muros (2010), who studied sex differences in relation to

job burnout in a meta-analysis, and their results showed that women felt slightly more emotional exhaustion than men; While men experienced more depersonalization than women, the results of Nayoung meta-analysis showed that the most significant indicators were age and working hours which were positively correlated with the level of individual success. Based on the results of the research, it was found that individual factors have a significant effect on the degree of burnout. Maslach (1998) found that traits and personality dimensions could be a justification for burnout. He concluded that occupational burnout is related to the psychotic personality dimension and the psychological profile of work-related fatigue (Maslach, 1998). In his opinion, there is a higher degree of job burnout among people who have external control source (Maslach, 2001). Another study reported that all dimensions of burnout are related to lower self-esteem (Semer, 1996). Based on the results, it was found that organizational indifference has a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of Sowmya & Panchanatham (2011) studying job burnout as an important outcome of organizational policies among banking sector staff in China, and Zopiatis & Constanti (2010) that organizations which are distrustful of their employees and are more tight in their control and also less committed to group work, have higher occupational burnout among employees were consistent with this study. Based on the results of the research, it was found that quality of working life has a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of this study were consistent with Sina et al. (2014) showing that there was a negative and significant relationship between quality of work life and two dimensions of job burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). Sergei et al. (2001) defined the quality of work life as "the satisfaction of staff with diverse needs through resources, activities and outcomes from workplace participation". They suggested that the quality of working life should be measurable from the needs of the employees. Based on the results, it was found that organizational commitment has a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of this study are partly consistent with Sina et al. (2014), who concluded that organizational commitment was only able to predict individual performance in managers job burnout. Organizational commitment is the positive or negative attitudes of individuals towards

the whole organization (Steron, 2001). Based on the results of the research, it was found that job performance had a significant effect on the degree of burnout. The results of this study were consistent with the results of Nayoung meta-analysis on personal and occupational factors affecting job burnout indicating that age and job variables were the most significant indicators of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and Ismaili's research (2010) which showed a significant relationship between direct and indirect relationships in this model. Based on the results of the research, it was found that the plateau had a significant effect on burnout. The results of this study were consistent with the study of Fayyazi and Ziaei (1393) that the results showed that the degree of plateauing (structural plateau and content plateau), burnout and tendency to leave among the librarians were more than average; regression analysis revealed that perceived occupational plateau had a significant effect on the tendency to leave job and burnout. Considering the fact that emotional exhaustion affects faculty members burnout at Azad University, it is suggested that the quality of working life increases with the adoption of different policies. In the interviews of university administrators, psychological tests should be used to identify people with higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of extraversion, consistency, dedication and openness to experiences, and try to employ these people less at the managerial level. Anxiety should be investigated in managers and controlled even with the adoption of programs such as special leave or special loans, paying attention to the recruitment of managers, extroversion should be developed in managers, and openness and neuroticism should be reduced. More attention should be paid to the status of women managers and appropriate policies should be adopted in this regard. More work hours and more time spent on paperwork lead to exhaustion of managers, so it is suggested that programs be designed to address these barriers. Considering the fact that the decrease in the success rate affects the faculty members' academic burnout at Azad University, it is suggested that in the recruitment and promotion programs, managers should pay attention to the fact that they have external or internal control resources, and they are examined for neuroticism and introversion. Considering that the results showed that depersonalization affects the burnout of faculty members in Azad

University, it is suggested that managers with an extroversion spirit, which is considered as a factor in maintaining mental stability, should be reinforced in the dimensions of admiration and conscientiousness. It should be attempted to examine the ideals of the people and their employment and fit their situation and their ability to achieve their aspirations through the management posts. Lack of personal performance and negative perceptions of performance through incentives and indicators should be measured and programs should be designed for managers who feel that they are not progressing in their work and move towards realism and, in the case of poor performance, programs should be designed to eliminate this negative feeling

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