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INVESTIGATION OF GROUP COHESION AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION LEVELS OF HOCKEY NATIONAL TEAM ATHLETES*

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it was aimed to examine the levels of group cohesiveness and achievement motivation of hockey national team athletes. For this purpose, group cohesiveness and achievement motivation levels of the athletes were analysed in terms of gender, age at the beginning of the sport, training history and nationality experience variables. A total of 73 athletes (n_{female}: 19, n_{male}: 54) with a mean age of 21.21±5.73 years participated in the study. The data of the study were obtained by using personal information form, "Group Cohesion Scale" developed by Carron et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Öcel and Aydın (2006) and "Sport-Specific Achievement Motivation Scale" developed by Willis (1982) and adapted into Turkish by Tiryaki and Gödelek (1997). Descriptive statistics, independent groups t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and LSD post hoc analysis were used to determine the source of the difference between the groups. According to the results of the analyses, there is no statistically significant difference (p>0.05) between the gender, age at the beginning of sport, training history and nationality experience variables and group cohesiveness levels of the athletes. There is a significant difference between the avoidance of failure motivation dimension and the variables of gender and nationality experience in sub-dimensions of athletes' achievement motivation (p<0.05). There is also a significant difference between the power demonstration motivation dimension and the dimension of approaching success motivation in relation to the variables of starting age in sports and training history (p<0.05). As a result, it can be said that female athletes have a higher level of failure avoidance motive than male athletes. In addition, it can be said that athletes who started sports at an early age have higher levels of motive to approach success and motive to show strength than athletes who started sports at a late age; athletes with a long training history have higher levels of motive to approach success and motive to show strength than athletes with a short training history; and athletes with less nationality experience have higher levels of motive to avoid failure.

Keywords: Group cohesion, achievement motivation, hockey.

* This study is based on the master's thesis of the first author under the supervision of the second author.

INTRODUCTION

The aim in all sports is to improve athletes' performance by developing the required attributes for success in that particular discipline and to achieve their goals (Wulf, 2007). Success in team sports like hockey, in particular, depends on the performance of the athletes. There are numerous factors that contribute to the success of a team and the development of performance. One of these factors is the concept of team cohesion, which relates to the team's ability to support each other and stay together in pursuit of the team's goals and objectives (Carron, 1982). Carron et al. (1985), developed a model to explain and measure team cohesion, focusing on the distinction between individual-group and task-social relationships. This model consists of two dimensions: attraction to the group and group integration. The attraction to the group dimension pertains to the individual and encompasses the levels at which individuals find the group attractive, their willingness to remain as members of the group, and their individual feelings toward the group. On the other hand, the group integration dimension is group-oriented and includes beliefs about the unity and cohesion of the group, as well as perceptions of the group's functions. Individuals' perceptions of these dimensions can influence whether they are drawn closer to or pushed away from the group.

It is assumed that when team building is successful, team synergy increases, leading to improved team performance. Therefore, coaches' beliefs that increasing team cohesion levels will enhance athlete performance support the desire to raise team cohesion levels (Bloom et al., 2003). The interaction between cohesion and performance has been studied in sports psychology, and a positive relationship between them has been established (Carron et al., 2002). While group integration positively affects athlete and team performance, athletes also need to be mentally and emotionally motivated to achieve their desired success (Konter, 2004). Therefore, it is crucial for athletes to remain motivated and maintain high levels of motivation to achieve the group's goals and objectives.

Achievement motivation is defined as the tendency to expend effort and persevere in trying to reach a desired goal (Moran, 2004, 267). In achievement motivation, questions such as why athletes participate in physical activities, why they exert effort to overcome challenges, and why they persist in their efforts without giving up are explored (Öğülmüş, 2002). Achievement motivation consists of two dimensions: the need for achievement and the fear of failure. The need for achievement leads to feelings of satisfaction and pride upon reaching the desired goal, while the fear of failure is associated with avoidance, apprehension, unhappiness, and shame (Cox, 1990). Achievement motivation is considered a reason that brings individuals to a point of satisfaction and keeps them away from distressing situations (Tiryaki & Gödelek, 1997). Therefore, individuals are motivated to continue working towards their goals, even in the face of defeat (Weinberg & Gould, 2003), and this is attributed to achievement motivation (Hayashi, 1996).

Hockey is an Olympic team sport played in many countries (Anders & Myers, 2008), and it has been featured in every Olympic Games since the 1908 London Olympics (THF, 2021). Despite being a relatively young federation established in 2002, hockey has rapidly grown in popularity in Turkey, with an increase in the number of clubs,

coaches, referees, and athletes, indicating the sport's development and widespread presence in the country (THF, 2021). Although academic research on the sport of hockey in Turkey has increased in recent years (Bilir et al., 2018; Çalayır et al., 2017; Çelik & Gıdık, 2022; Gıdık et al., 2022; Gıdık & Çelik, 2022; Gıdık & Kul, 2023; Hasan et al., 2015; Kul & Gıdık, 2022; Şahin & Yıldırım, 2023; Şen & Göral, 2020; Yıldırım, 2022), there is still a limited number of studies examining team cohesion and achievement motivation levels in hockey players (Bhagirathi, 2008; Dureha et al., 2010; Hasan et al., 2015; Öcel & Aydın, 2009; Peter, 2014; Pradeep & Ajeesh, 2013; Yıldırım, 2022), compared to research in other sports (Aktaş et al., 2006; Carron & Chelladurai, 1981; Carron et al., 2002; Goulmaris et al., 2016; Karademir, 2021; Kaya & Günay, 2020; Kocaekşi & Kuruç, 2012; Kumartaşlı et al., 2020; Nascimento et al., 2019; Polat et al., 2019; Sarı et al., 2021; Soyer et al., 2010; Tekkurşun Demir et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2021; Yetiş et al., 2022; Zorlu et al., 2020). It is evident that psychological preparation is crucial for success and performance in sports today, in addition to physical, technical, and tactical preparations. Therefore, efforts to achieve success, perseverance in the face of difficulties (Moran, 2004, 267), the ability to provide mutual support within the group in pursuit of team goals and objectives, and the capacity to stay together as a team (Carron, 1982), are important factors that positively affect team success. In this context, the purpose of this study is to examine the levels of team cohesion and achievement motivation among national hockey team athletes. To achieve this aim, the athletes' levels of team cohesion and achievement motivation were analyzed, taking into account personal characteristics such as gender, age of starting sports, training history, and national team experience.

METHOD

In this study, a descriptive survey method was employed. The descriptive survey method is an approach that aims to determine a situation that currently exists or has existed in the past as it is, and the subject, event, individual, or object is described within its own conditions (Karasar, 2002).

Population and Sample - Research Group

The population of the study consisted of the athletes participating in the 2020-2021 season leagues of the Turkish Hockey Federation. The sample, on the other hand, comprised 73 national athletes (Age: 21.21 ± 5.73) who voluntarily participated in the study, selected from within the mentioned population, with 19 female and 54 male athletes. The sample of the study was determined using the convenience sampling technique, which is one of the non-probability sampling methods. Convenience or suitable sampling is used to select a situation that is easily accessible in the population and is more economical in terms of time and cost. Therefore, it is more beneficial to use this method (Dawson & Trapp, 2001). To test the suitability of the sample, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett analysis were conducted. A high KMO value indicates that each variable in the scale can be perfectly predicted by the other variables. A KMO coefficient greater than 0.50 and a significant result from the Bartlett test indicate the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Çokluk et al., 2012). Descriptive statistics for the participating athletes are presented in Table 1, and the KMO-Bartlett analysis for sample suitability is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Athletes

Variables	Groups	f	%
Gender	Female	19	26.0
	Male	54	74.0
Age of Starting Sports	7-10 years	11	15.1
	11-13 years	46	63.0
	14 years +	16	21.9
Training History	1-6 years	35	47.9
	7 years +	38	52.1
National Team Experience	1-6 matches	35	47.9
	7-12 matches	11	15.1
	13 matches +	27	37.0

Table 1 when examined, it is observed that 26% of the national athletes participating in the study are female (n=19), while 74% are male (n=54). Regarding the age of starting sports, 15.1% of participants (n=11) began at ages 7-10, 63% (n=46) at ages 11-13, and 21.9% (n=16) at 14 years or older. Looking at the training history, 47.9% of athletes (n=35) had 1-6 years of experience, while 52.1% (n=38) had 7 years or more. The results related to athletes' national team experience indicate that 47.9% participated in 1-6 matches (n=35), 15.1% in 7-12 matches (n=11), and 37% in 13 matches or more (n=27) national team games.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test Analyses

Variables	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Sampling Adequacy (KMO)	Bartlett's Test		
		Chi-Square	Sd	p
Group Cohesion	0.694	529.517	153	0.001
Power of Motive	0.744	323.292	66	0.001
Motive to Approach Success	0.776	654.136	153	0.001
Motive to Avoid Failure	0.795	309.901	66	0.001

Table 2, the results of the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test and Bartlett's test for sample adequacy are presented.

KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: This test is used to determine whether the data is suitable for factor analysis. The KMO value typically ranges between 0 and 1. A KMO value closer to 1 suggests that the data is more suitable for factor analysis. In this table, it is indicated that the values of the scales used have exceeded 0.50, which suggests that the sample is adequate for analysis.

Data Collection Instruments

As for data collection instruments, a personal information form, Group Cohesion Scale, and Sport-Specific Achievement Motivation Scale were used.

Group Cohesion Scale: This scale, consisting of a total of 18 items and 4 sub-dimensions (group social integration, group task attractiveness, group social attractiveness, and group task integration), was developed by Carron et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Öcel and Aydın (2006). The scale is in a 5-point Likert format, with some items being reverse-scored. Öcel and Aydın (2006), reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.79 to

0.69 for the entire scale and its sub-dimensions. In this study, the reliability coefficient obtained for the overall cohesion level of athletes was determined as 0.75.

Sport-Specific Achievement Motivation Scale: This scale, developed by Willis (1982) and adapted into Turkish by Tiryaki and Gödelek (1997), consists of 40 items. The scale is in a 5-point Likert style and has 3 sub-dimensions: Power of Motive (POW), Motive to Approach Success (MAS), and Motive to Avoid Failure (MAF). Tiryaki and Gödelek (1997), reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the scale as 0.81 for the POW sub-dimension, 0.82 for the MAS sub-dimension, and 0.80 for the MAF sub-dimension. The reliability coefficients obtained for this study were 0.56 for the POW sub-dimension, 0.79 for the MAS sub-dimension, and 0.84 for the MAF sub-dimension.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected online through Google Forms and in face-to-face settings. The study was conducted with the approval of the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval No: E.27070-30640013-108.01, Date: 16/12/2020).

Data Analysis

Data distributions were assessed for homogeneity, normality, skewness, and kurtosis values using graphical approaches. In the literature, skewness, and kurtosis values between ± 1.0 are generally considered acceptable for psychometric purposes (George & Mallery, 2016). Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and LSD Post Hoc analysis were used to evaluate the data. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was considered in the research. Descriptive statistics for scale scores and the results of the normal distribution analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Scale Scores and Normality Distribution Analysis Results

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Group Cohesion	73	50.00	88.00	71.08	1.049	-0.461	-0.004
POW	73	26.00	54.00	40.94	0.598	-0.156	0.529
MAS	73	35.00	85.00	64.00	1.000	-0.471	0.981
MAF	73	19.00	52.00	31.09	0.909	0.586	0.254

When examining Table 3, it can be observed that the data for the measurement tools follow a normal distribution. In this section of the study, the findings related to the applied scales have been presented in tabular form and explained.

FINDINGS

In this section of the study, the findings related to the applied scales are presented and explained in tabular form.

Table 4. Analysis Results of Group Cohesion and Achievement Motivation Levels According to the Gender Variable of Athletes (T-Test)

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Ss	t	sd	p
Group Cohesion	Female	19	72.26	9.887	0.665	71	0.508
	Male	54	70.66	8.680			
POW	Female	19	39.15	6.568	-1.490	71	0.149
	Male	54	41.57	4.393			
MAS	Female	19	64.84	8.908	0.497	71	0.621
	Male	54	63.70	8.477			
MAF	Female	19	34.15	8.933	2.040	71	0.045*
	Male	54	30.01	7.101			

*p<0.05

When examining the analyses in Table 4, it is observed that there is a statistically significant difference between the gender of athletes and the level of MAF ($t_{(71)}=2.040$; $p<0.05$). However, there is no significant difference in group cohesion, POW, and MAS levels ($p>0.05$). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the level of MAF is higher in females compared to males.

Table 5. Analysis Results of Group Cohesion and Achievement Motivation Levels According to Athletes' Age of Starting Sports (ANOVA)

Variables	Age of Starting Sports	n	Mean	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Ss	Mean Squares	F	P
Group Cohesion	7-10 years	11	72.54	Between groups	64.312	2	32.156	0.393	0.676
	11-13 years	46	70.36						
	14 years +	16	72.12	Total	5789.507	72			
	Total	73	71.08						
POW	**7-10 years	11	44.63	Between groups	202.689	2	101.345	4.225	0.019*
	11-13 years	46	40.67						
	14 years +	16	39.18	Total	1881.781	72			
	Total	73	40.94						
MAS	***7-10 years	11	69.27	Between groups	441.199	2	220.599	3.207	0.046*
	11-13 years	46	63.73						
	14 years +	16	61.12	Total	5256.000	72			
	Total	73	64.00						
MAF	7-10 years	11	35.72	Between groups	295.245	2	147.622	2.548	0.085
	11-13 years	46	30.58						
	14 years +	16	29.37	Total	4350.329	72			
	Total	73	31.09						

*p<0.05. **7-10 years old > 11-13 years old and 14 years and older. ***7-10 years old > 14 years and older.

According to the results in Table 5, there is a statistically significant difference between the age at which athletes start their sports and their POW and MAS ($F_{(2,70)} = 4.225$, $p < 0.05$; $F_{(2,70)} = 3.207$, $p < 0.05$). However, there is no significant difference between group cohesion and MAF ($p > 0.05$). Based on this difference, athletes who start sports between the ages of 7-10 have a higher POW compared to those who start between the ages of 11-13 and those who start after the age of 14. Additionally, athletes who start after the age of 14 have a higher motivation for MAS compared to those who start between the ages of 7-10.

Table 6. Analysis Results of Group Cohesion and Achievement Motivation Levels According to Athletes' Training History Variable (T-Test)

Variables	Training history	N	Mean	Ss	t	Sd.	p
Group Cohesion	1-6 years	35	69.48	9.882	-1.472	71	0.146
	7 years +	38	72.55	7.879			
POW	1-6 years	35	39.17	5.349	-2.999	71	0.004**
	7 years +	38	42.57	4.341			
MAS	1-6 years	35	61.88	8.837	-2.075	71	0.042*
	7 years +	38	65.94	7.884			
MAF	1-6 years	35	31.51	8.005	0.439	71	0.662
	7 years +	38	30.71	7.640			

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

Table 6 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between athletes' training histories and group cohesion and MAF (p>0.05). However, there is a statistically significant difference in POW and MAS (p<0.01). Athletes with a training history of 7 years and more have higher POW and MAS compared to athletes with 1-6 years of training history.

Table 7. Analysis Results of Group Cohesion and Achievement Motivation Levels of Athletes' Nationality Experience Variable (ANOVA)

Variables	National Team Experience	n	Mean	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Ss	Mean Squares	F	P
Group Cohesion	1-6 matches	35	69.34	Between groups	273.911	2	136.955	1.738	0.183
	7-12 matches	11	74.81	Within groups	5515.596	70	78.794		
	13 matches +	27	71.81						
	Total	73	71.08	Total	5789.507	72			
POW	1-6 matches	35	41.17	Between groups	45.382	2	22.691	0.865	0.426
	7-12 matches	11	39.09	Within groups	1836.399	70	26.234		
	13 matches +	27	41.40						
	Total	73	40.94	Total	1881.781	72			
MAS	1-6 matches	35	64.14	Between groups	60.805	2	30.403	0.410	0.665
	7-12 matches	11	61.90	Within groups	5195.195	70	74.217		
	13 matches +	27	64.66						
	Total	73	64.00	Total	5256.000	72			
MAF	**1-6 matches	35	33.80	Between groups	663.584	2	331.792	6.300	0.003*
	7-12 matches	11	25.27	Within groups	3686.745	70	52.668		
	13 matches +	27	29.96						
	Total	73	31.09	Total	4350.329	72			

*p<0.01 **1-6 matches>7-12 matches and 13 matches or more.

According to the results of the analyses in Table 7, there is no statistically significant difference between the nationality experiences of the athletes and the levels of group cohesiveness, MAS, and POW (p>0.05). There is a statistically significant difference between the nationality experiences of the athletes and their levels of MAF (F(2,70)=6.300; p<0.01). According to this result, the "MAF" levels of the athletes with nationality experience of 1-6 matches are higher than the athletes with nationality experience of 7-12 matches and 13 matches and above.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aim of examining the levels of group cohesion and achievement motivation among national hockey team athletes. In order to achieve this purpose, the levels of group cohesion and achievement motivation of athletes were analysed, taking into account personal characteristics such as gender, age of starting sports, training history, and national team experience.

The analysis results indicated that there was no significant difference between the levels of group cohesion among male and female hockey national team athletes, as well as those with different starting ages in sports, varying training histories, and diverse national team experiences. While there are research findings in the literature that support the relationship between gender and training history variables with group cohesion (Albayrak et al., 2020; Carron et al., 2002; Goulimaris et al., 2016; Karademir, 2021; Tekkurşun Demir et al., 2022), there are also studies that do not support this relationship (Polat et al., 2019; Tekkurşun Demir et al., 2022). Table 3 shows that hockey national team athletes had high average scores in their perceptions of group cohesion. It can be argued that one of the most important goals for an athlete in their sports career is to represent their country in international competitions and achieve the best possible results. Therefore, being part of national teams, whether as an athlete or a coach, and competing while wearing the national team jersey are of utmost importance. In this context, national teams can create environments conducive to the development and enhancement of group cohesion perception, particularly in terms of athletes' belief in the unity and integrity of the team and the attractiveness of the team. The experience of competing in national teams may not have created a significant difference between the independent variables and the level of group cohesion among the athletes in the study. Kocaekşi and Kuruç (2012), suggested reasons for different results in studies on cohesion, such as the small sample size and the fact that the teams participating in the study were experimental teams rather than real sports teams.

While there was a significant difference between athletes' genders in terms of the level of MAF, there was no significant difference in the levels of POW and MAS. According to these results, females had higher levels of MAF compared to males. The literature contains studies that support these findings (Engür, 2002; Duman, 2018; Polat et al., 2019). Aktaş et al. (2006), conducted a study on basketball players and found that there was no significant difference between genders in MAF dimension of the achievement motivation scale. However, they observed a significant difference in favour of males in POW dimension and in favour of females in MAS dimension. Researchers suggested that this could be attributed to cultural characteristics and expectations, indicating that different roles assigned to genders by society may be the reason. According to traditional gender roles, men are expected to play an assertive role. Additionally, the differences in findings in studies on achievement motivation may be due to the selection of different sports branches.

There was a significant difference between athletes' ages of starting sports and their POW and MAS, while there was no significant difference in the level of MAF. According to this difference, athletes who started sports between the ages of 7-10 had higher POW compared to those who started between the ages of 11-13 and those

who started after the age of 14. Athletes who started sports at the age of 14 and above had higher MAS compared to those who started earlier. Oruç (2018), obtained results in his research indicating that athletes who started sports at the age of 7 or younger had higher POW than those who started after the age of 7, which supports the findings of this study. When reviewing the literature, there is a lack of sufficient evidence, especially regarding the variable of age of starting sports, in studies related to achievement motivation. New research on the age of starting sports and its relationship with achievement motivation may help to achieve clearer results.

According to the analysis results of the study, there was no statistically significant difference between athletes' training histories and their level of MAF. However, there was a statistically significant difference in POW and MAS. Athletes with a training history of 7 years or more had higher levels of POW and MAS compared to athletes with a training history of 1-6 years. When examining the literature, it is observed that there are studies both parallel and different from the results of this study (Eser & Nacar, 2022; Oruç, 2018; Polat et al., 2019; Turhan, 2009). Polat et al. (2019), reported that team sports athletes' achievement motivation levels increased proportionally with the years of sports. Oruç (2018), stated in his study that achievement motivation levels were higher in athletes with more years of training in the POW and MAF sub-dimensions. Turhan (2009), also found that athletes who played football for five years or more had higher POW compared to those who played for less than five years. Kaya and Günay (2020), reported in their study with national wrestlers that there was no significant relationship between the age of starting sports and the sub-dimensions of achievement motivation. This could be attributed to the relatively lower influence of external stimuli in wrestling competitions compared to other sports, equal opportunities provided in competitions, and the professionalism of athletes. According to the findings of the study, it can be said that the extensive training history of hockey athletes contributes to their high levels of POW and MAS. Long-term training helps athletes improve themselves, prepare for competitions both physically and psychologically, and evaluate their performance, which enables them to identify areas for improvement and elevate their performance. Therefore, it can be suggested that engaging in numerous and effective training sessions increases athletes' POW and MAS. However, more research is needed to make generalizations in this regard.

The analysis results regarding the comparison of national team experience in examining the achievement motivation levels of hockey national team athletes indicate that there is no significant difference between athletes' national team experience and their MAS and POW levels. However, there is a significant difference between athletes' national team experience and their level of MAF. According to this result, athletes with 1-6 national team match experiences have higher levels of "MAF" compared to athletes with 7-12 matches and those with 13 or more national team match experiences. In the literature review, no study related to the national team experience of hockey athletes and their achievement motivation was found. As a result of the analyses, it can be said that the experience factor is effective in the fact that the "MAF" levels of the athletes with 1-6 matches nationality experience are higher than the athletes with more national competition experience. This result is an important finding of the study. Indeed, the high scores in the sub-dimensions of "POW" and "MAS" in the Sport-Specific Achievement Motivation Scale indicate that these positively affect athletes' achievement motivation

levels, while the high scores in the sub-dimension of "MAF" suggest that athletes have a higher concern and stress about achieving success (Tiryaki & Gödelek, 1997). Maintaining continuity in national teams is important in terms of the athlete's performance and achievements. Therefore, it can be assumed that this situation increases the level of MAF among athletes with less national team match experience due to the increased concern and stress about achieving success.

However, in order to obtain more accurate and precise results, more research on anxiety and achievement motivation in national team athletes is needed. Increasing the number of studies conducted with national team athletes will be useful for a better understanding of the subject.

SUGGESTIONS

As a result of the findings obtained from the study, there is no statistically significant difference between athletes' levels of group cohesion and variables such as gender, age of starting sports, training history, league experience, and national team experience. This study is limited to athletes who participated in the Turkey Hockey Federation's 2020-2021 season leagues. Therefore, conducting longitudinal studies that include athletes from different seasons and non-national team athletes in the sample group may help to better understand and determine group cohesion perceptions among hockey athletes. One noteworthy result from the study is that athletes with less national team experience exhibit higher levels of fear of failure. In this regard, it can be said that providing psychological support, especially for national athletes with less experience, may contribute to their success and reduce their levels of fear of failure.

ETHICAL TEXT

The rules of journal writing, publication guidelines, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical standards have been adhered to in this article. Any potential violation related to the article is the responsibility of the author(s)." To conduct the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee on December 16, 2020, with approval number E.27070-30640013-108.01.

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