PERSPECTIVES ON MUSICAL OUTCOMES OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The relationship which exists between parents and their children happens to be a fundamental and a very vital individual human experience. This paper sought to answer the question of the parental influence on a child's musical acumen and character. The paper x-rayed from theoretical and empirical points of view the factors playing out between nature and nurture as contributory factors in a child's parental musical outcomes. Through the research instruments of extensive interview and keen observation of parents and children, the results of this study have the following revelations. There are both positive and negative elements contributing to a child's musical skill and intelligence through parental relationship. The factors range from emotional, social, spiritual, psychological, and even academic inferences. It is therefore necessary to pursue those factors that will result in optimal tradeoff of positive musical outcomes in children.

Keywords: Parent-child relationship, nurture, developmental theory, musical outcome. Interaction between parent and child

INTRODUCTION

A relationship exists when individuals interact with one another in the society where certain elements like family background, beliefs, values, environment etc, play their roles. "a relationship involves a series of interactions over time between two individuals known to each other" (Hinde, 1987:24). There are relationships and there are relationships. Troll & Fingerman (1996) posit that; parent-child relationship is specific in nature and differs from all other kinds of relationships (like partners, family, and friends) because of the degree of intimacy. Close relationship take place between parents and children and it

happens to be a fundamental or core interaction. Parent-child relationship can be viewed as the interpersonal interactions that exist between a parent and his/her child which contributes to the formed character or characteristic exhibition of a child. 'Scholars have moved beyond looking at a singular (usually maternal) relationship with children but have considered the ways in which parent-child relationships and other inter-family relationships may affect a child's development and life outcomes'(Grant & Carlson 2018). Parents and children keep on interacting over time to form a meaningful bond. Even though the contributions to each other in the relationship are not at the same level, yet they are quite significant. As Russell et al., (2002) concur that "Overall, it can be seen that parent-child relationships contain some elements of other types of close relationships. However, parent-child relationships are unique in a number of ways. The uniqueness appears to be especially associated with the level of commitment and obligation, in a relationship that contains aspects of asymmetry, but also where the child has considerable power." Socialization aspect of parent-child relation looks at the parent's behaviour towards the child and the effects of those behaviour on the child. It considers how the parents influence the growth, the behaviour, and the development of a child.

Multi-dimensional aspects of parent-child relationship

Parents/child relationship can be both vertical and horizontal. Shared power and reciprocity are two examples of horizontal relations between parents and children whereby both parents and children make contributions to their relationships. Shared power come into play when parents give up some powers in interactions and existence while allowing the child some power and by so doing bringing mutuality into play. Russell, et al., (2002) concur thus:

> Shared power is an especially significant indication of horizontal qualities in parent-child relationships.   …..Shared power occurs, for example, when parent and child cooperate, negotiate, make joint decisions, argue about rules and then reach a compromise, and when they collaborate. To some extent "shared power" occurs because parents give up some of their power. Nevertheless, significant amounts of power also reside with the child in parent-child *relationships*. P.210

Reciprocity as an aspect of horizontal interaction between parents and children is where both parent's and children's contributions in their relationship meet the expectations of both parties. Hinde (1979) writes that reciprocity occurs when participants show similar behavior, either simultaneously or alternatively. Reciprocity between parents and children involving negative behaviour and relationship qualities is likely to be associated with difficulty in the relationship. On the other hand, a system involving positive reciprocity and mutual cooperation has been argued to be a foundation for successful socialization (Kochanska, 1997). Children naturally are not restricted in their responses; they reciprocate both positively and negatively to their parents' behaviour depending on what they want to accept or reject as individuals. Bugental & Johnston (2000) posit that reciprocal interactions between parents and children provide the collaborative basis for the creation of shared knowledge. Recent studies relating to children's well-being centers around the ability of some parents to develop reciprocal form of interaction with their children

such as: shared positive affect and mutual responsivity (Maccoby, 2000). There are mutual co operations binding parents and their children in their relationship/interactions. Mutuality is experienced when parents relate with their children from the position of authority, acting as the authority figure issuing order, relationship at a horizontal level of play/ comradeship, and mutuality at the level of receptiveness and co-operation with the parents given initiatives or orders. Russell et al. (2002) noted that:

> Clearly, there are a number of perspectives on the central dimensions of parent-child relationships. Dimensions to do with affection and closeness as well as control appear to be widely acknowledged. The vertical/horizontal distinction appears to provide helpful strategies for analyzing parent-child relationships. Nevertheless, while there is some consensus about the definition and core dimensions of parent-child relationship, much remains in dispute. p.210

Kuczynski, Marshall, and Schell (1997), Lollis and Kuczynski (1997) argued research proposed on parent-child relationship based on a set of assumptions which they termed a "unilateral model of parent-child relationships". Their assumptions are (a) influence flows from the parent to the child, (b) parents are considered active agents and children as passive, (c) parents and children are separate interacting individuals rather than connected through their relationship, and (d) there is an asymmetry in power, with most of the power residing in the parent. They proposed an alternative model based on equal agency, bidirectional causality, parent-child interactions occurring within a relationship context, and power as interdependent asymmetry.

There is a conception of parents and children having their relationship co-constructed. Parents support their children's social endeavours and children also have impact on parents. In co-constructed parent-child relationship, consideration is given to the contribution of the characteristics of the parents and children and to the procedures of forming and maintaining relationships. Children's sex has an impact on parent-child relationship as parents relate differently with their boys and girls. Supporting the above, Leaper et al. (1998) in their study outlined evidence of greater amounts of talk with girls than with boys and more supportive speech with girls than with boys. The result was interpreted as consistent with a greater emphasis by parents on verbal interaction and affiliation with daughters than with sons and points to differences in the qualities of relationships with boys and with girls, partly along the lines of gender expectations Russell et al. (2002). The parent relationship differences with their male and female children does not necessarily stem from the children's characteristic personality and behaviour but from parental and socialization expectations. Parenting has everything to contribute to a child's mental, physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and social developments. Baldwin (1989) points out that' Parents naturally want to give their children the best start in life and do everything they can to assure their intellectual development'. Moral values are also taught children through the process of socialization through parenting.

Three stages have been identified in parent-child relationship: Stage one (Early Childhood), Stage two (Middle Childhood), and Stage three (Adulthood). Concentrating more on the Middle Childhood

(Adolescent). It is obvious that at the adolescent stage of a child's development, the child will want to express who he/she is and not necessarily who the parent expects him/her to be, this is identity issue. It will show up in change in the child's choice and taste of music, friendship, clothing, outdoor activities, hairstyle, etc. Children at this stage like listening to music that their parents dislike and have opinions that are in disagreement with their parents'. Baumrind (1991) in describing important dimensions of parenting identified four typologies associated with child outcomes: warmth (as opposed to conflict or neglect) and control: 'authoritative' (high warmth, positive/assertive control and in adolescence high expectations), 'authoritarian' (low warmth, high conflict and coercive, punitive control attempts),'permissive' (high warmth and low control).

Parents employ the tool of punishment as a disciplinary measure in curbing children's excesses in behaviour. There are two categories of punishments used: Corporal or Physical Punishment and Humiliating or Degrading Punishment. According to Durrant, (2012),

> Corporal or physical punishment is any application of punishment to a child's body, whether mild or severe. It includes hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe, etc), kicking, or throwing the child, pinching or pulling their hair; forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to engage in excessive physical exercise; burning or scarring the child. While Humiliating or Degrading Punishment takes various forms such as psychological punishment, verbal abuse, ridicule, isolation, withdrawal of love or ignoring the child. p.3

Corporal and humiliating punishments are taken in some quarters as violence against children and violations of children's right. Corporal punishment has been banned under the law in some countries of the world while some countries still uphold it as a legitimate way of discipline for children. Some people uphold physical punishment as traditional parts of a people's culture and so cannot be done without. 'Some associations between parent-child relationship quality- particularly corporal punishments – to child well-being differ across sub-populations and social settings, this needs to be noted when devising 'universal' interventions.' O'Connor & Scott (2007). Physical and humiliating punishments can actually produce feelings of enmity, resentment and rejection towards parents that children indirectly express.

The transfer of or the inculcating of knowledge for social change, behavioural change, attitudinal change etc in children can be achieved and or promoted through the development of other awareness materials other than the use of punishment. Children should be heard, their voices should be heard both in the homes and outside the homes, their suggestions should also be considered when necessary. As children are exposed to different situations for them to work out arguments, they will become good or better at resolving dispute. Parents should learn to build strong, secure and healthy relationship with their children and desist from treating them in anger and with violence.

Building Healthy Parent-child Relationship

Parents can be stressed trying to get their children to do particular tasks immediately they want them done but the child may refuse to obey the parent's order immediately. Feelings of desperation and panic make parents to quickly resort to angry reactions, hitting or shouting at the child or saying things they will later regret. Parent-child relationship is weakened each time this process takes place. Any time parents process their stress negatively towards their children through shouting, name-calling, hitting, threatening etc. they lose the opportunity of showing the children the right and better way to deal with their own stress and frustrations. Durrant (2012) identified the provision of warmth and structure as the two most powerful parenting tools as parents struggle to meet both their long-term and short-term goals. According to him, 'children learn best when they feel respected, understood, trusted, safe, secure and loved.' This is warmth: physical and emotional security. He writes further that 'children learn best when they have information, when they are helped to find constructive ways of meeting their goals, and when they understand the reasons for rules and guidelines'. Structure is information and clear, respectful communication. It is not coercion, control or punishment. Structure gives children the tools they need to succeed when the parent is not there.

Parents can be faced with the challenge of their patience being tried and their ability to handle frustrations. Parents need to be equipped with information and knowledge in parenting in order to build a positive parent-child relationship. The acquired knowledge and information will form a frame for parents to reflect on their actions towards their children, understanding of their children's actions towards them and then building a lifetime positive relationship between them. Children of different ages need different kinds of information and support in their development. They should have the capacity to constructively resolve conflict in relationship with their children. Parenting can bring out the best in parents as well as the worst. Children need guidance from parents and other adults in their lives as they grow. There are four principles that can be applied in all parent-child relationship as identified by Durrant, 2012: 1). Identifying your long-term parenting goals. 2). Providing warmth and structure in all of your interactions with your child. 3). Understanding how children think and feel in different situations. 4). Taking a problem-solving, rather than punitive, approach to conflict.

There are conventional rights of children. Over a period of ten years, all the member countries of the United Nations came to agreement on the fundamental rights of children around the world. They set out these rights in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* which was adopted by the United Nations in 1989. (Durrant, 2012:10). The child has rights to develop as an individual, to be protected from violence, to have its opinion heard, and to have its dignity respected. Parents should see and treat their children as full- fledged human beings and not as their individual property. There should be dignity in the way parents treat their children. Using humiliating punishment to correct children's behaviour can be viewed as violence on the children. In situations when conflict arise between parents and their children, they should be allowed to express themselves and should be understood based on their age and level of maturity. Parents should not impose their will on the children; they should be allowed the expression of their thoughts and feelings. Children's dignity should equally be recognized by parents taking cognizance of the impact of their words and actions on their children's emotional development and positive interactions

with other persons in the society. A positive parent-child relationship can contribute to fewer child social and emotional difficulties (Strazdins et al.2006, Esimone, & Ojukwu, 2014), a greater sense of child security (Cummings and Davies 2009), and creation of warmer and more connected parent-child relationship in the next generation (Friesen et al. 2013).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Attachment Theory: Attachment theory as developed by John Bowlby is a theory that explains that children build internal relationship based on the interactions they had with their parents or other of their primary caregivers which subsequently help them in keeping other relationships. This theory is drawn from biological and psychoanalysis concepts. As Antonucci et al., (2004) puts it, it emphasizes the importance of caring relationships for normal development of the child; it also suggests that a good nurturing relationship between parent and child shapes future social, cognitive, and emotional development of that child. This theory identifies the nature, significance and function of a child's tie and attachment to his/her parent. Attachment theory deals with issues of safety and protection. It looks at the provision with a sense of emotional security for the child and protection against harm. This theory explains why a child who already has a biological link with the parent and was very well cared for grows with a positive attachment to the parents and can naturally develop interest in music provided the parents likes it.

Social learning theory: Social learning theory incorporated the consideration of poor parenting based on the parents' social setting. This theory also argues that children's behaviour are directly or indirectly shaped by their real-life experiences and exposure. The principles of reinforcement and conditioning also come into play where a child is likely to exhibit a behaviour again because he/she received an immediate reward i.e. parental attention and approval for the behaviour. The reverse is also the case if the child is ignored or punished for a behaviour. Children learn to manage their emotions, relate with others, and resolve disputes based on the reactions they got from their behaviours as well as from their experiences. The relationship between the child and his/her parents and the influence from the family environment considering the reinforcement given the child in the music classes or learning of playing any musical instrument will definitely reflect in the improvement or advancement in the learning.

Developmental Cognitive Process: Piaget spent years observing very young children and mapped out four stages of developmental growth: sensorimotor (from birth to about 2 years), preoperational (roughly ages 2–7), concrete operations (encompassing ages 7-11) and formal operations (ages 11-15) (Hilgard and Bower, 1975). In the same vein, Ugoo-Okonkwo (2013), focused on the extent some learning theories, especially on the developmental, cognitive process were applied to the teaching and learning of songs.

Okeke (2014) highlighting the implication and application of Piaget's cognitive theory of learning to music outlined that:
- ✓ Younger children in particular be given many opportunities to listen, sing, play, and move to music.

✓ The introduction of staff notation should occur only after preliminary experiences.
✓ Music curriculum should be planned to follow the maturational ages of the learners. The evidence of the developmental stages implies the existence of sensitive or critical periods when formal learning should duly commence.

METHODOLOGY

The research instruments used for this study were interview and observation. An interview schedule was made use of to elicit responses from the interviewees, and they were audio-recorded for result discussion. There was a direct observation of children during lessons and other musical making engagements and interactions like social gatherings, Sunday schools, and birthday parties. Some lesson periods at homes were also observed.

Interview schedule for children aged 7 – 15 years

1. Do you like music?
2. Do/did your parents teach/taught you music?
3. Do you think music intelligence runs in your family?
4. Does any of your parents play musical instrument or sing?
5. Do you enjoy playing any musical instrument?
6. Do you like singing especially when doing your chores?
7. Did your parents start any musical class or lesson for you?
8. Is it at your home or you go to a music center for the lesson?
9. Do you like your music teacher?
10. Your music lessons at home and music classes at school which do you prefer?
11. How many of your siblings like music and play any musical instrument?
12. Does your parent(s) encourage/reward you in your music learning?
13. What kind of motivation do they give you?

Interview schedule for parents

1. Does musical intelligence run in your blood or family?
2. Do you play any musical instrument?
3. Do you take music learning so seriously to the point of engaging a music teacher for your child?
4. How do you recognize your child's efforts and success at learning?
5. Do you feel stressed up when your child refuses to do his/her music lesson or practice his/her musical instrument?
6. How do you motivate your child to learn music?
7. How do you reward your child's progress in his/her music learning?

Findings from parents' and children interview and Observation

The summary responses to the interviews held with children and parents are hereby presented as follows:

✓ Almost all the children interviewed like music and music making.

✓ Some persons agreed to the fact that music runs in their families while some do not. Many of the siblings of those from musical families also love and make music by way of singing, dancing and playing of musical instruments.

✓ The parents of the seemingly gifted children sing or play some musical instruments and the children also agreed to being taught music at home by their parents.

✓ Almost all the children like to play one musical instrument or the other with drums being the most favourable, available and seemingly more malleable to rhythmic adaptation.

✓ Some older children like singing while doing their chores while many simply like to sing ordinarily without combining it with chores.

✓ Some parents engaged music teachers at home to teach their children voice/singing. Some had their children properly tutored on voice having noticed that the child exhibited good singing voice (Ugoo-Okonkwo, 2013), while some could not because they couldn't afford it. Some parents who love music saw it as a necessity for their children's musical development and intelligence while some taught that such exposure will make the children to become interested in music which they the parents would not want.

✓ Some children receive music lessons at the comfort of their homes while some (particularly the older children) attend the music classes outside of their homes (at some music training centres).

✓ Some of the children prefer the home music lesson to outside of the home own and it is vice versa for some. The smaller children preferred home while the older children preferred outside.

✓ Some of the children agreed to liking their music teachers while some do not, particularly those who had problem coping with the lessons.

✓ Parents motivate their children to take their music lessons seriously. The children also agreed to being motivated and rewarded by their parents in their course of learning. The kind of reward received was largely the provision of material things as incentives or being taken out on a date to social function like birthday parties of their friends.

✓ Rewarding children through giving of threats and gifts reinforces positive behaviour by them. Parents should recognize and reward their children's musical progress for more progress to be made.

Every child is born into a family and families being unique entities have their peculiar traditions. Parents are saddled with the fundamental responsibility of training their children by way of teaching them, instructing them, supervising them and disciplining them in order for them to grow into the desired adult persons in the society. From participation activities in Children Sunday school engagements, there were observations of active musical outcomes by some children whose families were known to be musical. This result can be traced to the contributory factors of nature (genetics) and nurture (family environment) playing out in the lives of the children.

Music is something that starts even from the womb for a child. Children are musical by nature and they learn well by imitation and repetition. When a mother or a member of the family sings, the child tends to repeat that same song and continues to sing it over and over again; it is therefore important to say that

imitation is part and parcel of children's growth (Ugochukwu, 2020). Children are always interested in singing and dancing even from the time they are born; singing songs to them makes them happy (Esimone, 2021). A child begins his/her musical world and exploration from infancy and continues the development through adulthood. The parent is the first music teacher a child has. A mother sings lullaby for her crying baby and the child responds to the song by calming down and stopping to cry.

The family happens to be the foremost institution where the child begins his/her life from. The family is the environment that gives a child the existence and from where the child makes discoveries and learns. A musically favourable environment helps a child to develop musically. Unfortunately, this musical growth is being distorted by the environmental disorder. However, the importance of how the environment is stimulating musical interest cannot be overlooked for the child's sensitivity to environmental influences and especially to the quality of music instruction he receives (Ugoo-Okonkwo et al. 2022, Ugochukwu, 2020; Onyiuke, 2005; Gordon, 1991). And teachers are making effort to see to the intellectual development of children but the fact remains that family plays a very direct role in children's educational upbringing especially in music, teachers are very important but it all starts with parents and the entire family to mould a child's character (Ugochukwu, 2020).

Musical Outcomes

There are personality needs of a child as he/she grows that aid in his/her development. There is the need to attain adult status, the need for independence and the need for achievement. The child wants to be important, to stand out in his group, and to be recognized as a person of value. It gets to a time or stage in a child's development and life when he will have the need for independence. The child will yearn to be weaned from parental restrictions and to become self-directing. The child will want to be allowed by parents and adult to plan his programme of instructions, set up rules for instructions, and take on responsibilities in line with his maturity level. Then comes the need for achievement or reinforcement. The child wants to be commended anything he/she does something that is worthy of commendation. Parents sometimes use threats and punishment in their bid to get the child to study or take their musical learning seriously. But there is a negative side effect of this kind of approach to learning, the child may learn a little of the music for instance but develop hatred for the parent(s) who is forcing him/her to learn or even hate the music learning itself. As children draw or sing, they become self-assured in expressing themselves through art. To ensure a conducive and friendly learning atmosphere for the child, praise as a motivating device should be employed instead of censure. Parents should also develop the habit of rewarding their children for achievements (musical and otherwise) that they make.

Setting Goals: There will definitely be short-term goals and long-term goals that parents set for their children. Parents should focus on the long-term goals and relate to the short term goals as avenues to teach the children what they really want them to learn. Short-term goals are those things that a parent wants the child to do at the moment ie right now. Long-term goals are the future hopes a parent has for his/her child. They are the attributes parents hope their children will possess in the future as adults and the relationship they hope to have with them at thatx time. A parent may be a flautist for instance and has a long-term

goal of teaching the child to learn to play the flute even better than her. The child may not initially see the essence of his knowing/learning the instrument and may therefore develop irritating behaviours in the course of the teaching and learning of the flute. The parent should not get stressed up, irritated or discouraged by the child's show of non-interest in the learning. Those are temporal short-term situations. Looking at the bigger long-term goal of having a virtuoso flutist in her child should motivate the parent to see reasons for the child's behaviour and then device the best strategy to accommodate him/her and follow the child's learning approach. It should be borne in mind that a warm home or learning environment provides the foundation for meeting long-term goals for the children as parents.

Motivation: When children trust their parents, they build confidence and the motivation to try to learn. When children are encouraged and taught respectfully and diligently through infancy, they will desire to learn more things as they grow. They will keep asking questions upon questions, build vocabularies, store up information about things and also figure out how things work. Children are naturally inquisitive and this curiosity pushes them to make adventures and learn in the process which gives them joy in learning. Encouraging children's exploration motivates them to learn.

Communication: Communication happens to be among the crucial materials of building a positive parent-child relationship. It plays a very significant role in the relationship in the sense that it forms and preserves relationship between the parent and child producing a strong and effective interaction. "Communication is the engine of social relationships and a necessity for all relationship. It involves listening, availability, understanding, mutual respect and emotion" Popov & Ilesanmi (2015). Good communication between a parent and child helps the child to develop and express him/herself through language(s) and music happens to be among the languages: the language of the soul. Okafor (2005) succinctly puts that 'since man uses music to express and communicate an idea or emotion, music is then a language'. Children can learn about their fascinating world through the instrument of music as they start exploring sounds inside them and around them.

Positive atmosphere: The creation of a positive atmosphere at home helps children to express themselves through music. When children identify music as fun, it actually helps in learning as a tool. When a child has confidence in him/herself and the parents plus a sense of security around him, they are serious foundation of future learning for the child. As children mature in their musical development, they begin to sing songs they hear others sing in their environment. They also learn to listen to their teachers' using gestures and body movements to match the words of their songs. 'Parent's response has been shown to be a function of children's initiative; this means that parents who pay special attention to their children can be expected to provide an optimal environment for the child to learn, which can further be strengthened by the child's own motivation'(Popov & Ilesanmi 2015).

Aid To Task: Instrumental background music makes some children and adult as learners do their work with so much ease and fun. Instead of work being burdensome and taxing, music turns it into an enjoyable task. Larsen-Freeman (2000) outlined the following as some important features of such teaching/learning

technique: a relaxed atmosphere, a classroom positive environment, a new identity of students, or music activities themselves.

Temperament: Every individual is born with a temperament. Every child has his/her own temperament and it has to do with a particular way he/she approaches things in life that is inborn in them and which for the most part cannot be changed. Our uniqueness as individuals is largely due to our temperamental make-up. There are strengths and weaknesses in all temperaments which affect the way individuals respond to activities and or learning. Some temperamental make-ups have innated musical prowess in them while some do not have. A child that is musical in nature will easily adapt to music teaching and learning even early in life. In this instance, nature plays a bigger role than nurture where the child innate musical endowment makes him excel in musical practice than the environment contributes to that ability. Nature arguably exerts more influence on a child's musical performance than nurture. Identifying and understanding a child's temperamental make-up as a parent will help build on the child's strength and build a supportive environment to cushion the child's weakness and unique challenges. Parents and children share similarities and differences in temperaments. Observed differences between parent and child temperament actually contribute to the many conflicts in the family between a parent and a child. Schmeck & Poustka (2001) indicated that children's temperamental characteristics initiate bi-directional processes that occur between them and their parents.

CONCLUSION

There is inter-personal and intra-personal relationship existing between a parent and child. . There are contributions from both a parent and a child to the spiritual, physical, emotional, cultural, social, and even musical growth of the child. Parents have major role to play in their child's life and development which embodies support and guidance. As children navigate through life to finding their own identity, the parents have the task of strengthening their relationship with them while nurturing their growth and independence. Worthy of note is the fact that the relationship which exists between a parent and a child has a lot to say about the kind of family they come from. Parents should build early trust in their children and strengthen the attachment through the years. By so doing, they will establish a relationship that will successfully launch them into adulthood. Positive interaction between parents and children makes the children to feel more relaxed and desiring to spend time with the parents accepting the parents to be caring, loving, warm and as friends, without being controlling. The family is the child's first environment of music making and musical development. A conducive environment full of musical expressions with a positive parental relationship is a major requisite for favourable musical outcomes in the life of a child from infancy stage onward to the outer society through adolescence to adulthood. Children can be and are inspired by parents or adults around their lives to make a breakthrough in their musical knowledge and expression. The relationship which exists between parents and children contribute in no small measure in helping the children fulfill their musical potential.

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