

# Students' Use and Evaluation of College Libraries in Crawford University, Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** College libraries in universities complement the efforts of main libraries in information provision to students and faculty members. They provide prompt reference opportunity and bring library and information services closer to users. This study assessed the level of usage and users' assessment of college libraries at the Crawford University, Nigeria.

**Methodology:** The study evaluated the users' level of satisfaction with the resources and services of the two college libraries in the university. The respondents were undergraduate students at their various levels of study, 100-400 levels. 200 students were randomly selected for the study and corresponding copies of the questionnaire were administered on them to gather data. A total of 194 (87%) responses were received.

**Findings:** The results indicated that the students use their college libraries sparingly; they use the libraries less for references and other academic purposes but more for relaxation in between lectures and to discuss with mates and friends. However, the respondents rate the information resources, services and facilities of the libraries as fair. The study concluded that the resources and services of the college libraries are poorly used and used less for academic purposes. This may not be unconnected with the fair rating of the libraries by the respondents.

**Implications:** The research emphasised that there should be adequate awareness on the benefits of using the college libraries to students as it was discovered that the level of usage was poor.

**Originality/Value:** The study proffered recommendations among which are guided tour of the libraries during the fresh students' orientation programme; improvement in the user education course of the University, it should made more practical; and motivation of staff of the library in order to make them more pleasant and responsive to users' services and needs.

**Keywords:** User evaluation; User satisfaction; User study; College libraries; Crawford University, Nigeria

## Introduction

Arthur, Brafı, and Kuranchie (2013) described academic libraries as high ways to the forest of intellectual ideas. Libraries serve as the powerhouse for academic activities by carefully selecting, processing and storing relevant information that could be retrieved to meet both academic and leisure demands of all members of the university community. The primary reason for establishing libraries in Universities is to support the teaching, learning and research activities of their parent organization. The library plays a vital role in assisting the University to fulfill its basic objectives. By making information materials available for use, a well-equipped University library is indispensable for the transmission and

advancement of knowledge. A well-stocked library helps enhance teaching and research. Students use the library to augment the knowledge garnered in the classroom, faculty also use it to enhance their teaching and research. Adeniran (2011) posited that academic libraries in tertiary institutions serve two complementary purposes. They support universities curricular and research activities of faculty members and students. Furthermore, Banting et.al (2008) stated that academic libraries play significant roles towards the achievement of the goals of tertiary institution. They further stated that academic institutions would hardly be able to provide for the academic, intellectual and information needs of staff and students without the services of good libraries. These are because library and

information services have been noted as essential to the accomplishment of researches and successful teaching and learning.

Library of a university initially had the sole responsibility of providing needed services to the few members of staff and students in the few established departments. However, with time, more departments were created and resulting in increase in the population of users attended to by the main library. Bozimo (1992) describes libraries in tertiary institutions as the nerve/centre of activities that hold the key resources for departments in the teaching and learning process. Since the academic departments will have to patronize the main library for needed information, there is a tendency towards failing to satisfy users, thus the need for departmental or faculty libraries. In a related study, Bassey (2006) reveals that dissatisfaction among users of the library is due largely to inadequate information resources and services or poor attitude of its staff. With the growth and development of the university, the main library is often not in a position to provide the needed resources and services to users adequately and this calls for supplementary efforts or services which departmental libraries are established for.

College or departmental library, according to Prytherch (2000), is a library in a college or university which is established apart from the main library, and is restricted to one subject or group of related subjects. College or departmental library is also known as branch library, faculty library and laboratory collection. Uhegbu (1989) submits that it is a special reading room with selected collection in the department's subject groups for the benefit of the students and teaching staff of that particular college or department and others who wish to make use of the materials on permission. This is usually housed in a separate building outside the main library. The reasons for establishing college and departmental libraries, according to Uhegbu (1989), are: general increase in the total population of students admitted; proliferation in the number of departments being created; geographical distances between various schools and departments within an institution due to expansion; and struggle towards subject specialized collection for effective accessibility of information.

A college library is meant to bring information services to the door steps of the users. It is, therefore, expected to enjoy high patronage especially if it is well equipped and adequately staffed. In an academic community, students, lecturers and researchers are always encouraged to visit the library frequently if materials that can satisfy their information needs are available and the library staff is user friendly. Abubakar (2007) averred that the adequacy of information will normally prompt a reaction to its use particularly by the academia. This will stimulate progress and development in the overall system. For effective learning, teaching and research in the university, the library information resources should be relevant, current and in a variety of formats such as text books, journals, magazines, indexes and abstracts, encyclopedia, government publications, publications of international organisations, theses and dissertations, research and technical reports, microforms and electronic databases.

Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project or programme. The aim of evaluation in a library setting is to find out whether or not the objectives of the library are being achieved and also to know if the information needs of the users are met. Evaluation of library resources and services is a measure of quality assurance. Fidzani, (1998) Quality assurance demands that, libraries from time to time need to be assessed and evaluated by its users. The users' satisfaction is considered to be a reliable benchmark for determining library effectiveness. Users' information needs are met in an effective way by providing standard but suitable library services that they need. Users' assessment can provide invaluable information to libraries in re-orienting their collections, services and activities for effectively meeting their information needs. Osburn (1992) Periodic collection assessment is necessary to determine to what extent library collections are relevant, current and adequate in meeting the information needs of users.

To determine whether the objectives of the library are met, according to Bassey (2006), the views, opinions, and perception of the library users should be sought. In other words, any library that wants to improve its resources and services must solicit the help of its users to identify areas of weakness in order to improve upon them. On the adequacy of library

resources and services, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) showed that it is the size of a collection, combined with its quality that ensures its adequacy. Thus, adequacy of any collection has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

The extent to which library resources and services satisfy the needs of users will determine how effective and efficient a particular library is. For a library to be worth its salt, the resources and services it renders must strive to meet and satisfy the needs of its users. However, user's perception, which is a way a user forms impression of and makes inferences about library resources, services and personnel in term of how far they meet their expectation, should be used to measure library performance. This is because, according to Aina (2004) user is critical to the practice of librarianship and that all processes revolve round the users. User is a focal point of all libraries or information centres since the primary objectives of library's existence is to satisfy its users i.e. provision of excellent services to its users. This is usually the mission statement of libraries. This study focused on the use of college libraries in Crawford University, Ogun state Nigeria by the students of the institution. Information are elicited from the students on different aspects of the use of library such as on their frequency of use of the college libraries, reasons for using the college libraries, and their opinion on the college libraries services and facilities.

### **The Study Environment**

Crawford University is located in Igbesa, Ogun state, Nigeria. It is a private University owned by the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). It was founded on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 2005 and opened its doors to the first batch of students (all undergraduate) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 2005.

The vision of the University is to be a centre of excellence, producing graduates with a well-balanced education. Its mission is to be an international institution of higher learning with enviable standards of teaching and research. The philosophy of the University is to develop individuals to the point of self-actualization thereby equipping them intellectually and morally to contribute meaningfully to the development of Nigeria and by proxy the world at large.

Crawford University Library became operational immediately the University started. It is a central academic organ with the aim of supporting all

academic programmes as well as facilitating research by members of the University community and its immediate neighbourhood. It stocks books, journals, and other relevant materials in all areas of knowledge especially those that are pertinent to the programmes being run in the University. The Library has access to online journals, abstracts, and full text online materials. Crawford University library is made up of three service points which are the main library and the two college libraries (College of Business and Social Science library and College of Natural and Applied science library.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Following the National Universities Commission (NUC) policy of bringing library services closer to users, faculty (college) libraries were made mandatory pre-requisite for the accreditation of academic programmes in all Nigerian Universities. Crawford University has two college libraries attached to the two existing colleges in the University. The colleges are College of Natural and applied Sciences (CONAS) and College of Business and Social Sciences (CBSS). Although Crawford University main library strives hard to ensure that quality services and facilities are being provided in these college libraries, it is not unlikely that users have a different view of what the college libraries stands for. In the light of this, there is therefore the need to carry out a study on the students' usage and evaluation of students' use of the college libraries.

### **Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine frequency of use of the college libraries;
2. investigate purpose for using the college libraries; and
3. find out the opinion of Crawford University students about their college library services and facilities.

### **Literature Review**

Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) described an academic library as the heart of learning community, which provides a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance, their knowledge. In this regard, the librarians and staff provide numerous services to these users, addressing their diverse needs, characteristics, and interests. They however

observe that with the advent of online catalogue, CD-ROMS, online databases, other electronic resources, new methods of document library has begun to change. Students according to the writers do not have to be physically present in the library in order to access the library's resources but can access the resources without stepping into the library building. They further explain that users can also easily access other libraries' resources, such as online catalogue and unrestricted databases.

University libraries by their establishment exist mainly to support the acquisition of knowledge by their clientele, through the provision of information materials for the purpose of teaching, learning and research. It is however suffice to note as pointed out by Onwubiko (2005) that university libraries have progressively shifted from the old view of being the custodians of books to that of being the disseminator of information. He further observes that these libraries are busy information centres, packaging information in various formats for the use of prospective users. In other words a library service within the university system is user-centered as facilitated by the provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in Nigeria. It is therefore not an overview to note that university libraries have become important collating and disseminating centre for information.

Ahmad (2005) acknowledges that institution' library systems, whether centralized or decentralized, vary in size and formation, depending on the number of faculties, colleges or departments in each university. This suggests that certain institutions prefer centralization of library system which permits only the main library to be responsible for the availability and accessibility of information to the whole community. Alternatively, however, the decentralized system facilitates autonomy of information provision by faculties and departments to their respective audiences. Obviously, the desire of an academic community is to have easy access to the available information resources which can be effectively achieved through branch library services.

Bassi, and Jonathan (2008) observe that the present increase in the students population and academic staff in Federal University of Technology Yola is generating need for the establishment of faulty libraries in the various schools/faculties. They reveal that with the

current population of the main users of the central library, it means that only about 7.11% of both academic staff and students can be accommodated in the Library as against at least 25% minimum number of users' population a university library is expected to accommodate. In view of the situation, the writers look into the challenges of setting up faculty libraries in the university.

Amkpa (2000) affirms that it is a common practice in university and other tertiary institution to establish branches of the main library in various locations in order to meet needs of the community the library serves. The author provides an example of the University of Maiduguri main library known as Ramat library and having four other branches namely: Aminu Kano Law library in faculty of law, Medical library, Education library, Engineering library and Agro-vet library. These branch libraries according to the writer are sometimes referred to as faculty libraries, school libraries and in fact in some cases departmental libraries.

Ababio et al (2012) concluded that an effective and efficient academic library system can significantly contribute to student and other users' development in a wider perspective. The authors studied the satisfaction level of students with respect to the available reading materials and the services provided by their library. The author adopted survey approach to gather data obtained from students using the Kumasi Polytechnic library. Using ordinal logistic regression the overall service satisfaction model was specified and 57%, 30.8%, 6.7% and 4.3% of the respondents believes that the overall service quality is good, moderate, excellent and poor respectively. Also from the estimated model, the overall service quality decreases when students are less satisfied with the individual service components. In general, the estimated model suggest that among all the variables, availability of current and relevant materials; adequate user instructions; reliable internet facilities as well as friendly and helpful library staff are the first four (4) library service segments that highly influenced the students ratings for overall service quality.

Users of academic library have many reasons for using the facility. For instance, a study conducted by Okiy (2000) on students and faculty use of academic libraries in Delta State University in Nigeria found that respondents used books more than other materials. In a

similar fashion, Ugah (2007) also found out that textbooks usage account for most reasons for library visits. Users of academic library are not limited to the use of its various resources; the need for librarians to encourage and educate users on the effective use of the facility is eminent. Popoola (2001) observes that information availability does not mean accessibility and use, and that academic libraries should stimulate primary demand for their products and services. Mason (2010) also shares the same opinion and suggests that librarians must be sympathetic and helpful to all students and that students must be aware that librarians and faculty members are there to instruct and encourage their intellectual odyssey and should be seen as facilitators.

Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) studied the use of an academic library. It was discovered that students use the library more doing examination period and also to do assignment. This corresponds with Yusuf and Iwu (2010) finding. The study also revealed that students complained about the inadequacy of information materials that would meet their information needs. Onuoha, Omokoje and Bamidele (2013) on the other hand find out that most undergraduates who use the library do so mainly to photocopy library materials and to use the reference services. Also, the study showed that a majority (83.0%) of the respondents were satisfied with the library services to a little extent. Few (15.0%) respondents claimed to be satisfied with the library services to a great extent. However, findings from a study on evaluation of the use library resources and services by the students of Paul University, Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria by Nwamnebe, etal (2014) shows that users are satisfied with the facilities and services provided by their University library. Observation also shows that they use the library most during examination period.

Alade, Iyoro and Amusa (2014) employed a survey method to explore the library use characteristics of undergraduates in a Nigerian University; Ondo State University of Science and Technology (OSUSTECH). Questionnaires were used to gather data from the entire student population, 426 students. 332 undergraduates (78%) completed and returned copies of the questionnaire. Analysis of the returned questionnaires revealed that the respondents make use of the library for few days per week and only for academic purposes. They consult reference sources and subject textbooks which

they wanted in both print and electronic formats while their previous knowledge of school library use and library instruction programmes positively influenced the undergraduates' use of library. The study in conclusion recommended involvement of the undergraduates in collection development activities of the library, acquisition of both electronic and print titles, and current awareness services on library's acquisition, functions and services.

Onuoha and Subair (2013) investigated undergraduates' use of libraries in federal Universities in south west Nigeria. Findings reveals that majority of the respondents do visit the library. 53% actually claimed they do so between one to five times a week, 19% claimed they visit the library up to six times a week, while only 28% affirmed that they do not visit the library. Also, the study identified lack of relevant books as the greatest challenge faced when using the library. This corroborates Kumar (2013) finding in a study on the use of library resources by the students of Indian Institute of management (IIM) which also reveals that lack of current and up-to-date information materials as the most outstanding problem regarding use of library service. The other problems are lack of support from library staff, restricted library hours and inability to find enough information in the catalogue index.

Bassi and Jonathan (2008) having established the need for faculty libraries highlight the following challenges the university will have to contend with: Raising adequate funds to cater for massive acquisition of materials for the libraries; Erecting structures for the libraries that can accommodate a reasonable number of users and the collection; Employing qualified librarians and other supporting staff to properly manage the libraries to serve users to the optimum period and services; Putting in place effective management procedure for effective co-ordination of these libraries towards the achievements of the general goal of the university; Avoiding wasteful duplication in terms of administration staff and accommodation; Establishing good harmonious relationship between the university librarians and the faculty deans.

Evaluation is very essential in any institution for organizational effectiveness. These when carried out, will inform such an institution as to whether it is progressing or retrogressing. Ogunrombi (2003) remarked that when performance is

measured, performance improves, but when it is measured and reported, the rate of improvement accelerates. Evaluations, in the library setting entails quantifying performance practice and sometimes compare with output of another library considered as ideal (Ogbuiyi and Okpe, 2013). Evaluating the use of faculty libraries in the Nigerian University system is one major concern that must be looked into following its emergence in recent times. (Emokinovo and Ogunrombi, 2012). Sivathaasan (2013) find out that there is no significant difference between gender, year of study and subject specialization on the use of library facilities. The study also revealed that gender and year of study have negative association with the use of library facilities whereas subject specialization is positively correlated. Mubashir and Adeoti (2008) posit that the university library performs the basic functions of provision of information resources, dissemination of information, education, teaching and learning. The authors believed that it is through these functions that the library can satisfactorily serve the users. The authors considered these as the criteria for measuring quality service.

Chia and Edzan (2008) evaluated the users' level of satisfaction with the Chinese studies collection at the University of Malaya Library. The respondents were library professionals, faculty members, undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Department of Chinese Studies, University of Malaya. A total of 135 responses were received with a response rate of 77.5%. The results indicated that the undergraduates of years 2 and 3 and the postgraduates were less satisfied with the collection and services compared with the undergraduates of year 1, faculty members and

library professionals. The results further showed that there is no significant gap between the performance evaluation by library professionals and library users' expectations in the level of satisfaction with the information sources available between the library professionals and the respondents from the Department of Chinese Studies at the university. The study in conclusion identified some implications such as the need to: Provide adequate reference service to support the academic needs of the university students and faculty in the area of Chinese studies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; Encourage intensive research at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to propel the university to be a resource centre and research institute of excellence in Malaysia for Chinese studies. The study provided an understanding of how users use the Chinese studies collection as a teaching, learning and research resource; Support library policies to achieve the maximum use of library resources in an academic library. The findings will be useful for the University of Malaya Library to review their library resources, services and facilities to effectively meet the needs of the users.

**Methodology**

The population of Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun state is one thousand two hundred (1200) students out of which two hundred (200) samples were selected using random sampling technique across the two colleges of the university. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of the two hundred (200) questionnaires administered, one hundred and ninety four (194) copies were properly filled and returned. The returned questionnaires were therefore analyzed using simple percentage.

**Table 1: Demographic Background of respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	%
<b>Gender of Respondents</b>		
Male	89	45.9
Female	99	51.0
Missing	6	31.1
<b>College of Respondents</b>		
CBSS	117	60.6
CONAS	76	39.4

<b>Course of Study</b>		
Accounting and Finance	29	14.9
Administration and Management	52	26.8
Social Science	26	13.4
Mass Communication	9	4.6
Economics	7	3.6
Biochemistry	17	8.8
Computer science/ICT	23	11.9
Microbiology	13	6.7
Industrial Chemistry	3	1.5
Physics with electronics	7	3.6
Geology	6	3.1
<b>Students' Level of study</b>		
100 level	46	23.7
200 level	48	24.7
300 level	38	19.4
400 level	59	30.4

Table 1 presents a breakdown of respondents' gender, college, course of study and level. Majority of the respondents are female 99 (51%) and most from the College of Business and social Science 117 (60.6%). The department of management and administration had the highest

number of respondents 52(26.8%), followed by accounting, 29(14.9%) while the least is Industrial Chemistry 3(1.5%). Most of the respondents were in their final year of study as indicated by their level. 59 (30.4%) were in 400 level (final year).

**Table 2: Frequency of use of College Library**

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Daily	16	8.2
2-3 times a week	46	23.7
Once a week	18	9.3
Occasionally	68	35.1
During examination	7	3.6
Never	34	17.5
Missing	5	2.6

Table 2 shows that 16 (8.2%) respondents use the college library daily; 46 (23.7%) use it 2-3 times a week; 18 (9.3%) use the college library once a week; 68 (35.1) use it occasionally while 7 (3.6%) use it only during examination. 34 (17.5%) has never use the college library

This finding reveals that majority of the respondents use their college libraries occasionally. This contradicts the findings of Yusuf and Iwu (2010), Onuoha and Subair (2013).

**Table 3: Reasons for using the College Library**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
	<b>F (%)</b>	<b>F (%)</b>	<b>F (%)</b>	<b>F (%)</b>
To solve/write assignment	53 (27.3)	44 (22.7)	66 (34.0)	26 (13.4)
To read lecture note	49 (25.3)	33 (17.0)	60 (30.9)	48 (24.7)
To consult journal	104 (53.6)	44 (22.7)	31 (16.0)	10 (5.2)
To read for examination	55 (28.4)	35 (18.0)	46 (23.7)	52 (26.8)
To consult library materials	62 (32.0)	45 (23.2)	49 (25.3)	34 (17.5)
To meet/chat with friends	131 (67.5)	31 (16.0)	20 (10.3)	5 (2.6)
To relax and enjoy myself	136 (70.1)	28 (14.4)	15 (7.7)	5 (2.6)

Table 3 represents reasons for using the college library. Various reasons were adduced for using

the college library. 66 (34.0%) of the respondents rarely come to the college library in

order to solve/write assignment; 53 (27.3%) frequently use the library to solve /write their assignments; 60 (30.9%) of respondents rarely come to the college library to read their lecture notes; 49 (25.3%) come to the college library to read their lecture notes while 48 (24.7%) never go there to read lecture note. Only 33 (17.0%) sometimes come to the college library to read their lecture notes. 104 (53.6%) of the respondents come the college library to consult journals. 44 (22.7%) come to the college library to consult journals while only 31 (16.0%) rarely come to consult journals. 10 (5.2%) never come to the library to consult journals read and prepare for examination

55 (28.4%) of the respondents come to the college library to read and prepare for examination. 52 (26.8%) never come to the college library to read/prepare for examination while 46 (23.7%) rarely come to the college library to read for examination. Only 35 (18.0%)

come to the library to read for examination. 62 (32.0%) of the respondents frequently consult library materials when they come to the college library. 49 (25.3%) rarely consult library materials while 45 (23.2%) sometimes consult library materials. Only 34 (17.5%) of the respondents never consult library materials when they visit the college library.

The largest number of the respondents, 131(67.5%) frequently visit the library to meet/chat with friends, 31 (16.0%) sometimes go to the college library to meet/chat with friends while 20 (10.3%) go to the college library to meet/chat with friends. Only 5 (2.6%) never go there to meet/chat with friends Majority of the respondents 136 (70.1%) visit the college library only to relax and enjoy themselves, 28 (14.4%) sometimes go there to relax and enjoy themselves. 15 (7.7%) rarely visit the library to relax while 5 (2.6%) never go there to relax and enjoy themselves.

**Table 4: Users' Opinion on College Library services and Facilities**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	19	9.3
Good	38	19.6
Fair	75	38.7
Poor	36	18.6
Very poor	13	6.7
No opinion	13	6.7

Table 4 represents respondents' opinion on college libraries' services and facilities. The largest number of respondents 75 (38.7%) rated Crawford university college libraries as 'fair' while 38 (19.6%) rated the as 'good'. 36 (18.6%) rated them 'poor'; only 19 (9.3%) rated them 'very good' while 13 (6.7%) rated them very poor. This result corroborates Ugah (2007) findings that reveal that students rate University library services and facilities as fair.

**Discussion of findings**

Findings from this study revealed that majority of Crawford University students use the college library occasionally. This is at variance with the findings of Onuoha and Subair (2013) whose study revealed that undergraduates visit the library one to five times a week. This finding also opposed the study of Emokiniovo and Ogunrombi (2012) which revealed that faculty libraries are being used maximally. In addition, the study revealed that most Crawford University students visit the college library to meet/chat with friends and also to relax and enjoy themselves. This is not the primary

purpose of establishing the college libraries and it disagrees with Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) whose study find out that students use the library more doing examination and also to do assignment.

On users' opinion of college library's services and facilities, respondents rate the services and facilities of Crawford University college libraries as 'fair'. This result corroborates Ugah (2007) findings that showed that students rate University library services as fair.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

Considering the findings of this study, it can be concluded that college libraries at the Crawford University are poorly used and less on academic issues. This poor use of the library may not be unconnected with the below average rating of the information resources, services and facilities of the libraries. In the light of this conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Aggressive user education, most especially through the use of library course should be established and the



significance of the college libraries should be constantly stressed in the class.

- Library management should ensure that proper library orientation is put on the priority list especially for the first year students and the availability and importance of the college libraries should be emphasized during the orientation.
- Guide tour of the college library facilities/materials should be organized often.
- The library management should encourage more use of the college libraries by acquiring current textbooks and journals. The college libraries should also be made more sensitive to the students' information needs.
- Pleasant and ready to assist personnel should be deployed to the college libraries in order to foster user-librarian interactions.
- The college libraries internal and external environments should be improved upon. It should be made more aesthetically inviting and noiseless as much as possible.
- The collections of the college libraries should integrate both print and electronic resources. And there should be regular maintenance of electronic information sources and access facilities in the libraries.
- The library orientation programmes being provided to the students should be improved upon. It should be made more practical so that the students can acquire information literacy skills.
- Newly acquired information sources, and services of the college libraries should be communicated to the student users in other to promote their usage.

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