

Spiritual Intelligence and Mental Health of Post-graduate students: Comparison and correlation

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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been increased interest among researchers in examining relationship between Spiritual Intelligence (SI) and Mental Health (MH). This research examines university student's mental health (MH) and spiritual intelligence (SI) on the basis of their gender and stream. Primarily the investigators analyzed the relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health. 256 students participated in this study from streams (Humanities 74, Commerce 62, Science 54 and Social science 66). Gender wise participation was male 122 (47.65%) and females 134 (52.35%). The participants were screened using two instruments 1) spiritual intelligence scale and 2) Mental health scale. The data was analyzed by employing descriptive analysis (Mean and S.D.) and inferential analysis ('t' test, ANOVA, Post-hoc analysis Tukey's HSD and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation). No significant difference was found on mental health and spiritual intelligence of students in respect of gender. On MH, ANOVA results reveal significant difference between streams followed by Post-hoc analysis that confirmed the humanities stream revealed a significant difference in mental health between science and commerce. The mental health scores reported by the humanities and social science, science and social science, science and commerce and social science and commerce streams did not show any significant difference. On SI of students in respect of stream ANOVA results did not show any significant difference. The correlational analysis indicated that there is a significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health of students.

Keywords: Mental health, Spiritual intelligence, Gender, Stream, University students.

1. Introduction

The concept "mental health" denotes to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It refers to one's ability to make good decisions and manage stress. Mental health is known as a condition of mind that involves feelings of well-being, happiness, effectiveness, and harmony as a result of one's level of adjustment to him and society. The intrinsic perspective of mental well-being presently includes two aspects: (1) a positive

psycho-social state, healthy interpersonal interactions and self-realization; and (2) a positive psycho-social state, good interpersonal relationships and self-realization (the eudemonic perspective). The latter includes self-development, positive interpersonal interactions, autonomy, self-acceptance, and competence. Those interested in learning more about this topic should refer to Ryan and Deci's wide bibliography (2001). Mental health issues can have an impact on a

person's thinking, behaviors and overall personality. Mental health is described by [Crow and Crow \(1951\)](#) as the state that deals with human wellbeing and implores all aspects of human relations. Mental health refers to a person's ability to successfully and satisfactorily adapt to changing pressures and crises in their environment. It enables an individual to effectively participate in social concerns. Mental health is a state of balance between the person and the surrounding world, a state of harmony between oneself and others, a harmony between the realities of the self and those of other people as well as the surroundings ([Sortorives, 1983](#)). Mental health, according to the [World Health Organization \(2001\)](#) is a condition of well-being in which an individual recognizes his or her strengths, can cope with typical stressors of life, can work successfully and effectively and can also benefit to his or her community.

One of the most widely held beliefs among us is that one's IQ level indicates one's level of success in life. The more intelligent a person is, the more organized their life is, and vice versa. But in reality, this is a fallacy, since we see a lot of people with high IQ who are completely unprepared for life. As a result, we can conclude that IQ is not just a determinant of life achievement and adjustment. Other important factors such as Spiritual Intelligence, has a role in determining life success. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to obtain insight into one's own existence; it facilitates in understanding who and what one is and making decisions based on that insight. You will be able to make peace with yourself and others once you understand who you are. Spiritual intelligence aids us in discovering and communicating with the greatest force. [Zohar & Marshal \(2000\)](#) define, "spiritual intelligence as the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we place our actions and lives in a wider, richer meaning giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess how one course of action or one life path is more meaningful than other". [Wink & Dillon \(2002\)](#) define spirituality as "the self-existential search for ultimate meaning through an individualized understanding of the sacred."

Different researchers in different parts of the world and in different disciplines have explored the mental health and spiritual

intelligence in different ways. Researchers from education, psychology, sociology are investigating the connection between mental health and spiritual intelligence ([Shatery, Hayat & Jayervand 2018](#)). [Tabarsa & Jalaei \(2015\)](#) showed that there is a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health. Spirituality and mental health according to [Koenig \(2010\)](#) are a psychological and social resources for coping with stress.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Spiritual intelligence and mental health

According to [Pant & Srivastava \(2017\)](#) there was no notable change in spiritual intelligence between male and female students as well as no significant difference in mental health between arts and science students. Practicing spirituality can enhance well-being of male high school learners, according to ([Mohammadi et al. 2015](#)). Male and female teachers do not differ significantly on spiritual intelligence ([Dar and Khan, 2018](#)). In a research of 120 persons, [Rajhans \(2012\)](#) tried to determine the association between particular spiritual activities and mental health in young and middle-aged adults as well as sex, age and educational level disparities in mental health and spiritual practises. The findings revealed a strong link between mental suffering and spiritual practices. There is also a substantial difference in mean spiritual practice scores between young and middle-aged people, while sex and educational level differences in mental health and spiritual practices are minor. [Zuckerman \(1989\)](#) looked into how gender affects stress, self-esteem and mental health. In most aspects of life, men and women reported similar levels of stress, while women reported more stress in their family connections and concerns about their mental health. [Roothman et al. \(2003\)](#) looked into the disparities between men and women in terms of psychological well-being. It was discovered that there was a statistically significant gender difference with small to medium practical effects. Physical self-concept, feelings (positive), work and strive, mental flexibility, total self-concept and fortitude were all higher in men than in women. Women fared better in terms of affect expression, physical complaints and religious well-being. On psychological well-being, satisfaction with life, affect balance, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and the social components of self-concept and

bravery, no significant gender differences were discovered. A study on spiritual well-being and mental health in university students was undertaken by (Jafari et al.2010)and they found no variation in mental health scores based on gender. Another conclusion showed that females had much higher spiritual and existential Well-being than males. Kumar and Bhukar (2013) investigated college students' stress levels and coping strategies. The stress caused by all stressors was notably higher among girls than among boys in their profession; according to a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) boys had a better coping strategy than girls in their subject area, although sport education girls had a better coping strategy than engineering boys and girls.

Happiness and fulfilment in life are heavily influenced by mental health. Spiritual intelligence is required to make spiritual decisions and choices that are beneficial to one's mental health and well-being (Vaughan, 2002).The association between mental health and spiritual intelligence among primary school teachers was investigated by (Shatery, Hayat & Jayervand, 2018). Hassan & Shabani (2013) revealed that EI acted as a complete mediator between SI and mental wellness therefore, in the absence of EI, SI might not have a meaningful impact on mental health. Spiritual Intelligence, on the other hand has a considerable impact on teenagers' EI, and EI has a big impact on adolescents' mental health. Abadi et al. (2012) investigated the impact of fasting (rozah) on spiritual intelligence and contentment in fasting people, discovering that fasting people had higher spiritual intelligence than non-fasting people. Faribors et al. (2010) evaluated the association involving nurses' spiritual intelligence and happiness in Iran, discovering that there is indeed a strong link between the two. Spiritual intelligence training, according to Charkhabi et al. (2014)helps to mitigate psychological crises and increase the experienced level of mental health among high school students. Teachers with favourable and unfavourable attitude differ significantly on spiritual intelligence (Dar& Khan, 2018). Allen et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between religiosity/spirituality and mental health in older male convicts. They discovered that having more everyday spiritual encounters and not feeling neglected by God were linked to

improved mental well-being. According to Bozorgi & Bozorgi (2016)low spiritual intelligence and mental problems in pupils have a strong and detrimental association. There is no evidence of age having a mediating impact on the link between spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence and mental health (Shabani, Hassan, Ahmad & Baba, 2010). According to Akbarizadeh et al. (2012)spiritual intelligence, mental health and resilience among nurses have a favourable association. Spiritual intelligence training, as a new psychological and religious construct can help high school students reduce psychological disasters and improve their mental health experience(Morteza et al.2014). The level of spiritual intelligence of the parents influences the mental health of their children (Ghasem, 2012).The linkage between spiritual intelligence and its constituents with happiness in youngsters was studied by (Alihosseini, Rangan, Alihosseini & Hajmohammadi 2014) and the co-variance findings demonstrate that there is indeed a significant and positive relationship for both spiritual intelligence and its components (namely inner peace, spiritual experiences, forgiveness and self-recognition) with happiness. A research on spiritual well-being and mental well-being in students of the university was undertaken by (Jafari et al.2010). The study findings revealed that spiritual intelligence and mental health are interconnected in a substantial way. Kaur, (2013) investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job happiness in secondary school teachers and they found gender has little effect on spiritual intelligence or job satisfaction.Quadri and Akolkar, (2011) conducted research on college students' mental health and discovered a substantial disparity between undergraduate college students. Spiritual intelligence, benevolence, school environment and student performance were investigated as predictors of mental health in teenagers by (Singh et al. 2010). Further, the investigatorsin regression analysisrevealed that spiritual intelligence is significant predictor of mental health, while gender, residence location, creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, acceptance, permissiveness and academic achievement were not.

In this study,the spiritual intelligence and mental health of university students are examined based on their gender and stream. It also looked at the link between spiritual

intelligence and mental well-being. The following questions were addressed by the investigators:

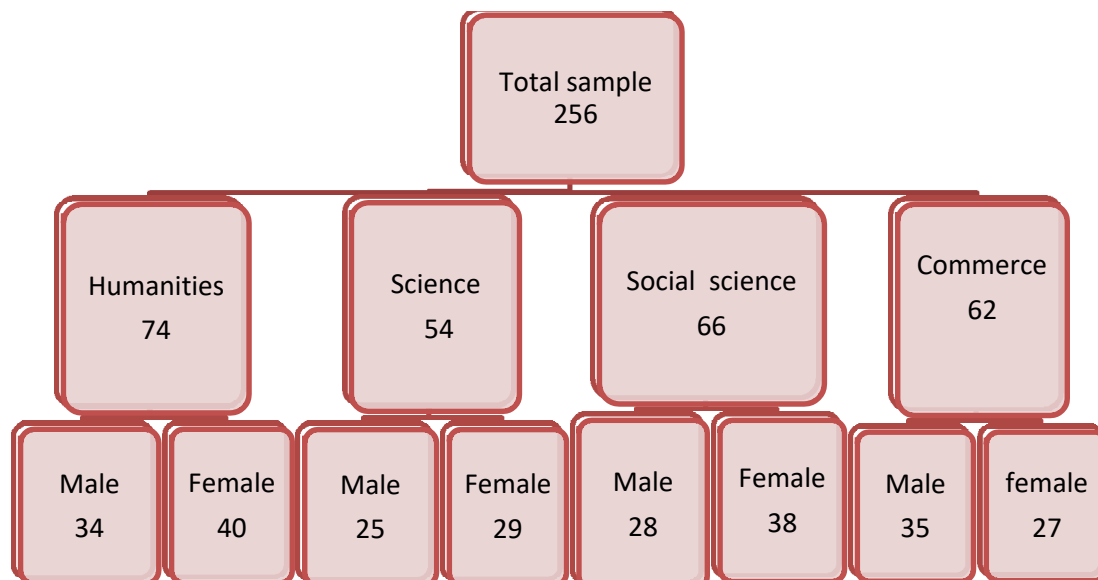
1. Does a student's spiritual intelligence and mental well-ness depend on their gender?
2. Is there a difference in mental health between students from different streams?
3. Whether or not students from various streams have varying levels of spiritual intelligence.
4. Does spiritual intelligence have anything to do with mental health?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Statistical population for the present study were all the students who were perusing their master's degree in the University of Kashmir Srinagar, India. The sample of this study consists of (256) university students from streams Humanities (74) science (54) social science (66) and commerce (62). Gender wise participation was male 122 (47.65%) and females 134 (52.35%). The breakup of sample is shown in fig 1.

Fig 1 showing the Stream and Gender wise sample breakup



3.2. Instrument

Spiritual Intelligence Scale

The Spiritual Intelligence Scale was used to assess the spiritual intelligence of subjects. It consists of six sub scales, namely, The Inner self, (e.g., "Comprises the personal inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from honesty and consistent uprightness of character"), The Inter-self (e.g., "Awareness related to how one influence others"), Biostoria (e.g., "The story experiences of one's life"), Life Perspectives (e.g., "what is the meaning of life?", "why am I here?" and "why are we here?"), Spiritual Actualization (e.g., "How I see my transcendental self"), Value Orientation, (e.g., what is right and and what is wrong"). Respondents answered these items on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 6= "strongly agree" to 1= "strongly disagree".

Cornbrash's Alpha Coefficient computed for the scale was 0.73, and the Guttman Split-Half coefficient calculated was 0.70. The present scale was validated by correlating it with Wuthnow's Test of Peak Experiences. Scores of both the scales were then correlated with each other and the correlation coefficient was found out to be $r = .61$.

Mental Health Battery

Mental health battery was used which consists of six sub scales: 1) Emotional stability, 2) Overall adjustment, 3) Autonomy, 4) Security insecurity 5) Self concept and 6) General intelligence. The validity of the scale was estimated as Part. I. ES 0.67, Part II. OA 0.70, Part III. AY 0.68, Part IV. SI 0.73, Part V. SC 0.60 and Part VI. IS 0.64. The reliability of the

test was estimated by test-retest method and the reliability for subscales found is ES ($r=0.87$), OA ($r=0.82$), AY ($r=0.76$), SI ($r=0.82$), SC ($r=0.78$) and IS ($r=0.82$). The odd even reliability of various sub scales is ES ($r=0.72$), OA ($r=0.87$), AY ($r=0.81$), SI ($r=0.82$), SC ($r=0.86$) and IS ($r=0.79$).

3.4. Statistical techniques

To find out the genderwise and stream wise differences between students on mental health and spiritual intelligence the data was analyzed by using Mean, S.D., 't' test, ANOVA, Post-hoc Analysis (Tukey test). Further Pearson's product moment correlation was applied to find the relationship between SI and MH.

4. Results

Table 1 showing the comparison between male and female students with respect to their spiritual intelligence

| Group | N | Mean | S.D | t value |
|--------|-----|--------|-------|---------|
| Male | 122 | 228.3 | 12.57 | 1.74 |
| Female | 134 | 222.03 | 14.12 | |

$p < 0.05$

The question that we answered first was to find if there are any significant gender differences in the scores obtained by the participants on spiritual intelligence. There were 122 males and 134 females in total, with mean scores of 228.30 (SD=12.57) and 222.03 (SD=14.12) respectively. The results presented in the table 1 show that gender wise no significant difference was found on spiritual intelligence of students.

Table 2 showing the Comparison between male and female students with respect to their mental health.

| Group | N | Mean | S.D | t value |
|--------|-----|-------|------|---------|
| Male | 122 | 204.2 | 1.65 | 0.33 |
| Female | 134 | 203.6 | 1.5 | |

$P < 0.05$

Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference in mental health MH between male and female students. At whatever level of significance, the computed $t=0.01$ is not significant.

The second key concern was if there are significant disparities in spiritual intelligence levels between streams. The ANOVA and Post-hoc analysis were used, and the results are shown in table 3a, 3b, and 3c.

Table 3 (a) depicts the descriptive study of students' mental health (MH) by stream.

| Stream | N | Mean | Std. deviation |
|-----------------------|----|--------|----------------|
| <i>Humanities</i> | 74 | 274.04 | 8.02 |
| <i>Science</i> | 54 | 269.7 | 8.14 |
| <i>Social science</i> | 66 | 270.68 | 10.75 |
| <i>Commerce</i> | 62 | 267.97 | 7.29 |

Table 3 (b) showing the ANOVA results between groups.**ANOVA RESULT**

| Mental Health | f-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Between groups | 6.331 | .000* |

p<0.05

Tables 3.a. and 3.b. show a significant difference in mental health between the four streams ($F=6.331$, $p<0.05$), with the Humanities stream having the best mental health (Mean=274.04, SD=8.02), followed by the Science stream (Mean=269.70, SD=8.14), and the Social science stream (Mean=270.68, SD=10.75). In comparison to the other streams, the commerce stream has revealed the least mental health (Mean=267.97, SD=7.29).

Table 3 (c) presenting the results of Post-hoc analysis (Tukey test) for multiple comparisons across different streams.

| Stream | Comparisons | Q | Sig |
|-----------------------|----------------|------|-------|
| <i>Humanities</i> | Science | 4.06 | .022* |
| | Social science | 2.59 | 0.26 |
| | Commerce | 5.73 | .000* |
| <i>Science</i> | Social science | 1.67 | 0.638 |
| | Commerce | 0.92 | 0.915 |
| <i>Social Science</i> | Commerce | 3.14 | 0.12 |

p<0.05

A post-hoc test was also conducted to discover which of the streams had the most significant differences in mental health when compared to the others. As shown in Table 3c the Humanities stream revealed a significant difference in MH between Science and Commerce. The mental health scores reported by the Humanities and Social Science, Science and Social Science, Science and Commerce, and Social Science and Commerce streams did not show any significant difference.

The third question investigators addressed was if there are significant disparities in spiritual intelligence levels between streams. The ANOVA was used, and the results are shown in table 4a, and 4b.

Table 4 (a) depicts the descriptive study of students' spiritual intelligence by stream.

| Stream | N | Mean | Std. deviation |
|-------------------|----|--------|----------------|
| Humanities | 74 | 203.9 | 12.26 |
| Science | 54 | 203.74 | 13.78 |

Social science 66 205.25 12.61

Commerce 62 201.95 5.04

Table 4 (b) showing the ANOVA results of streams between groups.

ANOVA RESULT

Spiritual intelligence f-ratio p-value

Between groups 0.898 0.442

p<0.05

Stream wise mean score obtained by the subjects on spiritual intelligence as presented in table 4a are Humanities (Mean=203.90, SD=12.26), Science stream (Mean=203.74, SD=13.78), Social science stream (Mean=205.25, SD=12.61) and the commerce stream (Mean=267.97, SD=7.29). ANOVA results in table 4.b. show that there is no significant difference in spiritual intelligence between the four streams ($F=0.898$, not significant at $p<0.05$). Since ANOVA test has not revealed any overall significant difference in stream wise analysis so Tukey's HSD was not applied.

Table 5 (a) showing the correlation between overall scores of SI and MH of students.

Dimension Mental Health

$r = 0.197^{**}$

Spiritual Intelligence $P=0.001$

$N=256$

p< 0.05

Table 5 (b) showing the correlation between sub-scales of SI and MH behaviours.

| Mental Health | Spiritual Intelligence | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | The Innerself | The Inter-self | Biostoria | Life perspectives | Spiritual Actualization | Value Orientation |
| Emotional stability | 0.224*** $P=0.000$ | 0.221*** $P=0.000$ | 0.101 $P=0.106$ | 0.117 $P=0.061$ | 0.305*** $P=0.000$ | 0.267*** $P=0.000$ |
| Overall adjustment | 0.288*** | 0.011 | 0.107 | 0.191** | 0.146* | 0.202** |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.860</i> | <i>P=0.087</i> | <i>P=0.002</i> | <i>P=0.019</i> | <i>P=0.001</i> |
| | 0.132* | 0.013 | 0.103 | 0.099 | 0.306*** | 0.216*** |
| Autonomy | <i>P=0.034</i> | <i>P=0.836</i> | <i>P=0.100</i> | <i>P=0.114</i> | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.000</i> |
| | 0.188** | 0.029 | 0.046 | 0.021 | 0.339*** | 0.019 |
| Security insecurity | <i>P=0.002</i> | <i>P=0.644</i> | <i>P=0.463</i> | <i>P=0.738</i> | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.762</i> |
| | 0.212*** | 0.161** | 0.152* | 0.291*** | 0.184*** | 0.136** |
| Self concept | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.009</i> | <i>P=0.014</i> | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.000</i> | <i>P=0.003</i> |
| | 0.069 | 0.087 | 0.009 | 0.012 | 0.017 | 0.138* |
| General intelligence | <i>P=0.271</i> | <i>P=0.165</i> | <i>P=0.886</i> | <i>P=0.848</i> | <i>P=0.786</i> | <i>P=0.027</i> |

p < 0.05, *N*=256

Pearson's product moment correlation was calculated to see if there was a relationship between spiritual intelligence and mental health. The findings in table 5a show that there is positive and significant correlation between spiritual intelligence and mental health behaviours of students ($r=197^{**}$, $p=001$ and $N=256$). Pearson's product moment correlations between SI and MH components were also calculated. The results show emotional stability has a significant link with the SI dimensions of inner-self, inter-self, self actualization, and value orientation, as shown in Table 5b. The SI dimensions of biostoria and life perspective had no correlation with emotional stability. The overall adjustment component of the MH has a substantial link with the inner-self, life perspective, self actualization, and value orientation, but not with the inter-self or biostoria. The MH's autonomy component showed a substantial relationship with inner-self, self-actualization, and value orientation, but not with inter-self, biostoria and life perspective. SI's inner self and self actualization dimensions have a considerable positive link with the MH's security-insecurity component but security-insecurity had no significant correlation with inter-self, biostoria, life perspective, or value orientation. The findings also show a significant positive relationship between MH's self concept and all SI dimensions. Only one

SI dimension, value orientation, showed a meaningful connection with general intelligence out of six.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the study showed that the Humanities stream demonstrated a considerable difference in MH between Science and Commerce. Post-hoc test confirm no significant difference in the mental health scores of Humanities and Social Science, Science and Social Science, Science and Commerce and Social Science and Commerce Streams. Stream wise mean score obtained by the subjects on spiritual intelligence as presented in table 4 (a) showed that there is no significant difference in spiritual intelligence between the four streams ($F=0.898$, not significant at $p<0.05$). Many researchers have reported substantial relationship between spirituality/spiritual intelligence and mental well-being/ mental health as (Kaplin and Giannone, 2020) examined the linkages between spiritual intelligence components and mental health and it was discovered that the ability to critically investigate existential issues was linked to higher levels of despair and anxiety, the ability to derive meaning and purpose from experience was linked to better mental health outcomes. In another study nurses with a high level of spiritual intelligence were found to have a better

psychological well-being and a sense of purpose in life (Sahebalzamani, Farahani, Abasi and Talebi, 2013). SI and Life Satisfaction, SI and Personal Meaning Production and SI and Transcendental Awareness were all found to have a relationship according to (King and DeCicco 2009).

The findings of this study revealed a relationship between emotional stability component of MH and the SI dimensions, inner-self, inter-self, self-actualization and value orientation. Emotional stability had no association with the SI dimensions of Biostoria and life perspective. The inner-self, life perspective, self actualization and value orientation are all linked to the overall adjustment component of the MH, but not the inter-self or Biostoria. The autonomy component of the MH demonstrated a strong link to inner-self, self-actualization and value orientation, but not to inter-self, biostoria, or life perspective. The MH's security-insecurity component has a substantial positive relationship with SI's inner self and self actualization dimensions, but security-insecurity showed no significant linkage with inter-self, Biostoria, life perspective, or value orientation. All SI aspects have a significant positive link with MH's self concept,

according to the data. Value orientation had a significant relationship with general intelligence. These findings align with those of Hatta, Saad and Mohamad (2010) who reported spirituality have a favourable impact on individuals' overall health. Talebi, Sahebalzamani, Farahani, and Abasi, (2013) also revealed in their study that spiritual intelligence components such as conscious state expansion, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness and critical existential thinking have been proven to have a substantial association with psychological well-being.

Author Contributions

Dar M. A. and Mir M. I. contributed to conception and design of the study, review related literature, organized the database, and performed the statistical analysis. Maqbool A. and Lone S.A. wrote the first draft and sections of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The investigators declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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