

LEADERSHIP OPENING BEHAVIOUR AND PRODUCTIVITY OF WATER-PRODUCING FIRMS IN OBIO-AKPOR, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leader opening behavior and organizational productivity with its dimensions and measures of water producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted the resource-based view theory as it provides insights in facilitating leadership ambidexterity and productivity. The study applied the correlational research design premised in a non-contrived setting with a target population of seventy (70) employees of thirty-five (35) water producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State, which was also the study sample using the census sampling method. The study utilized a well-structured questionnaire, designed in Likert five-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree as the instrument used in collecting primary data from the respondent, its reliability would be ascertained through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient with a threshold of 0.70. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to form the inferential statistical tools for testing the bivariate hypotheses of the study. Findings from the study revealed significant and positive relationships between leader opening behavior and the three measures of organisational effectiveness work efficiency, innovation and time effectiveness within water-producing firms in Rivers State. The study concluded that leader opening behavior plays a crucial role in driving organisational effectiveness by optimizing team performance across multiple dimensions. When leaders set clear objectives, provide psychological safety, and establish transparent communication, employees are more engaged, productive, innovative, and time-conscious. It is recommended that organizations invest in leadership development programs that focus on cultivating opening behaviors such as goal clarity, openness and strategic communication.

Keywords: Leader Opening Behavior, Organizational Productivity, Work Efficiency, Innovation, Time Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Organizations across the globe are grappling with an alarming decline and stagnation in productivity (Ogige & Adejare, 2024). Despite the proliferation of advanced technologies and the widespread adoption of innovative management frameworks, many companies continue to struggle with optimizing workflows and enhancing process efficiency. These struggles manifest as reduced operational effectiveness, waning employee morale, and dwindling competitiveness (Ramesh, 2022). The interplay of factors such as rapid technological change, evolving workforce demographics, and intensifying global market pressures has created a volatile business environment, underscoring the urgent need for leadership to adopt adaptive and forward-thinking strategies (Rosing, Frese & Bausch, 2011).

Organizational productivity, defined as the output of goods and services per unit of labor, serves as a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness and success of firms, industries and economies (Omunakwe, Nwinyokpugi & Adiele, 2018). High productivity signifies consistent excellence across operational areas, enabling firms to outperform competitors over sustained periods. This performance is largely dependent on how well organizations harness and integrate resources such as raw materials, skills, labor, capital, and intellectual assets (Agarwal & Adjirackor, 2016). As noted by Sickles and Zelenyuk (2019), true productivity involves achieving maximum results with minimal time, resources, and personnel. Consequently, organizational productivity remains the bedrock of viability, profitability, and long-term growth and any lapse in its sustenance calls for urgent investigation and intervention.

In response, numerous scholars have examined various factors influencing organizational productivity, including employee involvement, planning, leadership style, work-life balance and motivation (Tamunosiki-Amadi et al., 2020; Olusanya et al., 2012; Amofa et al., 2016; Obinwanne & Kpaji, 2022; Raimi & Obindah, 2022; Macwan & Vaghela, 2024). While these contributions are valuable, the current global market demands organizational agility, innovation, and strategic execution. Central to achieving this is leadership opening behaviour a component of leadership ambidexterity which empowers organizations to concurrently pursue innovation and operational efficiency (Abdul-Azeez, Ihechere & Idemudia, 2024). Although this leadership dimension has garnered increasing scholarly attention, gaps remain in understanding its direct impact on productivity. Thus, this study investigates how leadership opening behaviour influences organizational productivity within water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leader open behaviour and productivity of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State. Therefore, the following specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the relationship between leader opening behaviour and work efficiency of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.
- ii. To examine the relationship between opening behaviour and innovation of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.
- iii. To examine the relationship between leader opening behaviour and time effectiveness of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptual model takes a linear relationship between leadership open behaviour and productivity of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State. Leadership open behaviour as predictor variable while the criterion variable which is organizational productivity and was measured with work efficiency, innovation and time effectiveness.

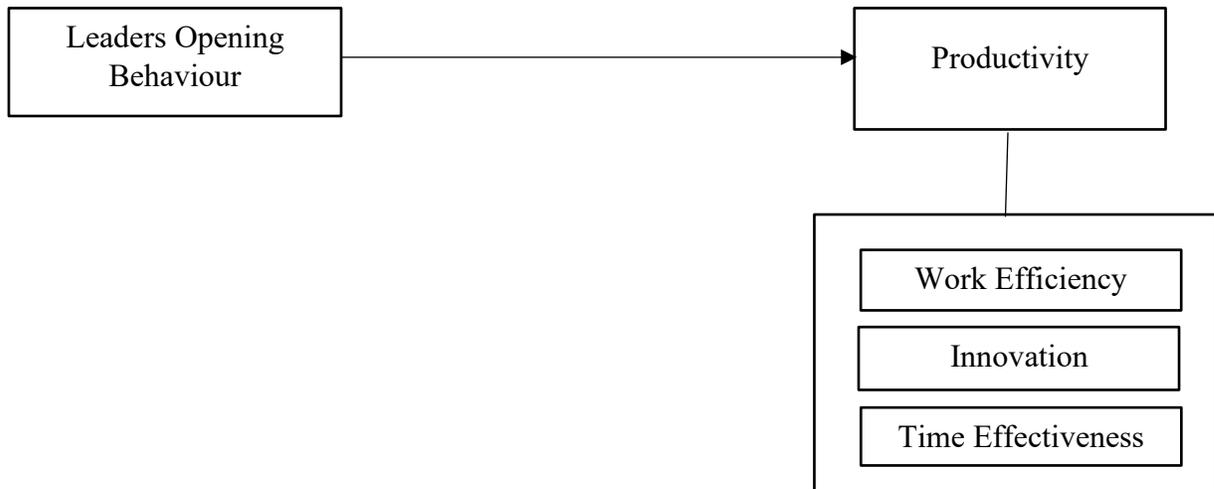


Figure 1: Conceptual framework depicting the relationship between leader open behaviour and Productivity of Water-Producing Firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.

Source: Desk Research, 2025 (leader open behaviour adopted from Rosing, Frese & Bausch, 2011; while measures of productivity were sourced from Yunus & Ernawati, 2018).

Research Questions

The following research question was formulated for the study.

- i. What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and work efficiency of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and innovation of water-producing firms in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and time effectiveness of water-producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between leader opening behavior and work efficiency of water producing firms in obio-akpor, Rivers State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between leader opening behavior and innovation of water producing firms in obio-akpor, Rivers State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between leader opening behavior and time effectiveness of water producing firms in obio-akpor, Rivers State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory as its foundational framework. Originally introduced by Barney (1991, as cited in Taher, 2011), the RBV theory explores why firms differ and how they attain and sustain competitive advantage by strategically deploying internal resources (Kraaijenbrink, Spender & Groen, 2010). It posits that resources—defined as inputs that enable a firm's operations (Barney, 2001) must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) to contribute meaningfully to sustainable competitive advantage. According to Szymaniec-Mlicka (2014), possessing and effectively utilizing such resources is essential for firms seeking to outperform competitors and enhance organizational productivity.

In the context of this study, leadership ambidexterity specifically leadership opening behaviour—is conceptualized as a VRIN resource that enables organizations to explore new opportunities while simultaneously exploiting existing capabilities. Ambidextrous leaders are capable of identifying new markets, developing innovative products and services, and optimizing internal processes to reduce costs and boost efficiency. Consequently, organizational productivity emerges as a critical outcome of this dual capability. Firms led by ambidextrous leaders are better positioned to innovate, adapt swiftly to dynamic market demands, and maintain long-term competitiveness. Thus, the application of RBV theory in this study underscores the strategic value of leader opening behaviour as a core resource that can drive both adaptability and productivity in contemporary organizational settings.

Conceptual Review

Leader Opening Behavior

Opening leadership behavior refers to leader actions that increase variability in subordinate behaviors by encouraging experimentation, risk-taking, and independent thinking, while also supporting efforts to challenge established routines (Wolf, Cantner, Graf & Rothgang, 2019; Luger, Raisch & Schimmer, 2018). Such behavior not only promotes autonomy and creative problem-solving but also plays a crucial role in inspiring and mobilizing teams toward a shared vision. A key component of this behavior is the leader's ability to articulate a compelling and imaginative future, communicating it in a way that inspires enthusiasm and commitment among followers (Bernal & Toro-Jaramilo, 2019). Equally important is the leader's capacity to build trusting relationships through open communication, rapport, and credibility, thereby fostering a collaborative and psychologically safe environment that enhances teamwork and innovation (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2011).

Productivity

Organizational productivity has become a key component of modern work culture, with organizations striving to maintain a highly productive workforce essential for long-term growth and sustainability (Bhatti & Qureshi, 2017). It is typically defined as a measure of economic performance that compares the output of goods and services to the inputs used over a specific period, reflecting the efficiency of individual workers (Ma & Ye, 2019). Kihama and Wainaina (2019) emphasized that productivity gauges the contribution of each employee to organizational goals, while Okochi and Ateke (2020) highlighted it as the extent to which employees fulfill their responsibilities and generate expected outputs. From a human capital perspective, productivity is a crucial metric for evaluating employee effectiveness. Cardy and Leonard (2004, as cited in Bhatti

& Qureshi, 2017) further defined it as the culmination of employee behaviors and actions that lead to tangible accomplishments and goal attainment. Ultimately, organizational productivity depends significantly on employees' abilities and motivation, making it a foundational factor in the success and resilience of any enterprise.

Measures of Productivity

Work Efficiency

Work efficiency is a multifaceted, measurable attribute that reflects both the efforts and achievements of employees (Task Management Guide, 2018). Drucker (1974, cited in Noordzij, 2013) defined efficiency as "doing things in the right way," emphasizing its focus on the quality of processes and outcomes. Efficiency is commonly measured in terms of output, or the quantity produced within a given timeframe (Everard & Burrow, 2011), and is closely linked to work efficiency, which refers to the speed and accuracy with which employees perform their tasks. This concept ties into organizational productivity, suggesting that greater employee efficiency contributes significantly to higher productivity when effectively managed (Fandom, 2017). Akerele (2011) highlighted that poor worker productivity in Nigeria can often be traced to inadequate compensation and the demoralizing disparity displayed by the privileged class, which undermines worker morale. Love (2019) further added that an organization's efficiency hinges on the strategic allocation of resources toward achieving its goals, with successful conversion of inputs into meaningful outputs such as goods, programs, or services serving as a direct indicator of its operational efficiency.

Innovation

Innovativeness, derived from the Latin term "innovate," meaning "into new," is fundamentally about doing things differently and encompasses the development of new ideas, products, devices, or novelties. It represents a forward-thinking mindset aimed at anticipating and shaping the future (Marinova & Phillimore, 2013). Damanpour and Gopalakrishnan (2018) describe innovativeness as the generation of new ideas and behaviors within an organization, while Högskolani et al. (2014) underscore its importance as a strategic imperative for organizational survival and success across all sectors and sizes, with Anderson, Potočnik, and Zhou (2014) noting that innovation can manifest as a process, strategy, or managerial approach. At its core, innovation involves generating and integrating ideas that link past experiences to current accomplishments in solving future challenges, playing a pivotal role in technological advancement and economic development globally (Arad, Hanson & Schneider, 2017).

Time Effectiveness

Msila (2011) submitted that time is a powerful resource that may be used to accomplish any goal or get the most reward from your efforts, no matter how little. In today's fast-paced world, the key to success is a well-managed use of one's limited time. When discussing time, it is crucial to practice effective time effectiveness on your own terms, choosing what to do, how much time to devote to activities, how to execute activities more effectively, and when the time is ideal for certain tasks. Time is a finite and irreplaceable commodity that never returns (Kayode & Ayodele, 2015). The key to success is the management of this resource, which everyone has in equal measure. Time is considered the most valuable resource since it can never be duplicated, inherited, or sold; in addition, all of humanity's endeavors are time-sensitive because they need the use of

time to accomplish their goals (Akomolafe & Oluwatimehin, 2013). Because of its nature and the absolute need of making the most of one's time, the availability of time is absolutely inelastic.

Empirical Review

Mascareño, Rietzschel and Wisse (2021) did a study on ambidextrous leadership: opening and closing leader behaviors to facilitate idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. The generation of ideas and the subsequent promotion and implementation of these ideas are important for organizational performance. Unfortunately, however, ideas do not always turn into innovations. Based on the ambidexterity theory of leadership for innovation, we argue that both employee idea generation and the relationship between idea generation on the one hand and idea promotion and idea realization on the other, could benefit from leaders who display both opening (fostering exploration) and closing behaviors (fostering exploitation). Results based on dyadic data (N = 201 dyads) partly supported our hypotheses, showing that opening leader behaviors were positively related to idea generation and subsequently to idea promotion and idea realization, and that closing leader behaviors strengthened the relationship between idea generation and idea realization (but not the relationship between idea generation and idea promotion).

Schindler (2015) also did a study on ambidextrous leadership: the role of flexibly switching between opening and closing leadership behaviors for team innovative outcome in the case of management consultancies. Although initially developed as an organizational learning capability, the achievement of an ambidextrous organization is first and foremost a leadership challenge. As one approach to ambidextrous leadership as a predictor of innovation. Focusing on management consultancy teams as a practical setting, this empirical study is one of the first to address Rosing *et al.*'s (2011) ambidextrous leadership model in form of a qualitative research design. By conducting 10 semi-structured interviews with management consulting project leaders, information were collected and analyzed first to derive conclusions about the dynamics of opening and closing leadership behaviors along a project, secondly to identify factors that cause a leader to switch between those contrasting leadership behaviors, and last to provide an indication about the effect of opening and closing leadership behaviors for innovative team outcome. Findings provide support for the conclusion that both opening and closing leadership behaviors are required to contribute to team innovative outcome, whereas a general tendency towards closing leadership behaviors can be derived.

Ahlers and Wilms (2017) carried out a study on ambidextrous leadership in innovation: a multiple case study of innovation leaders on the alignment of opening and closing leader behaviors. The purpose of this study is to extend the existing theory of ambidextrous leadership from Rosing and colleagues by providing a more differentiated view with regard to its most central assumption about how innovation leadership can be described. The research goal was to explore how both types of leadership behaviors alternate over the course of the innovation process. On the basis of the Stage-Gate process model opening and closing leadership behaviors were explored during the innovation process. Results reveal that opening and closing leadership behaviors are both constantly present but occur in different intensity over the course of the innovation process. Thereby findings generally underline the importance of ambidextrous leadership within innovation processes. In addition, the applied model of ambidextrous leadership is further extended by defining and refining existing and new items of ambidextrous leadership behaviors

METHODOLOGY

The study was a correlational study as it focused on assessing the relationship between leadership ambidexterity and productivity and also sought to establish its operations in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State. The population of the study was the 35 water producing firms in Port-Harcourt and Obio-Akpor local government areas of Rivers State. The target population of the study is seventy (70) employees of thirty-five (35) water producing firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State using the consensus sampling method. The study utilized a well-structured questionnaire, designed in Likert five-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree as the instrument used in collecting primary data from the respondent, its reliability would be ascertained through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient with a threshold of 0.70. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the dimensions of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variables as well as to test the hypotheses which was stated in the null form with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A total of 70 questionnaire copies were distributed based on the adopted sample size, 65 copies were retrieved successfully from the target organizations and utilized, thus only 65 copies were considered admissible in the study. 5 copies were not returned therefore unused. As such, data for the study was premised on 65 cases from the 35 water producing companies in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State.

Bivariate Data Analysis

The bi-variate data analysis employed the use of bivariate inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation tool which was used at a 95% confidence level. Specifically, the tests covered hypotheses H_{01} to H_{03} which were bivariate at all, stated in the null manner. The study relied on the Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool to carry out the analysis thus the probability criterion of 0.05 significance level was adopted for accepting the null hypotheses at ($P > 0.05$) or rejecting the hypotheses at ($P < 0.05$).

Leader Opening Behaviour and Productivity Measures

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for leader opening behaviour and productivity (work efficiency, innovation and time effectiveness) of water-producing firms in Rivers State. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p – value), which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

Table 1: Correlations for Leader Opening Behavior and Work Efficiency

		Leader Opening Behavior	Work Efficiency
Leader Opening Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Work Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.650**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Survey, 2025.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and work efficiency of water-producing firms in Rivers State?

In Table 1, the analysis of the relationship between leader opening behaviour and work efficiency in water-producing firms in Rivers State, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, revealed a strong positive correlation coefficient ($r = 0.650$), suggesting that when leaders demonstrate opening behaviours—such as fostering open communication, clarifying goals, and building trust employees exhibit higher levels of work efficiency. This implies that openness in leadership enhances goal clarity, team collaboration, and employee ownership of tasks, thereby improving overall productivity. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.423$) indicates that approximately 42.3% of the variance in employee work efficiency can be attributed to leader opening behaviour. Additionally, hypothesis testing showed a statistically significant relationship between leader closing behaviour and work efficiency ($p = 0.012 < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirming that leader closing behaviour also significantly influences employee efficiency in water-producing firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlations for Leader Opening Behavior and Innovation

		Leader Opening Behavior	Innovation
Leader Opening Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	.860**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Survey, 2025.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and Innovation of water-producing firms in Rivers State?

In table 2, the analysis of the relationship between leader opening behaviour and innovation in water-producing firms in Rivers State, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, revealed a very strong positive correlation coefficient ($r = 0.860$), indicating that as leaders foster open communication and clearly define objectives, there is a substantial enhancement in organizational innovation. This suggests that leader openness creates an environment conducive to creativity, idea-sharing, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby significantly boosting the firm's innovative capabilities. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.740$) implies that 74.0% of the variance in innovation can be explained by leader opening behaviour. Furthermore, the statistical test of significance ($p = 0.012 < 0.05$) confirms a significant relationship between leader closing behaviour and innovation, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the conclusion that both leader opening and closing behaviours are significantly related to innovation in water-producing firms in Rivers State.

Table 4: Correlations for Leader Opening Behavior and Time Effectiveness

		Leader Opening Behavior	Time Effectiveness
Leader Opening Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	65	65
Time Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.687**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	65	65

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Survey, 2025.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between leader opening behaviour and time effectiveness of water-producing firms in Rivers State?

In table 3, the analysis of the relationship between leader opening behaviour and time effectiveness in water-producing firms in Rivers State, using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique, revealed a strong positive correlation coefficient ($r = 0.687$), suggesting that when leaders engage in opening behaviours—such as promoting open communication, setting clear discussion objectives, and fostering a transparent work environment employees demonstrate significantly improved time management and task prioritization. This positive relationship implies that leadership practices encouraging clarity and openness enhance employees' focus, organization, and timely decision-making, thereby contributing to greater time effectiveness. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.472$) further indicates that approximately 47.2% of the variance in time effectiveness can be statistically attributed to leader opening behaviour. Additionally, the statistical test of significance ($p = 0.012 < 0.05$) confirms a significant relationship between leader closing behaviour and time effectiveness, warranting the rejection of the null hypothesis and affirming that both leader opening and closing behaviours significantly influence time effectiveness in water-producing firms in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Leader Opening Behavior and Productivity in Water Producing Firms in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State

The findings from the study conducted in Obio-Akpor, Rivers State, reveal that leader opening behavior has a significant positive impact on work efficiency, innovation, and time effectiveness within water-producing firms. Regarding work efficiency, the analysis shows that leaders who clearly communicate project goals, expectations, and individual roles foster teams that are more focused, motivated, and productive. These leaders provide direction and instill a strong sense of purpose, which enhances commitment and performance among team members. This aligns with existing literature (Mascareño et al., 2021; Gerlach, Hundeling & Rosing, 2020), supporting the assertion that leader opening behavior is crucial for optimizing work outcomes. Similarly, the relationship between leader opening behavior and innovation is also significant. Leaders who encourage experimentation, risk-taking, and continuous learning while providing structure and clarity tend to create environments that nurture creativity. This reinforces the views of Spisak et al. (2014) and Mascareño et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of psychological safety and supportive leadership in driving innovation.

Furthermore, the study found a significant association between leader opening behavior and time effectiveness. Leaders who effectively initiate projects by setting clear priorities, timelines, and shared expectations enable their teams to manage time more efficiently. Such leaders reduce ambiguity, minimize delays, and help team members stay focused on high-value tasks, contributing to better time utilization. These findings echo the assertions of Zacher, Robinson, and Rosing (2016), who noted that effective leader communication enhances time management within teams. Overall, the study underscores that leader opening behavior through clarity, direction, and support plays a pivotal role in enhancing work efficiency, fostering innovation, and improving time effectiveness in water-producing firms in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that leader opening behavior plays a critical role in enhancing organizational performance within water-producing firms in Rivers State. Specifically, leaders who promote open communication, clearly define goals, and foster a supportive and transparent work environment significantly improve employee work efficiency, drive innovation, and enhance time effectiveness. These results underscore the importance of cultivating opening leadership behaviors to optimize team outcomes and sustain competitive advantage.

Based on the findings regarding leader opening behavior, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Management should train leaders to consistently set clear goals, expectations, and roles to improve employees' focus and work efficiency.
2. Organizations should encourage leaders to foster open communication and psychological safety to stimulate innovation and creative problem-solving among team members.
3. Leaders should establish structured timelines and prioritize transparency to help teams manage tasks efficiently, reduce delays, and enhance time effectiveness

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