



# **THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF SOMALI YOUTH IN MOGADISHU**

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## **Abstract**

Somali youth are harnessing their skills and talents to create a wide range of businesses, from tech startups to agriculture ventures. The rise of the internet and mobile technology has played a significant role in enabling young entrepreneurs to overcome geographical barriers and reach a global market. For example, some Somali youth have developed mobile applications to address local challenges, such as accessing healthcare services or finding reliable transportation options.

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu is fueled by their resilience and adaptability in challenging environments. Despite the aftermath of conflict and significant socio-economic challenges, Somali youth have shown remarkable determination and motivation to create their own opportunities. The sense of community and support from fellow entrepreneurs has fostered an environment where Somali youth feel encouraged to take risks and pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

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## **Key words**

Youth, entrepreneurial, spirit, talents, ventures and dreams.

## **1. Introduction**

Somalia, a country located in the Horn of Africa, has faced numerous challenges over the years, including political instability, economic struggles, and ongoing conflicts. However, amidst these difficulties, there is a glimmer of hope in the form of the entrepreneurial spirit displayed by Somali youth. Despite limited resources and a lack of institutional support, young Somalis are finding innovative ways to create their own opportunities and contribute to the development of their communities.

The entrepreneurial spirit of youth is a powerful force driving innovation, growth, and change in today's society. With their fresh ideas, boundless energy, and fearless approach to taking risks, young entrepreneurs are reshaping industries and making

a significant impact on the economy.

One of the key characteristics of the entrepreneurial spirit is the ability to see opportunities where others see obstacles. This mindset allows young entrepreneurs to identify gaps in the market and develop innovative solutions to meet the needs of consumers. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo and disrupt traditional business models, which often leads to the creation of new industries and the transformation of existing ones.

One of the key factors driving the entrepreneurial spirit among Somali youth is the desire for economic independence. With high levels of unemployment and a lack of formal job opportunities, many young people are taking matters into their own hands and

starting their own businesses. They are motivated by the prospect of creating a sustainable income for themselves and their families, as well as the ability to make a positive impact in their communities.

In addition to technological advancements, Somali youth are also leveraging their cultural heritage and traditional skills to create thriving businesses. For instance, many young people are involved in the livestock trade, a key sector of the Somali economy. They are using their knowledge of animal husbandry and networking skills to establish connections with international

## **2. Literature review**

One of the key characteristics of the entrepreneurial spirit in the youth is their creativity and innovation. Young entrepreneurs possess a

buyers and expand their market reach.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth is not limited to business ventures alone. Many young people are actively engaged in social entrepreneurship, focusing on addressing pressing social issues in their communities. They are creating initiatives that promote education, healthcare, clean energy, and gender equality, among other causes. By combining their passion for social change with their entrepreneurial mindset, Somali youth are making.

natural ability to think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions to problems [1]. World Creativity and Innovation Day,

celebrated on April 21st, aims to raise awareness about the role of creativity and innovation in problem-solving [2]. Despite facing challenges, young individuals around the world are harnessing their creativity and ingenuity to develop innovative ideas and businesses [3]. This spirit of creativity and innovation is crucial for driving economic growth and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship [4].

Another important characteristic of the entrepreneurial spirit in the youth is their willingness to take risks and their resilience in the face of failure. Risk-taking is an essential aspect of entrepreneurship, as it allows young entrepreneurs to seize opportunities and pursue their goals [5]. Inherent in entrepreneurship is the

understanding that failure is a part of the journey, and resilient individuals are able to bounce back from setbacks and learn from their experiences [6]. Nurturing a growth mindset and resilience from a young age is crucial in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset [7]. This risk-taking attitude and resilience enable young entrepreneurs to overcome challenges and persevere in the pursuit of their goals [8].

Passion and motivation are also key characteristics of the entrepreneurial spirit in the youth. Young entrepreneurs are driven by their passion for their ideas and their desire to make a difference in the world [9]. They possess a growth mindset and are constantly seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth [10]. Raising children with an entrepreneurial

spirit can instill in them a growth mindset, analytical skills, and leadership abilities that will serve them well in their future endeavors [11]. Ultimately, the passion and motivation of young entrepreneurs fuel their determination to succeed and make a positive impact in their chosen fields [12].

Somali youth in Mogadishu face numerous challenges that hinder their entrepreneurial pursuits. One major challenge is the limited access to education and job opportunities. Many young Somalis lack access to quality education, which limits their skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurship [13]. Without proper education and training, it becomes difficult for them to develop the necessary business acumen and entrepreneurial mindset [14].

This lack of educational opportunities restricts their ability to explore and pursue entrepreneurial ventures, leaving them with limited options for economic advancement [15].

Another significant challenge faced by Somali youth in Mogadishu is the political instability and security concerns prevalent in the region. The country has been plagued by years of conflict and political unrest, making it difficult for young entrepreneurs to operate in a stable and secure environment [16]. The ongoing security threats posed by extremist groups such as al-Shabaab further exacerbate the challenges faced by Somali youth [17]. The constant fear of violence and insecurity not only hinders their ability to establish and sustain businesses but also

discourages potential investors from supporting entrepreneurial initiatives in the region [18].

Economic hardships and poverty also pose significant barriers to the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu. The country has been grappling with high levels of poverty and unemployment, making it challenging for young entrepreneurs to access the necessary resources and capital to start and grow their businesses [13]. Limited access to financial services and lack of investment opportunities further hinder their entrepreneurial aspirations [19]. However, there are initiatives like the Somalia GEEL project, funded by USAID, that aim to build a robust economic engine through the private sector, providing some hope for economic growth and

entrepreneurial opportunities [20]. Despite these challenges, Somali youth in Mogadishu continue to demonstrate resilience and determination in their pursuit of entrepreneurship, showcasing their entrepreneurial spirit even in the face of adversity [21].

The supportive community and networking opportunities in Mogadishu have also contributed to the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth. Initiatives such as business training, mentorship programs, and incubators have provided young entrepreneurs with the guidance and support they need to succeed. Organizations like Hormuud have placed high value on cultivating young entrepreneurs and have provided them with the necessary resources and support to turn their ideas into successful ventures. Additionally, events

and summits aimed at showcasing business opportunities and inspiring young entrepreneurs have

created a platform for networking and collaboration among aspiring business owners .

### **3. Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study was used descriptive survey design to explain the variables by of the study accordingly.

#### **Population of the Study**

The target population of this study was 240 respondents. The study was carried out in Mogadishu of Somalia.

#### **Sample Size Determination**

The sample size was 150 respondents selected carefully from the target population mentioned above to simplify the process of data collection and safe time. They were selected by using Slovene's formula.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

The researcher was used questionnaire and interview as a research instrument to collect data from the field. Questionnaire is intended to give chance to the respondents to read and understand questions and get time to answer it while interview is intended to target the key individuals who have no chance to fill questionnaire and collect important information obtained from non-verbal communications. These two tools enable the researcher to obtain the required information from the respondents under study.

#### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The collected data was analyzed critically by using (SPSS VERSION 20) and excel sheet and put it in Tables and figures. The tables and figures were clearly translated and were meaningful, reliable and accurate information was generated from them.

Quantitative data was analyzed through mode and means and as well as frequency tabulations to arrive a valuable conclusion. In an interview guide data was analyzed basing on the judgment of the researcher to subjects responses.

#### **4. Results**

##### **Profile of Respondents**

The total number of respondents who participated in this study was 150. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents investigated in this study included

the gender, age, marital status, Job experience, and the Qualification of the education. The responses regarding these are summarized using frequencies and percentage distributions as indicated in tables.

**Table 1.1 Gender of the Respondents**

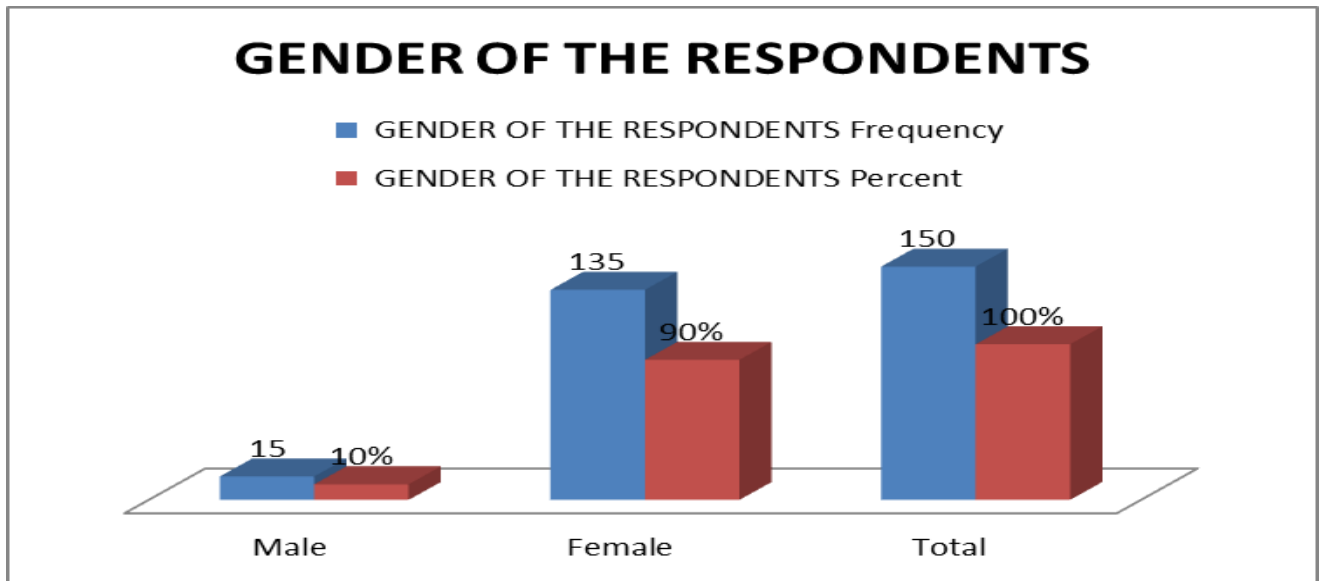
<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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Male	15	10.0
Female	135	90.0
Total	150	100.0

**Source: Primary Data 2023**

**Figure 1.1 Gender of the Respondents**



**Source: Primary Data 2023**

Table and figure 1.1 revealed that the majority of the respondents in this sample were female (90.0%) as compared to (10.0%) who were male, hence observing a moderate gender gap among respondents. Much as the number of female respondents was more than that of their

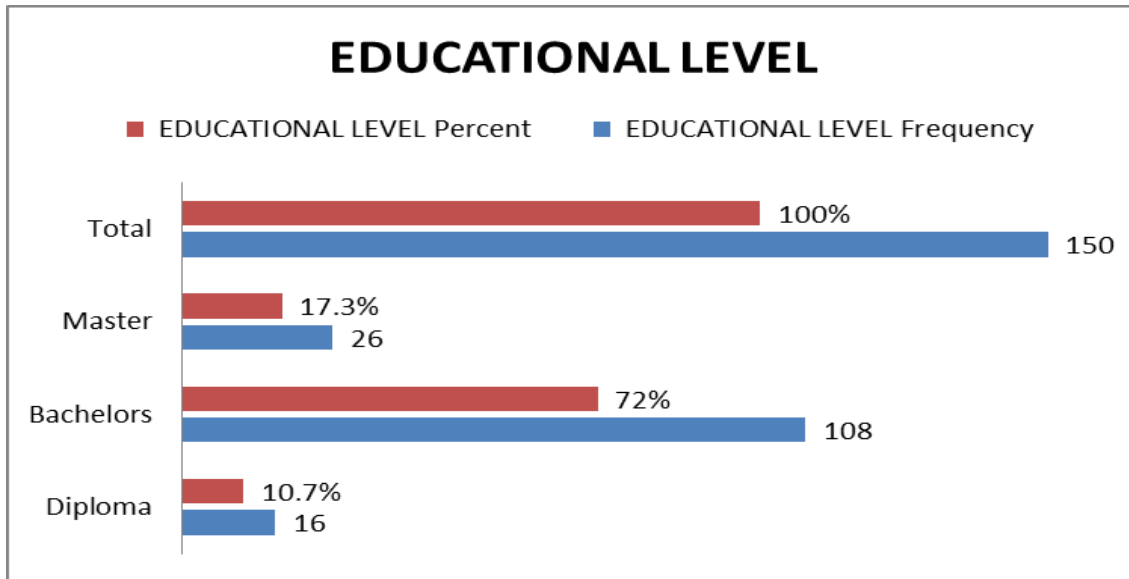
male counterparts, the study findings were not affected since the issue under investigation was not gender oriented. Sampling both men and women as respondents was helpful in that some of the information that one sex could not reveal properly could be indicated by the other sex.

**Table 1.2 Educational Level**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	16	10.7
Bachelors	108	72.0
Master	26	17.3
Total	150	100.0

**Source: Primary Data 2023**

**Figure 1.2 Educational Level**



**Source: Primary Data 2023**

Table and figure 1.2 indicates that the most respondents (72.0%) sampled were Bachelors; then followed by the Masters (17.3%); and lastly, the least of the participants in this study

were diploma level (10.7%). Information obtained from respondents from different education level was very instrumental in the data analysis since people with different

attitude and beliefs influenced by their education level had different ideology

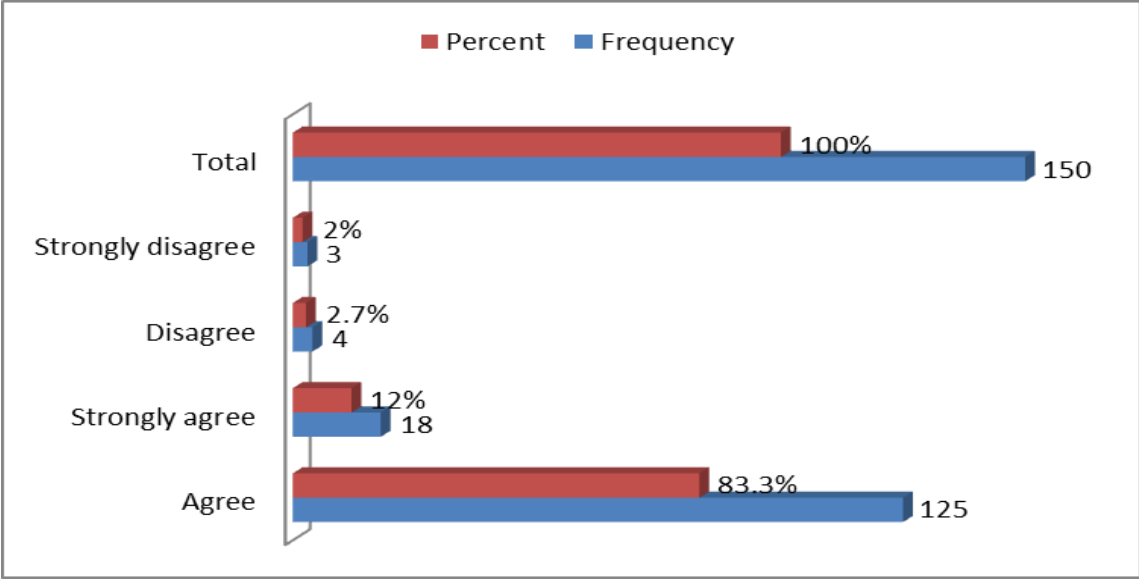
regarding the study variables in the area of the study.

**Table 1.3 The entrepreneurship is not for the faint-hearted. It requires resilience, adaptability, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	125	83.3
Strongly agree	18	12.0
Disagree	4	2.7
Strongly disagree	3	2.0
Total	150	100.0

**Source: Primary Data 2023**

**Figure 1.3 The entrepreneurship is not for the faint-hearted. It requires resilience, adaptability, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit.**



**Source: Primary Data 2023**

Table and figure 1.3 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the entrepreneurship is not for the faint-hearted. It requires resilience, adaptability, and a

strong entrepreneurial spirit. (83.3%), and (12.0%) strongly agreed, also (2.7%) of the respondents disagreed, (2.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

**5. Discussion of the study**

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth is a topic that

deserves attention and recognition. Despite the

challenges faced by Somalia as a country, its young population has demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt, innovate, and create opportunities for themselves and their communities.

One of the driving factors behind this entrepreneurial spirit is the lack of formal employment opportunities in the country. High levels of unemployment and underemployment have pushed many young Somalis to think outside the box and explore alternative ways to make a living. This has led to the emergence of a vibrant and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, where young people are taking risks and starting their own businesses.

Access to information and technology has played a crucial role in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit among

Somali youth in Mogadishu. With the rise of technology and the internet, young entrepreneurs have been able to access valuable information, market trends, and business opportunities. The tech-savvy youth population in Mogadishu has utilized digital platforms and social media to connect with potential customers, market their products or services, and expand their networks. This access to information and technology has leveled the playing field and empowered Somali youth to start and grow their businesses with limited resources.

Another factor contributing to the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth is the prevalence of informal economies. In many parts of the country, informal markets and trade networks have become the primary means of

economic activity. This has created a culture of entrepreneurship, where individuals learn to identify opportunities, negotiate deals, and navigate the complexities of the market. Somali youth have grown up in this environment, learning from their parents and older generations who have successfully operated in the informal sector.

### **The emergence of the entrepreneurial spirit among Somali youth**

The entrepreneurial spirit among Somali youth in Mogadishu has been on the rise, with an increasing number of small-scale businesses and startups emerging in the city. These young entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the evolving economic landscape in Somalia [22]. Despite the challenges of

doing business in Mogadishu, such as limited infrastructure and political instability, the youth are finding ways to navigate the business environment and make their mark [15]. They are driven by a determination to succeed and create a better future for themselves and their communities [23].

One of the key characteristics of the entrepreneurial spirit among Somali youth is their ability to come up with innovative solutions to local problems. They are keen observers of the challenges faced by their communities and strive to find creative ways to address them [24]. This entrepreneurial mindset is crucial in a country like Somalia, where access to basic services and resources can be limited. By developing innovative solutions, these young

entrepreneurs are not only improving the lives of their fellow citizens but also contributing to the overall development of the country [15].

Moreover, the Somali diaspora has played a significant role in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit among Somali youth. Many young Somalis who have migrated to other countries have gained exposure to different business models and ideas. They have access to educational and networking opportunities that they bring back to Somalia, infusing their communities with new knowledge and a fresh perspective. This cross-pollination of ideas has been instrumental in driving innovation and entrepreneurship within the country.

The resilience and determination displayed by Somali youth in

their entrepreneurial pursuits are commendable. Despite the socio-economic challenges and the legacy of conflict in Somalia, they are undeterred in their pursuit of success [25]. Organizations like the Saanqaad Business Incubator (SBI) in Mogadishu are playing a vital role in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit within the community and providing support to young entrepreneurs [26]. With the right support and opportunities, the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth has the potential to drive economic growth and bring about positive change in the country [22].

### **The impact of the entrepreneurial spirit on Mogadishu's economy and society**

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu has

had a significant impact on the city's economy and society. One of the key contributions of this entrepreneurial spirit is job creation and economic growth. Joblessness among young Somali adults has been a chronic issue, and the entrepreneurial endeavors of the youth have played a crucial role in creating employment opportunities [24]. Mobile money has also played a significant role in facilitating financial inclusion and providing a foundation for the Somali entrepreneurial spirit to thrive [19]. The innovative growth and job creation driven by the entrepreneurial spirit have become the most important currency for the city's economic development.

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu has empowered marginalized

communities. Facing limited job opportunities, youth in these communities have embraced entrepreneurship as a means of improving their livelihoods [27]. This empowerment has been particularly notable among Somali women, who have expanded into employment and livelihood sectors that were traditionally held by men [28]. Organizations like GEEL have also played a role in improving access to finance for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and rural entrepreneurs [29]. The entrepreneurial spirit has become a catalyst for inclusion and empowerment within Somali society [30].

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu has also contributed to the rebuilding and development of the city. Many young entrepreneurs have



dedicated themselves to initiatives aimed at rebuilding and revitalizing the city after years of conflict and socio-economic challenges [31]. Youth activists like Fartun Mohammed have dedicated their lives to helping Somali refugees rebuild their lives when they return home [32]. Organizations and programs focused on entrepreneurial and leadership skills development have emerged to socially and economically empower the youth [33]. The entrepreneurial spirit has become a driving force behind the resilience and hope of Somali youth [21].

### **The challenges faced by Somali youth in Mogadishu**

Somali youth in Mogadishu face numerous challenges that hinder their entrepreneurial pursuits. One major challenge is the limited access to education and job opportunities. Many young

Somalis lack access to quality education, which limits their skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurship [34]. Without proper education and training, it becomes difficult for them to develop the necessary business acumen and entrepreneurial mindset [35]. This lack of educational opportunities restricts their ability to explore and pursue entrepreneurial ventures, leaving them with limited options for economic advancement [36].

Another significant challenge faced by Somali youth in Mogadishu is the political instability and security concerns prevalent in the region. The country has been plagued by years of conflict and political unrest, making it difficult for young entrepreneurs to operate in a stable and secure

environment [37]. The ongoing security threats posed by extremist groups such as al-Shabaab further exacerbate the challenges faced by Somali youth [38]. The constant fear of violence and insecurity not only hinders their ability to establish and sustain businesses but also discourages potential investors from supporting entrepreneurial initiatives in the region [39].

Economic hardships and poverty also pose significant barriers to the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu. The country has been grappling with high levels of poverty and unemployment, making it challenging for young entrepreneurs to access the

## **6. Conclusion**

The entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth is not limited to traditional sectors such as small-

necessary resources and capital to start and grow their businesses [34]. Limited access to financial services and lack of investment opportunities further hinder their entrepreneurial aspirations [40]. However, there are initiatives like the Somalia GEEL project, funded by USAID, that aim to build a robust economic engine through the private sector, providing some hope for economic growth and entrepreneurial opportunities [8,40]. Despite these challenges, Somali youth in Mogadishu continue to demonstrate resilience and determination in their pursuit of entrepreneurship, showcasing their entrepreneurial spirit even in the face of adversity [9,32].

scale trade and agriculture. The tech industry has seen a surge of young Somali entrepreneurs,

leveraging technology to create innovative solutions to local challenges. From mobile payment platforms to e-commerce ventures, these young individuals are harnessing the power of technology to connect with customers, expand their reach, and create impact.

The text highlights the entrepreneurial spirit of Somali youth in Mogadishu. Despite the challenges faced in Somalia, young people in the capital city are demonstrating a strong drive to start their own businesses. They are motivated to overcome obstacles and make a positive impact on their communities. These young entrepreneurs are

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using innovative approaches, such as technology and social media, to promote their businesses and reach a wider audience. Their determination and resilience are truly inspiring, as they strive to bring economic growth and stability to their city.

The youth in Mogadishu possess a strong sense of resilience, creativity, and faith in a better future, which are essential qualities for successful entrepreneurs. They have learned to navigate and thrive in difficult circumstances, leveraging their resourcefulness to overcome obstacles and pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

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