

Elements of Employee Relations Management in the Islamic Movement

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Abstract

Leadership inefficacy is a significant factor contributing to organizational issues, often rooted in strained relationships between managers and employees. These challenges emerge when both parties lack adequate understanding and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities within the organization. Such deficiencies can lead to poor communication, misaligned goals, and organizational inefficiency, hindering the ability to achieve expected performance benchmarks. This study explores the concept of employee relations management from both Western and Islamic perspectives, identifying critical elements that influence effective interactions between managers and employees. The research emphasizes the need for mutual understanding and cooperative dynamics as central to fostering a productive work environment. Drawing from the teachings and philosophies of key Islamic movement thinkers, the study delves into the unique frameworks applied within Islamic movement organizations. These organizations often emphasize values-based leadership and relational harmony grounded in ethical principles, providing a distinct perspective on managing employee relations. Employing a qualitative research design, this study utilizes content analysis to synthesize insights from both perspectives. The findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach where managers and employees work collaboratively, leveraging their respective roles to establish structured and efficient organizational operations. This alignment not only facilitates the achievement of performance goals but also equips organizations to navigate the complexities of today's global challenges. The study concludes that integrating Islamic principles into employee relations management offers a robust framework for addressing leadership and relational challenges, ensuring sustainable organizational growth. This approach provides valuable insights for organizations aiming to align operational efficiency with ethical and cultural values.

Keywords: Islamic Movement Management, Islamic Movement (Harakah Islamiyah), Manager-Employee Relations, Employee Relationship Management, Ethical Leadership.

Introduction

The organizational structure of Islamic movements is not significantly different from other organizations. Every organization typically comprises managers who oversee its administration and employees who execute its directives and tasks. When managers and employees perform their respective roles, interactions inevitably occur between them. This dynamic is referred to as the relationship between managers and employees.

This paper aims to explore the nature of these relationships within Islamic movement organizations. However, before delving into this context, it is essential to first examine the concept from a Western perspective. The term *Employee Relationship Management* (ERM) has been introduced in the Western management discourse to describe strategies and practices aimed at fostering productive interactions between managers and employees.

Following this, the paper discusses the ERM concept through the lens of Islamic management principles, which serve as a foundation for organizations rooted in Islamic values. The analysis provides a comparative understanding of how these principles align or diverge from Western practices. Finally, the discussion incorporates insights from prominent Islamic movement thinkers, shedding light on their perspectives regarding manager-employee relationships in Islamic movement organizations.

This examination is intended to provide a comprehensive view of how Islamic values and ethics influence the dynamics of manager-employee relations, offering practical guidance for improving organizational effectiveness in Islamic contexts. By synthesizing Western and Islamic approaches, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of employee relationship management within organizations that operate with an Islamic ethos.

Employee Relationship Management from a Western Perspective

Employee relationship management (ERM) refers to the process of managing relationships between various employees within an organization. This relationship encompasses interactions between employees and employers as well as among employees at the same hierarchical level (Management Study Guide Content Team, n.d.). A similar definition is provided by Satyendra (2017), in their respective works. ERM plays a pivotal role in enabling organizations to manage all interactions effectively, ultimately leading to the achievement of organizational objectives (Satyendra, 2017).

Satyendra (2017), highlights that effective ERM ensures that organizational tasks are carried out without confusion or issues. Furthermore, Girish (2019), referencing Bajaj et al. (2013), notes that ERM fosters positive morale, trust, and a productive and conducive work environment. This perspective aligns with Yongcai (2010), who emphasizes that ERM contributes significantly to employee satisfaction.

ERM comprises five key aspects that organizations should adopt to ensure effective management. These include human resource practices, communication, shared values and goals, trust, and leadership styles (Satyendra, 2017). These components collectively form the

foundation for a robust and harmonious employee relationship, which is essential for achieving both individual and organizational success.

By addressing these aspects, organizations can create a work environment that not only enhances productivity but also cultivates a sense of belonging and mutual respect among employees and employers. These practices underscore the importance of relationship management as a core organizational function in the Western context.

Aspects of Employee Relationship Management

This paper focuses on five key aspects of employee relationship management: human resource practices, communication, shared values and goals, trust, and leadership style. These elements are essential for maintaining positive relationships between managers and employees. Neglecting any one of these aspects may result in deficiencies or flaws in these relationships.

1. *Human Resource Practices*

The human resources (HR) department plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and managing employee relationships. HR can develop policies tailored to organizational needs to enhance employee satisfaction (Satyendra, 2017). Effective policies can improve job satisfaction and translate into higher organizational performance. Examples of HR practices that boost job satisfaction include training programs, job rotation, performance evaluations, and career planning and development initiatives.

2. *Communication*

Communication serves as a vital link and coordinator between employees and the organization. Continuous and frequent two-way communication is a crucial component of a comprehensive employee relationship management strategy (Satyendra, 2017). Effective organizational communication involves the exchange of critical information between the organization and employees (Satyendra, 2017; Girish, 2019). Informal communication, according to Satyendra (2017), is often more trusted than formal communication. Informal communication fosters open discussions, enabling smoother and more effective information flow.

3. *Shared Values and Goals*

Shared values and goals between managers and employees facilitate collective efforts toward achieving organizational performance. Satyendra (2017) describe shared values and goals as mutual trust regarding behaviors, objectives, and key policies. This alignment inspires both parties to collaborate and strive toward organizational success (Chinomona & Sandada, 2013).

4. *Trust*

Trust plays a critical role in employee relationship management, acting as a key indicator of reliance and confidence in workplace interactions (Satyendra, 2017). Trust develops over time through consistent workplace relationships. Key elements contributing to trust include integrity and dependability.

5. *Leadership Style*

Leadership style significantly influences organizational performance and employee relationship management (Satyendra, 2017; Girish, 2019). Leadership style, as defined

by Satyendra (2017), is the approach managers adopt to guide their subordinates. Various leadership styles include autocratic, democratic, and recreational club management, among others (Zin, 1990; Yusof, 2015; Omar, 2014). Each style impacts the performance of both employees and managers (Wang et al., 2005).

By understanding and implementing these five aspects, organizations can strengthen employee relationships and enhance overall productivity and morale.

Employee Relationship Management from an Islamic Perspective

This section elaborates on the five aspects of employee relationship management—human resource practices, communication, shared values and goals, trust, and leadership style—from an Islamic perspective. This explanation provides insight into these aspects within Islamic management, demonstrating how Islamic-oriented organizations, such as Islamic movement organizations, align with Islamic management principles.

Human Resource Practices

Omar (2014), outlines Islamic management operational principles, many of which align with universal management practices but are adapted to Islamic values to integrate Islamic principles into organizational management.

1. *Obedience to the Organization*

Employees are required to obey their managers, provided the instructions are in line with Islamic principles and do not contradict Islamic teachings. This obedience is limited to lawful and reasonable tasks within the manager's authority and the employee's capacity.

2. *Loyalty to the Organization*

Managers are expected to demonstrate loyalty to the organization by acting in its best interest, avoiding actions that may harm it, and safeguarding organizational confidentiality.

3. *Adherence to Discipline*

All members of the organization, including managers and employees, must adhere to its policies and regulations to ensure smooth operations.

4. *Consideration of Maslahah (Public Interest)*

Omar (2014), identifies three types of *maslahah* in Islamic management: societal, organizational, and individual. Societal interests take precedence over organizational and individual interests, while organizational interests are prioritized over individual interests.

5. *Hiring Qualified Employees*

Managers have the right to select employees based on qualifications and experience. Omar (2014), recommends Islamic organizations prioritize hiring Muslims to align work with the Islamic concept of worship.

6. *Assigning Tasks According to Qualifications*
Managers must assign tasks that match employees' skills and qualifications. Clearly defined job scopes and mutual understanding of employment terms, typically outlined in contracts, are essential.
7. *Delegation of Authority*
Managers may delegate authority and tasks to subordinates, especially when trust has been established based on their performance and competence.
8. *Accountability to a Single Leader*
Employees should report to and take instructions from a single manager to avoid confusion caused by conflicting directives (Omar 2014).
9. *Fair Compensation*
Compensation should reflect current market rates, living costs, economic conditions, and employees' academic qualifications (Omar 2014)
10. *Employee Supervision and Control*
Managers must oversee and evaluate employee performance to ensure organizational goals are met. Supervision also facilitates recording achievements, which inform decisions regarding rewards, disciplinary actions, or training.
11. *Human Development Training*
Organizations often provide training to underperforming employees and managers. Omar (2014), suggests Islamic organizations include training that fosters moral and behavioral improvement, replacing negative traits (*mazmumah*) with positive qualities (*mahmudah*).
12. *Employee Welfare*
Employee welfare is crucial to maintaining productivity. Employers must address workers' challenges, such as financial or personal issues, to prevent declines in performance (Omar, 2014).
13. *Safeguarding the Rights of Muslim Employees*
Muslim employees have specific rights, such as the freedom to pray and for women to observe Islamic dress codes. Failing to honor these rights constitutes a betrayal of Islamic values, particularly if the manager is a Muslim (Omar 2014)
14. *Fostering Teamwork and Brotherhood*
Teamwork and camaraderie are critical to organizational success. A spirit of brotherhood fosters collaboration, allowing tasks to be completed effectively as a team (Omar 2014)

By integrating these principles, Islamic management ensures employee relationships are harmonious and aligned with the ethical and spiritual values of Islam.

Communication

In the relationship between managers and employees, communication primarily occurs during discussions between the two parties. These discussions often revolve around organizational tasks and matters requiring mutual agreement to determine the organization's direction. This process is known as *shura* (consultation). Yunus and Yacob (2009), explain that *shura* is a comprehensive system encompassing all aspects of life, from the family and household level to companies, offices, and governments. *Shura* serves as a primary method for decision-making and implementation.

The practice of *shura* offers several advantages to an organization, such as pooling the best ideas to arrive at a collective decision. Once a decision is reached, it is implemented either individually or collectively. The importance of *shura* is also highlighted in the Qur'an. Surah Al-Imran (3:159) states:

"And consult them in matters. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who trust in Him."

This verse underscores the value of *shura* in fostering collective decision-making and trust in Allah's guidance. Thus, the element of communication, particularly in the form of *shura*, between managers and employees is crucial for maintaining harmony in relationships. A strong communication framework not only strengthens the bond between managers and employees but also enhances productivity, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance.

Sharing Values and Goals – Work as Worship and Achieving Success in This World

In this aspect, Islamic management outlines the goals that employees should strive for. The goal is for the work performed by employees to become an act of worship to Allah, in seeking His pleasure and achieving success both in this world and the hereafter. This goal is based on a verse from the Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am (6:162):

"Say: Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds."

Yusuf (2014), further emphasizes that the essence of Islamic Management focuses on the balance between this world and the hereafter. This distinguishes Islamic management from Western management, whose primary objective is to maximize profit without considering the manner in which these profits are earned and distributed.

In Islamic management, the understanding that work is not merely a worldly endeavor, but also an act of devotion to Allah, shapes the work ethics and the approach towards achieving both material and spiritual success. This approach ensures that employees are motivated not just by financial rewards but by the larger purpose of fulfilling their responsibilities in a manner that aligns with divine guidance, contributing to both their worldly success and eternal salvation.

Trust/Amānah

The trust that exists in the relationship between managers and employees is a result of the quality of *Amānah* (trustworthiness) from both parties. The concept of *Amānah* is also emphasized in Islamic management. Islam stresses the importance of trust by specifically assigning responsibilities to those who are qualified to handle them. This is based on Allah's command in the Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa (4:58):

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due..."
(Surah an-Nisa: 58)

Furthermore, Islam places significant importance on this value. The Qur'an and Hadith clearly instruct Muslims to fulfill their trust and never betray it. This directive is evident in the words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as found in a Hadith: From Samurah, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"Fulfill the trust to the one who entrusted you, and do not betray the one who betrays you."
(Narrated by Ahmad, 15424; Al-Tirmidhi, 1264; Abu Dawood, 3534)

If there is betrayal of trust among Muslims, the individuals involved may be regarded as hypocrites (*Munāfiq*). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) outlined the signs of hypocrisy in another Hadith:

"The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted, he betrays the trust."
(Narrated by al-Bukhari, 33; Muslim, 59)

This emphasis on *Amānah* in Islam highlights the importance of maintaining integrity and trust in all relationships, including those between managers and employees, ensuring ethical and responsible behavior within the organization.

Leadership Style

Leadership style refers to the approach used by a manager in guiding their subordinates toward achieving organizational goals (Naerul Edwin Kiky Aprianto, 2016). Generally, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is considered the best example for Muslims in applying Islamic teachings in all aspects of life. As Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah al-Ahzab, verse 21:

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often."
(Surah al-Ahzab: 21)

This principle extends to the realm of management and leadership. The leadership style of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is vast and cannot be fully covered in this paper. However, the basic principles of Islamic management outlined by Omar (2014), can serve as a foundational guide. These principles are the pillars of all aspects of Islamic management. The three fundamental principles are *Amanah* (trust), *Syura* (consultation), and *Justice*.

a) Amanah (Trust)

Amanah is a core value in Islamic management (Omar, 2014). A manager is someone entrusted with the responsibility of managing tasks with integrity. To explain this briefly,

Azman Che Omar refers to Ahmad Ibrahim Abu Sin's book *Pengurusan dalam Islam*, where he outlines the characteristics of *Amanah* in management as follows:

- i. Perform tasks with honesty and sincerity.
- ii. Manage time efficiently. A manager should be a good role model for employees.
- iii. Do not misuse the position for personal gain. A manager should not use their position to seek personal profit.

b) Syura (Consultation)

Syura is an important principle that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always prioritized when making significant decisions (Yusof, 2014). According to Azman Che Omar (2014), *Syura* refers to the participation or involvement of employees in the decision-making process that affects their work. Employees are given the opportunity to identify work-related issues and improve their performance. As a result, the best decision for all parties can be reached, and employees are given the freedom to solve problems related to their organizational tasks.

c) Justice

Justice means putting things in their rightful place and is not the same as equality (Azman Che Omar, 2014). In an organization, justice relates to the fair distribution of organizational resources, starting from employee selection, remuneration, promotions, evaluations, and more (Rokhman, 2015). The characteristics of justice in management, according to Azman Che Omar (2014), are:

- i. Assign tasks that match the individual's natural abilities and inclinations.
- ii. Provide fair wages, rewards, or incentives based on the work done, as outlined in the service contract.
- iii. Administer appropriate penalties for any offenses committed.

These principles—*Amanah*, *Syura*, and *Justice*—form the foundation of an Islamic leadership style that emphasizes trustworthiness, collaboration, and fairness in managing people and resources.

Employee Relations Management from the Perspective of Islamic Movement Figures

The relationship between managers and employees is also discussed by figures of the Islamic movement, such as Mustafa Masyhur. Mustafa Masyhur addressed this in his treatise titled *Al-Qiyadah Wal Jundiyah*, where he listed several aspects of the relationship between organizational leaders or managers and their employees. In this paper, the aspects listed by Mustafa Masyhur will be organized according to the elements of employee relations management as discussed at the beginning of the paper. These five elements include human resource practices, communication, value and goal sharing, trust, and leadership style. Additionally, opinions from other Islamic movement figures such as Hassan al-Banna and Abul A'la Maududi will be incorporated to strengthen the argument.

Human Resource Practices

Human resource practices are essential in every organization, regardless of its type. The human resource practices that occur in Islamic movements are generally related to the responsibilities of both leaders and employees within the organization. Additionally, the element of *Amal Jama'i* (collective action) also adds meaning to human resource practices in Islamic movements.

Regarding the responsibilities of leaders and employees, Masyhur (2000) classified these responsibilities into several areas. Among the involved areas are the selection of employees, task division, coordination, and task execution. In terms of employee selection, Masyhur (2000), stated that leaders should choose qualified individuals for any position or task. This is closely related to the need for employees to be assigned tasks that align with their capabilities.

Regarding task division, the leader must ensure that there is no overlap in responsibilities among employees so that organizational work can be carried out in an organized manner. In terms of coordination and task execution, employees are given the freedom to carry out organizational work (Masyhur, 2000). This freedom is intended to make it easier for employees to achieve results in a manner they believe to be best. Employees must also engage in shared efforts with the leader to ensure the leader has a clear understanding of the actual situation faced by employees. This can be done through regular meetings between leaders and employees. Furthermore, both employees and leaders must engage in *muhasabah* (self-reflection) or review of the mistakes made during the execution of organizational tasks. This step is crucial for identifying weaknesses or areas that need improvement. The weaknesses that are identified will be addressed through appropriate training.

The work relationship between the leader and employees when carrying out organizational tasks is enriched by the element of *Amal Jama'i*. Othman (2017), explained that the foundation of this element is based on the Qur'an in Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 92, which means, "Indeed, this religion of Islam is one." The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also supports this, where the Prophet (PBUH) said: "*You should remain with the community, for the hand of Allah is with the community, and whoever separates from it, separates into the fire.*"

In *Amal Jama'i*, according to Othman (2017), there are three key aspects: *Al-Fahmu* (understanding), *At-Taqwa* (piety), and *At-Ta'ah* (obedience). *Al-Fahmu* refers to a deep understanding of the goals of the collective struggle, as well as matters related to the group, such as its principles, the challenges it faces, the methods or approach defined by the group, and the need to possess patience in the struggle.

Secondly, every member of the group, whether leader or employee, must possess *At-Taqwa*. This can be understood as fulfilling the commands of Allah and avoiding His prohibitions, both outwardly and inwardly. This principle must be fully embraced by all members because the group members are the ones who translate actions into the principles they are fighting for.

Thirdly, *At-Ta'ah*, which means obedience to leadership, is a key element for the success of *Amal Jama'i*. Without obedience to the group's leadership, the collective work cannot proceed smoothly. Employees in the Islamic movement must undergo *tarbiyyah* (education) to become dedicated members who are sincere in their commitment to the cause, as indicated in Allah's command in Surah An-Nisa, verse 59: "*O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.*"

Communication

Communication is also a crucial element in the relationship between managers and employees. In this aspect, the elements of *syura* (consultation) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) are vital in the context of an Islamic movement organization (Masyhur M, 2000; Al-Maududi, n.d.). In the element of *syura*, both Mustafa Masyhur (2000) and Al-Maududi (n.d.) have emphasized that consultation is necessary in an organization or group before making any important decisions. This is essential in fostering a sense of unity, cooperation, and mutual support among the members of the organization (Mustafa Masyhur, 2000). *Syura* facilitates the realization of these qualities by involving all members in thinking and determining the direction of the organization. Furthermore, Al-Maududi explains that *syura* begins when each party involved expresses their opinion sincerely regarding a matter. A decision is then made after listening to all explanations from the parties involved in the discussion. Once the decision is made, it is necessary for all parties to accept it with an open heart.

As for the element of *ukhuwah*, Al-Maududi states that every member of the organization must have love and affection for one another. This bond of love, or *ukhuwah*, fosters qualities such as empathy, good intentions, and a spirit of sacrifice among the members of the organization. Al-Maududi (n.d.) further adds that this practice unites every member in the organization like bricks that form a strong building. Mustafa Masyhur (2000) explains this element practically, where the leader must engage with employees to understand their feelings and gain a clear picture of the actual situation within the organization. Through this bond, the leader can manage the employees more effectively. If employees need advice or motivation, the manager can provide support based on their individual needs.

Sharing Values and Goals

The sharing of values and goals within an Islamic movement organization differs from that of a business-oriented organization. The main activity of an Islamic movement organization is to raise awareness in society about living Islam in everyday life. Hassan Al-Banna (2011) explains that the practice of Islam must encompass all aspects of life, as stated in his *risalah ta'lim* (guidance letter), which says:

"Islam is a comprehensive system that covers all aspects of life. Islam is the state and homeland, or government and citizens. Islam is morality and strength, or mercy and justice. Islam is knowledge and law, or science and justice. Islam is wealth and property, or income and riches. Islam is jihad and dawah, or the army and the vision. Furthermore, Islam is sound faith and correct worship."

To achieve this goal, the main task is none other than the work of *dawah* (preaching). Mustafa Masyhur has addressed this aspect by encouraging both managers and employees to return to Allah. Masyhur (2000), explains that there is a distinction between engaging in *dawah* and working in a business organization. Therefore, managers must provide reminders and guidance to employees to help them continuously strive to improve their actions, particularly their worship to Allah.

Trust

In this aspect, Mustafa Masyhur discusses the concept of trust between managers and employees. There are two key points explained under this aspect: trust that the manager has in the employee and trust that the employee has in the manager.

a) Trust the Manager Has in Employees

Managers must place trust in the high moral standards of their employees. However, managers should not be complacent; they must continuously work to elevate the moral standards of their employees and instill an optimistic mindset among them. This is important to ensure that employees feel optimistic and are motivated to work towards achieving the organization's goals.

b) Trust the Employee Has in the Manager

In this regard, Mustafa Masyhur (2000) clearly states that every employee in the organization must trust the manager. The existence of this trust contributes to the strength of the system, the integrity of the structure, the cohesion of the programs, and the success of the organization in achieving its goals.

Leadership Style

An effective leadership style can significantly contribute to the success of an organization. This leadership style is frequently employed by managers in managing their employees. Masyhur (2000), also touches on the leadership styles that managers should adopt. According to him, a manager should embody four leadership roles: the manager as a father, the manager as a teacher, the manager as a spiritual guide (Syeikh), and the manager as a leader or head of the organization. Each of these leadership roles should be adopted based on the situation in the organization.

- **Manager as a Father:** This role is played when dealing with matters that involve emotional bonds with employees. It aims to strengthen the relationship and camaraderie between the leader and the employees.
- **Manager as a Teacher:** This role is important when the leader is teaching useful knowledge to the employees.
- **Manager as a Syeikh:** The leader assumes the role of a spiritual guide, providing spiritual education and guidance to the employees.
- **Manager as a Leader:** Finally, the manager must take on the role of a leader when making decisions related to organizational policies.

In conclusion, managers or leaders in Islamic movement organizations play a significant role in driving the organization. This is due to the larger goal that the organization seeks to achieve—instilling the practice of Islam in all aspects of life. This is in contrast to other organizations, whose goals may be limited to human welfare or the welfare of animals and the environment.

Conclusion

The relationship between managers and employees is a critical cornerstone for the success of any organization, including those rooted in Islamic movements. This study underscores the distinctive differences between the managerial approaches of Western organizations and Islamic movement organizations, particularly in their conceptualization and implementation

of values and goals. Western organizations often prioritize objectives that are narrowly aligned with immediate organizational outcomes, focusing primarily on material success. In contrast, Islamic movement organizations adopt a broader, more comprehensive perspective that integrates both worldly achievements and spiritual aspirations, reflecting the dual purpose of human existence in Islamic thought. The emphasis placed by Islamic movement leaders on values and goals extends beyond the workplace, encompassing all dimensions of life. This holistic approach instills a shared vision and a sense of greater purpose among employees, fostering a deeper connection to the organization's mission. Such an integrative perspective strengthens employee commitment and ensures that organizational success is measured not only by tangible achievements but also by the alignment with spiritual and ethical principles.

Effective employee relations management within Islamic movement organizations is thus not merely a functional necessity but a strategic imperative. By prioritizing principles such as mutual trust, cooperation, shared purpose, and alignment with Islamic values, these organizations can cultivate a healthy and dynamic work environment. This environment supports enhanced organizational performance while simultaneously guiding employees toward personal and spiritual growth. In conclusion, Islamic movement organizations offer a model of leadership and management that is deeply rooted in ethical and spiritual principles. By adopting these principles, organizations can achieve success that transcends the material, creating a legacy of holistic development and fulfillment in both this world and the Hereafter. Such a model serves as a valuable blueprint for organizations seeking to integrate ethical integrity with operational excellence.

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