

# **Studying Girls' Opportunities to the Variation of the Field in Qom Vocational Training**

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## **Abstract**

This study has been done to review of the girls' opportunity to the variation of the field in Qom vocational training branch. The sample consisted of 318 female students of vocational training in the 2010-2011 school years which selected in random, cluster, class and a structured questionnaire was completed by them with 0.78 as reliability coefficient. The study shows that only 33.4 percent of girls in the industry have the opportunity to select their profession. There is a 95 percent of confidence interval for girls' opportunity ratio in the industrial sector (38.6 and 28.2) which shows a significant difference of girls' opinions on their opportunities. In agricultural field, only 43.4 percent of girls have the opportunity to select their educational field. There is a 95 percent of confidence interval for girls' opportunity ratio in the agricultural sector (48.8 and 38.0) which shows a significant difference of girls' opinions their opportunities. In service sector, only 51.7 percent of girls have the opportunity to select their educational field. There is a 95 percent of confidence interval for girls' opportunity ratio in the service sector (46.5 and 57.2) which shows a non significant difference of girls' opinions their opportunities. Overall, only 9.3% of girls have the opportunity to select their educational field. There is a 95 percent of confidence interval for girls' opportunity ratio in the industrial sector (6.1 and 12.5) which shows a non significant difference of girls' opinions their opportunities. Also, the possibility to prepare vocational training students for employment in the labor market, the possibility of the role played by vocational training in providing employment for young people – the influence of the future course for students on course selection – students' interests in course selection and the possibility of keeping on the education in students

interested fields in university are all high. Students' familiarity vocational training, skill-learning workshops, access to proper jobs for graduates, opportunity to choose interested educational field by female students and the possibility of continuing the education in university are all in average for vocational training graduates. Personal interest in selecting educational field has been the most important factor. Further, parents play an important role in selecting the educational field by students.

**Keywords:** Vocational Training Branch, Opportunity to Enjoy, QOM.

## **Introduction**

Development is nothing than "human excellence." All political, cultural, social and economic aspects are included in human excellence. Obviously, a society which plans to move toward development should go forward on human excellence and on mitigating inequalities rather than on changing material factors. It means all inequalities in political, economic and social aspects as well as those inequalities whose benchmark in human gender.

Therefore, it is impossible to achieve the goals of a sustainable and overall development without utilizing the capabilities and competencies of women since an important indicator of social development in any community is the rate of contribution by women in social activities. Undoubtedly, in gendered planning with the aim equality in opportunities and creating equal facilities to control the resources and to use them for men and women as well as putting aside those policies, plans and initiatives that lead into an institutionalized discrimination against women and taking the measures which lead into the improvement of all women life directly or indirectly, all can pave the ground for full contribution by women in development issue as a fundamental and economic right for them.

Such movement toward gender equality needs a new method and thinking in which traditional patterns for men and women are replaced by a new philosophy in which all people are considered as change agents apart from their gender. Paramount experiences show that the lack of contribution morale among women in a society exposes its social and economic activities to various risks and even may leads the movements by various economic sectors into contradictory. One can facilitate to achieve development goals and to reduce its barriers by equipping this important resource and to utilize it in a right and ideal manner.

A barrier of development is to omit female workforce and to limit their job diversity. Therefore, it necessary that in addition to quantitative indicators, qualitative ones and diversifying their trains to be considered as half of active population and human capital that plays a vital role in development procedure (Rahyaft, 2005).

An important aim emphasized in recent years is to achieve independence and national self – belief. An important aspect of such aim is scientific and technical independence. A necessity to achieve this aim is the existence of skillful and specialized manpower. In other words, national self – belief is not possible without the existence of a competent manpower.

An important training resource and human resource supply for the activities in industrial section is vocational training system. Although each center attempts in human resource training based on its facilities and needs, overall they do not play a remarkable role in this regard. Even, they look for employing trained forces to mitigate their training costs. Such propensity has increased the expectations of industrial activities of training centers especially vocational training system and it reminds the necessity of domain importance and quality in training.

Although vocational training has been paid attention in our country since many years ago, it has not found its special context until recent decades. In fact, the age of most official trainings in this field is close to 50 years (Ghorban Ali Hussein, Masoud, 1994).

Before, forces were trained as student – instructor style. The forces who are attracted to this system are supplied through a closed social network and relatives. Training such forces needs years of long and modest effort and gaining dispersed experiences in simple and limited interactions. Experiences and information were transferred by word of mouth.

On the other hand, political and social dissimilarities curb the trend of aggregating technical skills and job experiences. In modern age, the need to learning vocational knowledge is specially paid attention due to scientific and technical improvement and due to consistencies to industrial transformations.

Today, student – instructor system is changed to vocational schools. Their main difference is that production is done by machines due to the shortness of learning time (Fiozat, 1995).

1960s witnessed the growth of human capital theory. According to this theory, pedagogy is investment not consumption and it can play a vital role in economic development. Accepting this theory and its progress caused that the new role of pedagogy was gradually paid attention by planners and policy makers (Browma, M. J. 1966).

Linking educational system to economic and profession/job system as well as to labor market conditions and requirements in the society would mitigate the youths' unemployment and would increase economic benefits for community members (UNESCO).

Vocational training especially in vocational schools plays an important role in supplying efficient manpower and makes it possible to achieve the aims. However, the necessity of industry

development is ideal and efficient utilization of specialized manpower, proper educational planning, selecting desired educational course and technical equipment. Disrespecting the standards would pose irrevocable damages to the society.

The most important subject is to select desired educational course. If someone faces with compulsion or unawareness in selecting educational course and if he/she is not interested in the course, then he/she would be a nonsuccess and non specialized force who has posed unpredictable damages on himself/herself and society.

Regarding the aims of pedagogy twenty – year development outlook which prioritizes the creation of equal learning opportunities and access to training and education for all as well as the orientation of domestic population in terms of age and gender based on provided information by UN in next twenty five years, the majority of Iranian population will be between 24 through 60 years – old and it is exactly the same population which will act as the driving force of development and will own most jobs and expertise inside the country. Half of such population is women. It shows the importance of investment on manpower breeding and balancing training access opportunities as well as equal selection opportunities for girls and boys to achieve human development.

Gender equality, power balance and equal opportunities for men and women are all an indicator of development achieved through right planning for all resources including human resources at any country and to utilize it efficiently (Rahyaft, 2005).

As a major entity to breed manpower and by investing on education, pedagogy is like a guiding strategy which can play a remarkable role in development process so that today changes in development indicators correlate the rate of manpower education directly. In other words, material resources of a country are productive and efficient when it matters human capital through skill training and expertise window.

The importance and necessity of skill and professional training is more obvious due to changes in labor market and increasingly need to skilful manpower to achieve industrial and agricultural self-sufficiency as well as the inflation of young manpower but without any skill that enter the universities and a high percentage of them joins to hide and explicit unemployed people.

Balanced development of secondary education is, *inter alia*, a guideline by Education and Training Ministry to respond such necessity and an aim of such development is to prepare secondary education students for productive and fruitful occupation as well as combating against unemployment due to the lack of skills and unfamiliarity with work culture. On this basis, vocational training is established as a new skill learning paradigm contemporary to changes in secondary education.

An important step to achieve this aim is to expand training opportunities for girls who shape almost half of student population and to guide them toward proper jobs through trained skills.

To enhance equal access of girls to skill training plans effective methods should be applied and, contemporarily, work and training ambiances should be organized for girls' contribution properly, hidden and explicit discriminations should be removed and attractive perspectives should be established along with suitable motivations for their contribution in skill learning.

In one hand, the nature of skill trainings roots in ideal goals of pedagogy and, on the other hand, it is impacted by work market criteria and standards. It is necessary to consider training and work aspects as well as wearing of training and occupational values and standards in designing systems and plans.

Today, labor concept is changed following to rapid and increasingly changes in technology and has led into rapid changes in work market. It also changes demand for needed manpower in various economic sectors. Needs to some jobs are met and some other jobs find special importance. In some jobs, it is necessary to have new skills or full different skills. Therefore, the most important trait of skill training is its resilience to be in line with work market. Thus, it seems that educating skilful manpower in vocational area depends on communications with educational system as well as work market needs. Such communication always needs to be recognized and revised to identify limitations form broad and rapid changes in knowledge, sciences and technology and to establish equal opportunities for girls to access skill training and its diversification by respecting local and regional conditions for urban and rural students.

According to National Document on Pedagogy Development (2005 – 2009), it is forecasted that at the end of 2004 – 2005 educational year (the final year of the 3<sup>rd</sup> development plan), the share of vocational training branch students would be 36% of total students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> development ranks and this figure will increase to 45.5% until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> development plan.

Since the right of education and work is recognized in Iranian Constitutional Law and the necessities of sustainable development and the critical share of women, this question comes to mind that how is the participation of girls in skill learning plans qualitatively and quantitatively.

Students inflation in secondary period as well as the diversity of their talents and interests, labor market characteristics and its needs and deficiencies and revolutionary changes in science, industry and economy make it more complicated to plan in proper educational disciplines and jobs and a fundamental question arises: what are the most fundamental capabilities and skills that boy and girl students need for continuous contribution in various

industrial and economic activities? Which skill does lead into occupation in the labor market and what types of skills do increase girls' contribution in labor market?

Less participation of girls in skill training and their limitations on choosing educational fields would constraint their job opportunities in labor market. It is necessary to change traditional perceptions on the proper roles for men and women in workplaces.

By relying upon the data and statistics of Budget, Planning and Statistics Office and conducted researches on this topic, present study attempts to answer this questions: how is girls' opportunity to variation of Qom province vocational training branch?

After Islamic revolution in Iran and huge transformations in various political, cultural and economic arenas, a new generation near to the population at the time revolution victory year entered into the scene with new needs and demands. Undoubtedly, educational system could not have necessary efficiency to educated needed manpower. This is a fact confirmed by many distinguished training experts. The inflation of students in theoretical training and unplanned entrance of students to universities and high education institutes would lead into an ambiguity future. We know that vocational training costs even ten times than theoretical education. In contrary to such costs, we have observed relatively plausible return compared to other theoretical trainings. In such conditions, our main problem is occupation particularly capital occupation. However, we must move toward the development of vocational training branch by self – occupation orientation (Mazaheri, 2000).

Nowadays, occupational grounds are facing with serious limitations due to a few factors. Depression of industrial operation and workforce approach to other activities, crisis in monetary system, lack of raw materials, increasing in unemployment rate, rising the costs of guardianship per capita, low life expectancy and vulnerability in job centers all play a vital role in renewing occupational grounds. To improve this undesired situation, modern steps should be taken. One can prevent possible crises in imbalance and disharmony of vocational training branch by providing modern guidelines, sharing information, estimating labor market needs, prioritizing some skill fields or their subsets, setting relations between vocational training branch skill fields, revising training plans, trying to adopt and update training materials with industrial changing needs, coordinating pedagogy officials with authorities in other ministries to encourage them for joint planning in the field of meeting mutual training and occupational needs, and controlling major activities through the conditions and goals of governmental plans (Mahdzadeh, 1997: 64).

Another advantage of vocational training branch is that a serious and dynamic relationship is established between trains and work market, pedagogy will be provided with broad resources, vocational jobs cultural and social values will be promoted and those students who leave

education and refer to labor market can use facilities to return the school and use their technical learning during their occupation. The possibility of more attention to students' interests and talents is feasible.

Another factor of the opportunity to balance vocational training fields is the rising of communities' needs with regard to rapid changes in technology. Overtime, some fields are expired and replaced by new ones or their contents are changed. Therefore, one should particularly pay attention to capacity building through developing skill trainings in secondary education. Recent changes in industry, auto making, electronic mixture with computer, new technologies in home appliances, previous methods replaced by e-commerce and tourism blossom and related services are good samples to perceive this issue better (Fany, 2002).

One can point out following aims in vocational training new secondary education:

1. Learning needed techniques and skills for the society, guiding and breeding individuals' talents proportionate to their interests and motivations to professions, breeding job selection power and the right way of life to promote individuals and the society, growing disciplined morale to plan social and individual affairs.
2. Growing self – interest morale through acquiring capabilities, promoting curiosity feeling, innovation and creativity in people
3. Expanding knowledge and scientific/technical thinking capabilities and perceiving the role of science and technology in human community progress
4. Recognizing productive jobs and the importance of handicrafts as well as understanding the importance of economic independence and its role in domestic independence and developing research capacity
5. The power of communication and self – learning, growing the capability of decision – making in solving the problems, persistence and patience in facing with difficulties, promoting responsibility morale, balance in affairs, enhancing the recognition and perceiving the importance of social activities.
6. Expanding the recognition and respecting the value of job and healthy subsistence, enhancing hardworking morale and efforts in all affairs of life, avoiding unemployment and false jobs and forbidding them, growing and developing individuals' skills and capabilities proportionate to their gender, talent, interest and economic needs of different regions in the country
7. Recognizing labor laws and rules and job relations, understanding workplace discipline, enhancing appreciation morale regarding public assets and national wealth

Regarding above points, it feels that guidelines should be provided for positive results from skill activities and increasingly balanced development of various vocational fields to enable the girls to use the opportunities of their desired fields based on their interests. The success of vocational training branch in different arenas shows that secondary education is well planned and forecasts have come to truth.

Hopefully, important steps to be taken to grow and promote this important key sector by providing proper guidelines.

### **Research questions and hypotheses**

*Main question:*

How much is girls' opportunity to variation of vocational training branch?

*Minor questions:*

1. How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in industry?
2. How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in agriculture?
3. How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in services?
4. How much is the recognition of girls' opportunity based on their interests?

### **Methodology**

Studied statistical population contains all Iranian girls (1836) in vocational training branch in 2010/ 2011 educational year.

Cluster ranked random sampling method is in proportionate to the volume of ranks. In such ranks, educational fields are vocational training disciplines.

In sampling all vocational schools in 4 boroughs of Qom province, the students were selected in random and 318 questionnaires were filled by them. We got needed information by studying and analyzing responses via SPSS software.

The number of girl students in vocational training is 1836 individuals of whom 14 were in agricultural field (apartment plants) and 89 in industrial field (building mapping). Others (1733) were educating in service sector.



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Industry	89	4.84%
Agriculture	14	0.76%
Services	1733	94.38%

Overall, the methods to gather data in this study were library and field study. In library method, a part of information was gathered by referring to domestic and external books. In field study, a structured questionnaire was used.

Regarding the validity of structured questionnaire, it should be noted that the author used conducted questionnaires in vocational training branch, studied their attached questionnaires and provided other related questions. Then the author devised another questionnaire through a brainstorming with connoisseurs on vocational training. Their opinions were included in the questionnaire and then it was finally confirmed by guiding professor, the questionnaire was distributed. To calculate the reliability, the questionnaire was distributed among 30 vocational training students. The resulted reliability ratio was 0.78 by using Chronbach's alpha and then 318 questionnaires were distributed among students. Their responses were analyzed after gathering the questionnaires.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistical method was applied to rank and gather demographical data. Inductive statistics were used to study research questions and goals.

In inductive statistics,  $\chi^2$  was utilized to compare girls' opportunities in different fields.

*Research 1<sup>st</sup> minor question:*

How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in industry?

**Table 1: girls' frequency and limitation percentage in selecting educational fields in industry sector**

Girls' limitations in selecting educational field in industry section (power, mechanic, construction, handicrafts, ceramics) compare to boys	Frequency	percent
No	100	31.4
Yes	199	62.6
Total	299	94.0
No response	19	6.0
Total	318	100.0

Above data show the frequency and limitation percentage of girls in selecting educational field in industry sector with regard to research 1<sup>st</sup> minor question.

Regarding above data, one can conclude that only 33.4% of girls in industry sector have the opportunity to select educational course.

The confidence distance on girls' opportunity in industry sector is 38.6 and 28.2.

By using Chi square, the amount of statistic is 32.77 which show a significant difference in 0.000 level regarding girls' opinions about their opportunities.

It means that there is a significant difference between girls' opinions namely 33.4% of girls enjoy such opportunity and 66.6% have no opportunity. In other words, majority of respondents believe in the existence of limitations on girls' opportunities to field variation which requires developing girls' interested courses.

*Research 2<sup>nd</sup> minor question:*

How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in agriculture?

**Table 2: girls' frequency and limitation percentage in selecting educational fields in agriculture sector**

Girls' limitations in selecting educational field in agriculture section (forests, useful insects, farming, husbandry, poultry, fishery)	Frequency	percent
No	131	41.2
Yes	171	53.8
No response	16	5.0
Total	318	100.0

Above data show the frequency and limitation percentage of girls in selecting educational field in agriculture sector with regard to research 2<sup>nd</sup> minor question.

Regarding above data, one can conclude that only 43.4% of girls in agriculture sector have the opportunity to select educational course.

The confidence distance on girls' opportunity in agriculture sector is 48.8 and 38.0.

By using Chi square, the amount of statistic is 5.3 which show a significant difference in 0.000 level regarding girls' opinions about their opportunities.

It means that there is a significant difference between girls' opinions namely 43.4% of girls enjoy such opportunity and 56.6% have no opportunity. In other words, majority of respondents believe in the existence of limitations on girls' opportunities to field variation which requires developing girls' interested courses.

*Research 3<sup>rd</sup> minor question:*

How much is girls' opportunity to variation fields of vocational training branch in services?

**Table 3: girls' frequency and limitation percentage in selecting educational fields in service sector**

Girls' limitations in selecting educational field in service section (art, healthcare, social security, foods, transportation, financial and official)	Frequency	percent
No	156	49.1
Yes	146	45.9
No response	16	5.0
Total sum	318	100.0

Above data show the frequency and limitation percentage of girls in selecting educational field in service sector with regard to research 3<sup>rd</sup> minor question.

Regarding above data, one can conclude that only 51.7% of girls in service sector have the opportunity to select educational course.

The confidence distance on girls' opportunity in service sector is 57.2 and 46.5.

By using Chi square, the amount of statistic is 0.33 which show a no significant difference in 0.000 level regarding girls' opinions about their opportunities.

It means that there is no significant difference between girls' opinions namely 51.7% of girls enjoy such opportunity and 48.3% have no opportunity. In other words, half of respondents (48.3%) believe in the existence of limitations and half of them believe that there is no limitation on girls' opportunities to field variation and the priority of their development needs is less than industry and agriculture.

*Research 4<sup>th</sup> minor question:*

How much is girls' opportunity based on their interests?

**Table 4: girls' frequency and opportunity percentage in selecting educational fields**

Girls' opportunity to select educational field	Frequency	percent
No	272	85.5
Yes	28	8.8
No response	18	5.7
Total	318	100.0

Above data show the frequency and opportunity percentage of girls in selecting educational field with regard to research 4<sup>th</sup> minor question.

Regarding above data, one can conclude that only 9.3% of girls have the opportunity to select educational course.

The confidence distance on girls' opportunity based on their interests is 12.5 and 6.1.

By using Chi square, the amount of statistic is 198.45 which show a significant difference in 0.000 level regarding girls' opportunities.

It means that most girls have no opportunity to select their interested educational field and authorities should attempt to increase girls' opportunities to select their interested educational field through analyzing this issue carefully.

### **Research Findings**

Expansion and development of pedagogy has been always closely related to general democratic ideals. Obviously, reformers value pedagogy per se – since it provides people with an opportunity to breed their talents. However, pedagogy has been always considered as a tool for equalizing. It is said that pedagogy helps to decrease inequalities by teaching skills to the youth to enable them to achieve a valuable status in the society (Gidens, 1998).

In Pedagogy Global Crisis, Philip Cumbs explains five types of inequalities of training opportunities: the priority of boys' education compared to girls, unequal access to high education, inequality in selecting educational field, discrimination in labor market and, finally, inequality resulted from family's cultural beliefs. Totally, such inequalities do not allow the women to contribute in the society like men in mutual reaction (mutual reaction theory).

Equal access to training is a necessary but insufficient condition for pedagogy democracy. Although equal access is considered as the ultimate aim of free pedagogy, equal access does not mean equal opportunity since justice establishment requires an equal opportunity to succeed (Petrovsky et al, 1957).

Statistics in different education periods in 2004 – 2005 show that the number of girls is more than boys in secondary schools and pre-university but the number of boys is more than girls in elementary school, middle school and vocational training. Although an access indicator is preschool education, increase in the number of high school graduates or increase in the number of girls' students, equality and accessibility does not mean equal opportunities quantitatively. It means that despite of face equal access to different training levels, discrimination and mental frameworks lead into unequal facilities for girls and boys to select educational type, educational course, job and lifestyle (mutual reaction theory). In industry, agriculture and service fields, present study has achieved following information.

### **Service field**

The highest population of girl students is studying in service field and 94.38% of female students are studying in service field. It contains 19 disciplines with 1733 students. Based on statistics, the limitations to select this field are less than boys (48.3%).

Test statistic rate is 0.33 by using square Chi2 which shows that there is no significant difference on girls' opinions on educational opportunity.

The results show that the highest priority of students to study in service includes computer and art and the lowest priority is food section.

### **Industry field**

Followed by service field, the most quantity of girl students is studying in industry sector (4.84%) with 89 students in building mapping field. According to statistics, 66.6% of girl students have limitations to select educational field compared to boys. It indicates that girls are facing with more limitation than boys to select educational field.

Test statistic rate is 32.77 by using Chi square which shows that there is significant difference on girls' opinions on educational opportunity.

The results show that the highest priority of students to study in industry field is construction and the lowest priority is material section.

### **Agriculture field**

Less than 1% namely 0.76% of girl students are studying in one field (apartment plants). According to statistics, 56.6% of girl students have limitations to select educational field compared to boys. It indicates that girls are facing with more limitation than boys to select educational field.

Test statistic rate is 5.3 by using Chi square which shows that there is significant difference on girls' opinions on educational opportunity.

The results show that the highest priority of students to study in agriculture field is food industries and the lowest priority is farming section.

However, the number of girl students in Qom province is 1836 students of whom only 14 ones study in educational field.

Among the reasons why students are not studying in their interested fields, one can point following items:

1. Low score and not acquiring the needed average to enter desired field.
2. Parents' oppositions and their insistence and impacts by friends, sisters and brothers.
3. Lack of motivation and unawareness regarding the future of desired field.
4. Lack of school close to students' homes and enforcement to select another field.
5. Lack of desired field in the province.
6. Some students have said that they are studying in their desired field and are successful.
7. Full capacity of desired field which has caused that students study in an undesired field.
8. Incapability to study in desired field.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Drawing full conclusion on any topic needs complete researching. However, it seems that girls' opportunity to variation in vocational training branch is lower than boys and girls are not provided with a wide range of selection opportunities (34.33% of girl students in vocational training branch are studying in housekeeping-related fields).

As a result, girls have remarkable majority in certain field. There are other fields that boys have the same majority or are only boy – student fields. The findings on the quantity of girls in

vocation training branch and studying those fields that girls can select them show that high percentage of girls register of housekeeping – related fields (family management – tailoring), bookkeeping – related fields (from computer operator to financial and accounting affairs) and also handicrafts.

It seems that girls are guided to those fields that are in line with housekeeping role or servicing roles. On the other hand, regarding the majority or uniqueness of boys, one can say that the existence of discrimination and inequality in selecting the educational fields have limited girls' opportunities in training, work and life arenas.

Considering the Constitutional Law and the goals of vocational training branch as well as article 52 of 4<sup>th</sup> Development plan, government is obliged to assure equal training accessibility opportunities especially in less developed regions, to expand the knowledge/skills and to promote human capital productivity particularly for girls. Initiatives are mentioned in such articles that lead into meeting above goals. Therefore, training and education system which aimed to assure the equality should take initiatives to change the barriers which extend inequalities.

Educational fields in vocational training branch are considered as male fields due to their related jobs and are eliminated from girls' opportunities. However, in higher education, these are considered as academic disciplines without any gender limitation and female graduates can be attracted by labor market.

Regarding the role of training in accessing to occupation and income, one can say that educating in male fields are generally related to new segments of labor market. They add to male's social status, provide them with more progress and expose them to better income. In contrary, depriving the girls of educating in such fields limit their social status and job opportunities and leads into their attraction in lower job levels.

Continuing such differences in educational fields makes girls' educational selection real and girls try to select female disciplines due to impacts by unequal educational opportunities, inspired differences and the expectations by parents and the society.



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