



Academic Achievement and Its Relation with Self-Efficacy and Academic Adjustment in EFL Class

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v7i5.1511>

Abstract

Acquiring a second or foreign language in the context of non-native speakers could be influenced with many factors that increase or weaken students' intake of a new language. Thus, this study attempts to investigate if EFL university students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment as well as the significance of self-efficacy and academic adjustment for high and low achievers. The study also seeks the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment. A total of (100) female-students were chosen randomly from two Iraqi universities at Al-Karakh side of Baghdad city. SPSS software version (20) was run to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed that students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment; there is statistically significant difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy; there is no a statistically significant difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment. Moreover, the study revealed that self-efficacy is negatively correlated with academic adjustment.

Keywords: *Achievement; Self-Efficacy; Academic Adjustment; University Students*

1. Introduction

The concept of self-efficacy is one of the directives of the individual's behavior as social cognitive theory states that came as an extension of the social learning theory brought by the American scientist "Albert Bando R." It is one of the concepts of modern psychology, as this concept has received the attention of researchers because of its importance in interpreting an individual's behavior and directing him to solve his problems. Self-efficacy described as an important determinant of the learning process that represents a group of judgments that relate not only to what an individual accomplishes but also to judging what he can accomplish. It is a product of personal ability and represents a cognitive mirror of the individual that makes him feel his ability to control the environment al-maitah, 2012. p80). Self-efficacy defined as a driving condition in which an individual's self-esteem is measured in carrying out certain actions to achieve some of his goals. Self-efficacy is not concerned with what an individual possesses, but rather is concerned with his beliefs about what he can do and represents the epistemological axis of operations (Pandora 2007).

Cervone & Peake (1986) consider people's beliefs about self-efficacy determine the level of motivation that reflected in the effort they make in their work and on the period during, they can withstand obstacles and problems. The more a person's confidence in self-efficacy increases his efforts, his determination increases to overcome the corresponding obstacles, when the individual faces a situation that has doubts about his own ability; this reduces his effort, which affects the attempt to solve problems in a successful way. This implies that an individual who enjoys high effectiveness is endurance that is more persistent and perseverance to accomplish tasks and makes it more balanced, less tense, more self-confident and reaching its goals without attacking others or moral or legal rules.

Pandora (1977) pointed out that the self-efficacy increases for the individual if he accomplishes a personal achievement, and if he sees that, others like him achieve success in a particular task. On the other way, it can decrease if he sees that others fail in this task. Individual can be convinced that he is able to dealing with difficult situations but this conviction can be disturbed if he really fails in such cases, where self-efficacy works as self-aids, or as self-impediments to facing problems. An individual who has a strong sense of the efficacy of brilliance focuses his attention when facing a problem on analyzing it in order to reach appropriate solutions to solve it.

Self-efficacy has strong impacts on our level of motivation. When we believe that we are good at certain tasks, we work vigorously and persistently no matter the obstacles related to them. Conversely, when we feel hesitate about self-efficacy, our work going to be less active, and we are more likely to give in when facing difficulties. He also showed that students who have a high sense of self-efficacy set higher aspirations for themselves and have flexibility in finding a strategy to solve their problems more accurately, while students who suffer from low self-efficacy give in easily. They tend to indifference, lack of interest in their mission in addition to their feeling of anxiety and stress, and attribute their failure to external factors Pandora, 1977).

Chamot (1993), identifying some of the major academic needs of the students who want to learn English, reports that one of the basic needs of language learners is to have high self-efficacy. Students confident in their academic skills expect high marks on related exams and papers. Conversely, students who doubt their academic efficacy see a low grade on their paper even before they begin their exam. Learners' self-efficacy is also associated with the goals they set for learning the language. That is, learners with high self-efficacy set higher goals and higher personal standards. The amount of effort, persistence, or attention exerted to reach a specific goal is also influenced by a perceived probability of the attainability of the outcome (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995, p. 507).

As for adjustment, many students face problems in adjustment, especially students who move from secondary to university. As a new cultural and social environment is accompanied by many pressures and multiple situations in terms of psychological and social climate, forming friendships and making decisions, and choosing the profession of the future as well. The university gives its students a broader freedom and greater responsibility that requires the individual to reach an ideal adjustment. The academic adjustment of the student is one of the most important aspects of his general adjustment. The feeling of satisfaction with the quality of university life is reflected in students' academic achievement (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

The process of adjustment, in general, is the interaction between the individual and the possibilities and needs on the one hand and between the environment and its characteristics and requirements on the other hand, and the outcome of this process is a positive adjustment or negative adjustment. Good adjustment appears in the student's satisfaction with his role as a student at the university, his involvement in the university community, and his enjoyment of his studies and his satisfaction with his professors and colleagues. The positive adjustment is also reflected in productivity in the performance of the tasks, mastery of knowledge, information, and skills, which appears in the academic results as well as in his level of success in the tests and assessment methods that were designed to measure the student's knowledge, information, and skills that the teaching aims to achieve (Baker &

Siryk, 1984). As for the negative adjustment, it appears through a student's feeling of dissatisfaction with his role as a student at the university, which appears in the sense of anxiety, tension, and depression that hinder student's contact with reality (Clinciu, 2012). Additionally, the effects of negative adjustment are reflected in a deterioration of the achievement performance.

1.1 The Important of Study

The importance of this research lies in the importance of the variables, the problem it addresses, and its findings. The importance of studying self-efficacy, academic adjustment as important dimensions in the human personality due to their great impact on the behavior of the individual, represented in self-convictions about the individual's ability to overcome the difficult tasks and problems that he faces through educational tasks, because they affect how Individuals feel when performing their tasks (Schwarzer, 1995). For self-efficacy, it is considered one of the concepts of modern psychology that Bandura referred to in the theory of social cognitive learning, who sees that the beliefs of the individual about his self-efficacy arise through cognitive awareness of personal capabilities and multiple experiences, whether direct or indirect. In addition, self-efficacy emphasizes an individual's beliefs in his ability to exercise control over events that affect his life. Self-efficacy is not only concerned with the skills that an individual possesses, but rather what an individual can do with the skills that he possesses. Academic self-efficacy has been defined as confidence in an individual's ability to organize and execute actions that lead to academic success, and it is a variable associated with university student success. Academic self-efficacy is one of the most important factors that directly affect academic achievement in various subjects. Dale (2001) pointed out that student's engagement in academic society depends significantly on the level of self-efficacy. Thus, the importance of this research is revolve around identifying the level of self-efficacy in relation with academic adjustment among college students, which are important factors affecting the high or low level of academic achievement.

1.2 Research Problem

Academic self-efficacy is one of the most significant factors affecting the perseverance and academic performance of the student, this competence crystallizes in the form of ideas and beliefs. Dale has indicated that an individual with high self-efficacy is easily and quickly involve in academic societies, while an individual with a sense of low competence leads to a lower level of achievement (Dale, 2001). Through academic self-efficacy, student's achievement can be predicted whether it is high or low. Hence, a high level of academic self-efficacy; is clear evidence to the integrity of the educational process. It is an important key to the success that students have in achieving academic adjustment over the learning process. On the contrary, the low level of perceived academic self-efficacy indicates students need to reinforce their experiences in order this level to rise because its decline makes them subject to stress and difficulties in daily life, which may affect their academic adjustment. In the context of learning English language, most studies focused on examining the relationship between self-efficacy and some other variables such as anxiety, performance, achievement, learning strategies, but to the best of researcher knowledge none of the Arabic context researchers especially in Iraq has studied the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment and their influence on EFL students' achievement. Based on the aforementioned, the researcher attempts to reveal the level of academic self-efficacy and adjustment among students and how could these factors affect students' achievement.

1.3 Research Objectives

The current research aims to examine if university students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment. Besides, determines if there is a significant relationship between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy and academic adjustment. The study also seeks to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1- Do university students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment?
- 2- Is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy?
- 3- Is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment?
- 4- What is the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- 1- H01: EFL learners do not have self-efficacy and academic adjustment.
- 2- Ha2: there is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy.
- 3- Ha2: there is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment.
- 4- H03: there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment.

2- Chapter Two

2.1 Sources of Efficacy

Beliefs concerning our efficacy can be developed via four sources. The most effective way to create a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences (Bandura, 1982; Pajares, 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Successful performance accomplishments provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can bring about success. In contrast, failure, especially if it occurs early in the learning experience, undermines one's sense of efficacy. The second source for creating efficacy beliefs is via vicarious experiences made available by social models. Belief in one's own capability to master similar tasks is strengthened by seeing others who are similar or held in high regard succeed by persevering (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1987). Conversely, observing others fail despite persistent effort tends to lower one's judgments of efficacy. The third source for enhancing self-efficacy is social or self-persuasion of capability. Unrealistic boosts in efficacy via persuasion are quickly deflated by failure, especially if it happens after hearing: 'Come on, you can do it'. Such social persuasion, while commonly used by teachers, is also one of the least effective means of raising self-efficacy. The final and often most subtle source is one's physiological and emotional stress reactions, including sweating, trembling and getting the 'butterflies'. Interpretation of these body signals informs our sense of efficacy. For instance, trembling may be viewed as a sign of vulnerability to poor performance, or it may be viewed as a determination to succeed (Bandura, 1995). These four sources of information combine to signal to students how capable they are and how well they are learning and performing. As a result, self-efficacy is re-appraised, which in turn affects ongoing motivation and learning.

2.2. Self-Efficacy and Adjustment Theories

Self-efficacy theory is concerned primarily with the role of personal cognitive factors in the triadic reciprocity model of social cognitive theory—with both the effect of cognition on effect and behavior and the effect of behavior, affect, and environmental events on cognition. Self-efficacy theory maintains that all processes of psychological and behavioral change operate through the alteration of the individual's sense of personal mastery or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982b, 1986). Self-efficacy was originally defined as a rather specific type of expectancy concerned with one's beliefs in one's ability to perform a specific behavior or set of behaviors required to produce an outcome (Bandura, 1977). The definition of self-efficacy has been expanded, however, to refer to "people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175) and their "beliefs in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over task demands" (Bandura, 1990, p. 316). Thus, self-efficacy judgments are concerned "not with the skills one has but with judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). According to Bandura (1977), "people process, weigh and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behavior and effort expenditure accordingly" (p. 212). Thus, expectations concerning mastery or efficacy have the generative capability and determine the choice of goals and goal-directed actions, the expenditure of effort in the pursuit of goals, persistence in the face of adversity, and emotional or affective experiences (Bandura, 1986; Locke & Latham, 1990). The crux of self-efficacy theory is that the initiation of and persistence at behaviors and courses of action are determined primarily by judgments and expectations concerning behavioral skills and capabilities and the likelihood of being able to successfully cope with environmental demands and challenges. Self-efficacy theory also maintains that these same factors play an important role in adjustment. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that self-efficacy affects the choice of activities, effort, and persistence. Compared with students who doubt their learning capabilities, those with high self-efficacy for accomplishing a task participate more readily, work harder, and persist longer when they encounter difficulties.

Self-efficacy beliefs influence cognition in four ways. First, they influence the goals people set for themselves. People with stronger self-efficacy beliefs for their performance set higher goals and commit to goals more strongly than do people with weaker beliefs about their abilities. Second, self-efficacy beliefs influence the plans or strategies people envision for attaining these goals. Third, they influence the development of rules for predicting and influencing events. Finally, self-efficacy for problem solving influences the efficiency and effectiveness of problem solving. When faced with complex decision-making tasks, people who believe strongly in their problem-solving abilities remain highly efficient and highly effective problem solvers and decision makers; those who doubt their abilities become erratic, inefficient, and ineffective (e.g., Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Bandura & Wood, 1989; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

In terms of nature of the human personality and its psychological adjustment, the main schools of psychology have tried to explain psychological adjustment. The behavioral school considers the human being an interactive being that responds to the stimuli that are available in the environment around him. An individual has the capability to leave behaviors that have not been positively reinforced and have the ability to control oneself, and the adjustment of the individual is achieved if he is able to explore the secrets and laws of nature and society. Then, he can strive to meet his needs and avoid the risks and difficulties impeding his achievement of adjustment (Sarhan, 2013). As for behavioral cognitive school, it also indicates that the individual learns good behavior by observing others through modeling or simulation. The mental disorders are generated as a result of ideas and beliefs carried by people and not experiences and incidents that they pass through. Thus, the person is able to achieve self-control and psychological adjustment through the change of his beliefs about himself and the events around him. However, the human school sees that a person's experience has an important role to play in the learning process; the person has the freedom and the capacity for psychological adjustment, which makes people

who are psychologically adjusted accept themselves and the others around them. Additionally, they have flexibility in dealing with events around them and able for innovation and renewal.

Previous Studies

Many studies over the past few years have been conducted investigating self-efficacy in relation to different variables, which have found various results, such as, Al-rabai (2018) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement among (221) Saudi undergraduates who were studying the English language as a foreign language. So as to collect required data, (32) items' questionnaire was developed by the researcher included a combination of self-efficacy scale designed by Wang (2004), Wang et al (2013), and a number of items added by the researcher based on his experience as English teacher. Furthermore, the final exam's scores were employed to determine their academic achievement. The results showed that the study sample described generally as low achievers as well as hold low self-efficacy beliefs toward the English language, the study also found a positive correlation between self-efficacy and students' academic achievement. In (2016) Genç et al concluded that EFL learners reported an average level in perceived self-efficacy. Moreover, they held a strong belief that motivation factors have a significant relationship with their process of learning English. The researcher used two questionnaires to collect the needed data: BALLI scale (34) items was developed by Horwitz (1987) to assess students' beliefs about language learning in five areas. The other one is English Self-Efficacy Scale of (34) items was developed by Yanar and Bümen (2008) to assess students' perceived self-efficacy towards four basic language skills, which were applied to (210) Turkish EFL undergraduate students whose major is English. It came up with a recommendation that teachers should enhance students' self-efficacy and help them to hold correct beliefs about foreign language learning to motivate them. Luangpipat & Padgate (2015) have investigated the relationship between students' perceived self-efficacy English learning achievement in regard to different variables. To this end, A group of (370) first-year students at Naresuan University were randomly selected to be the sample of study. As the data collection instrument, the researcher used a questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions about students' general information, their self-efficacy with respect to English language learning, and factors related to their self-efficacy. The findings indicated that vicarious experience seemed to be the only factor that had a statistically significant relationship with the students' self-efficacy. The other factors, which were mastery experience (ME), social persuasion (S), and physiological states (PS), showed no statistical relationship with self-efficacy. Ahamad (2019) examined the relationship between language learning strategies, self-efficacy, and English language proficiency. To do this, a total of 341 male and female students, were studying at University Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Campus, employed as the research sample. The researcher utilized English language learning strategies adopted from Oxford's (1989) work. Besides, the self-efficacy scale adapted from Wang's (2004) to achieve the targeted objectives of the study. The findings revealed that there is a significant correlation between self-efficacy belief and learners' level of proficiency in the English language. As for language learning strategies, the metacognitive strategy has recorded the highest average compared to the other strategies, which were in all have a slight relationship with students' English language proficiency. Kim (2015) attempted to identify the subgroups of students who had similar profiles for their self-efficacy beliefs for learning English and to examine the relationship between the self-efficacy beliefs of these students and their use of Self-regulated learning strategies. To collect data, two questionnaire: English Self-Efficacy scale consists of 32 items and Self-regulated Learning Strategies scale includes 68 items were administered to (167) male and female undergraduates. The findings revealed statistically significant differences between students with low efficacy beliefs and those with high/medium efficacy beliefs with respect to their use of SRL strategies and language interpretation strategies. The study also found that male students were identified in the low self-efficacy profile compared to the previous studies that suggested male student might do better than female students in language learning outcomes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The current study was conducted during the academic year 2018-2019. One hundred first-stage female students at two public universities in Al-Karkh side of Baghdad city were employed as study sample. The participants have been approximately learning English for nine years. The female-students form (100%) of the total sample, which were chosen randomly to avoid the bias of selecting sample.

3.2 Instruments

This study employed a correlational research design since it aims to identify the relationships between self-efficacy and academic adjustment with English language achievement. Wang's (2004) scale to measure self-efficacy and Ismail & Shatha s' (2016) scale to measure academic adjustment were used as research tools. Since the Arab context differs from the context in which self-efficacy and academic adjustment scales were designed for; a new-modified Arabic version with minor changes have been created to be more appropriate and comprehended for study sample. The modified-scale version of self-efficacy was tabulated in (19) items with 5-points Likert scale. As for the academic adjustment's scale, it was modified to form (35) items with 5-points Likert scale. They were conceived as reliable scales in research studies over the past year. To determine students' achievement in English language, the results of mid-year exam of English course for the academic year 2018-2019 were considered as third tool to collect the needed data for the current study.

3.3 Questionnaires Reliability

To scrutinize the internal consistency of the two questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha test was run using SPSS software.

Table 1 The Reliability Statistic

Academic Adjustment scale		Self-efficacy scale	
Cronbach's alpha	N of Items	Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
0.86	31	0.88	19

Table 1 shows the reliability values of the academic adjustment scale and self-efficacy scale which were found to be (0.86, 0.88) respectively. The values indicate that the two questionnaires have high inter-correlation index among items.

3. 4 Data Analysis

To analyze collected data, SPSS software version .20 was employed, using one sample t-test to identify if students have an academic adjustment as well as self-efficacy. Independent sample t-test was applied to examine if there are a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of an

academic adjustment as well as self-efficacy. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation test was employed to determine the correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment.

4. Results

This section includes the findings of the raised questions that addressed the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment with academic achievement among EFL learners.

4.1. Do university students have a self-efficacy and academic adjustment?

To answer question one, which is seeking to identify if students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment, a one-sample t-test, was run.

Table 2 One-sample t-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test-value	DF	T-value		Sig. (2.Tailed)
						Calculated	Tabulated	
Academic Adjustment	100	112.440	15.551	93	99	12.501	1.96	0.000
Self-Efficacy	100	68.500	10.356	57	99	11.104	1.96	0.000

The results in Table 2 reveal the mean scores of students self-efficacy and academic adjustment are (M=112.440, SD= 15.551), (M=68.500, SD=10.356) respectively which are greater than test value=93, 57. Simultaneously, the calculated (T) (12.501), (11.104) are higher than the tabulated T (1.96) at the level of (0.05). This implies there is a significant difference between the mean scores and test values confirming that students have self-efficacy and academic adjustment. Thus, the null hypothesis that students do not have self-efficacy and academic adjustment is rejected.

4.2 Is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy?

Table 3 The difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy

Group		N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig
Female	High	50	72.960	10.522	98	-4.753-	.000
	Low	50	64.040	8.086			

To answer question two, independent sample T-test was used. As seen in table 3, there is a difference between high-female achievers' mean (M=72.960, SD=10.522) and low-female achievers' mean (M=64.040, SD=8.086). This implies there is statistically significant difference between high and

low achievers in term of self-efficacy if we compare the calculated T (-4.753-) to the tabulated T (1.96) at the level of (0.05). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

4.3 Is a significant difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment?

Table 4 The difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment

Group		N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig
Female	High	50	109.980	14.733	98	-1.594-	.114
	Low	50	114.900	16.099			

To identify how students' achievement affected by academic adjustment, independent sample T-test was used. As seen in table 4, there is a slight difference between high-female achievers' mean (M=109.980, SD=14.733) and low-female achievers' mean (M=114.900, SD=16.099). This means there is no statistically significant difference between high and low achievers in term of academic adjustment if we compare the calculated T (-1.594-) to the tabulated T (1.96) at the level of (0.05). Thus, the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

4.4 Is there significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment?

Table 5 Correlations

		Total	Proficiency
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.014-
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.887
	N	100	100
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.014-	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.887	
	N	100	100

To examine the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment, the researcher employed Pearson's correlation coefficient test. As shown in table 5, (R= -.014-), which is within the border of correlation between variables (-1, +1), but it takes the negative side. This implies that self-efficacy is negatively correlates with academic adjustment; the more students have self-efficacy, the lesser academic adjustment is be and verse versa. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

5. Discussion

Researchers have keen to study various variables that can predict self-efficacy and affect its levels, so working to improve the beliefs of academic self-efficacy is necessary for the student to possess the required motivation, enthusiasm, and skill. Among the most prominent of these variables is academic

adjustment that affects immediately at students' achievement. Accordingly, the current study has studied these two variables concluded that students have a high average of self-efficacy and academic adjustment, it came to be in line with the result of Sally's (2012) study. Having self-efficacy is a student's capability to perform adequately in a given situation; Academic self- efficacy in the university context refers to a student's confidence that he\ she can perform adequately in the university environment (Bandura 1997). Aspelmeier et al. (2012) stated that academic self-efficacy is an important factor to consider since it influences achievement both directly and through adjustment.

As for the difference between low and high achievers, the finding of the study disclosed that there is statistically significant difference between high and low achievers in term of self-efficacy; Students with low self- efficacy often display lower performance comparatively to Students with high self-efficacy. On the other way, an academic adjustment did not show an effect on low and high achievers. An adjustable student has a high motivation for achievement. Thus, he always seeks continuously to set goals and aspirations and takes the right means and methods to satisfy his needs and achieve his goals. He feels more satisfied and comfortable in contacting people around him, which help him to overcome the difficulties and challenges that hinder the achievement of his goals. Pandora (1997) emphasizes that the direct experiences for individual are the most sources that raise the degree of beliefs of individual's self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the result here came with different conclusion, it is not necessary to experience an academic adjustment to show a good level of achievement. Since the study sample is limited to (100) female students in only two universities, we can not generalize this conclusion.

Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment, the finding revealed different outcomes to these studies of (Brenner (2003); Bell (2003); Schwartz (2002); Poyrazli (2001); Ramos & Nicholas (2007); Multon, Browns & Lent (1991). The studies concluded with a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment. It means the more students experience the academic adjustment, the higher self-efficacy students have. In other words, students who experience a high level of academic adjustment; self-efficacy can influence their achievements significantly.

6. Recommendations

- 1- Holding Training programs to improve students' academic self-efficacy by focusing on providing students with positive adjustment strategies, especially for females.
- 2- Activating students' self-efficacy expectations through verbal persuasion, which alters teachers, that students are able to achieve success and overcome difficulties.
- 3- Paying attention to the university environment by providing students' needs in order to develop their level of self-efficacy.

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