

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIORS IN MILITARY ORGANIZATION

Raluca RUSU

rusu.raluca@armyacademy.ro

“NICOLAE BĂLCESCU” LAND FORCES ACADEMY, SIBIU, ROMANIA

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the present study is to identify and analyze the factors that predict counterproductive behaviors in the military organization, specifically among military students. A quantitative research design, based on data collection through multiple measurement scales, was used to achieve this goal. The measurement scales used to analyze the organizational predictors of counterproductive behaviors were: the Organizational Constraints Measurement Scale (Spector & Jex, 1998), the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Measurement Scale (Spector & Jex, 1998). And perceptions of organizational justice were measured by the Distributive and Procedural Justice Measurement Scale, which was developed by Niehoff & Moorman (1993). The data analysis measured the correlation (using SPSS we calculated the coefficient of determination, denoted R^2 , which represents the proportion of the variation in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variables) between a number of predictors, namely interpersonal conflict, perceptions of procedural and distributive organizational justice, and organizational constraints and counterproductive behavior. The analysis was carried out comparatively on students from faculties belonging to “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu. In constructing the sample, we used a probabilistic stratified sampling, reaching a number of 137 students. The results show as that high levels of interpersonal conflict and organizational constraints are associated with variations in counterproductive behaviors, but low levels of distributive justice and procedural justice do not have a significant impact on these behaviors according to the data presented.

KEYWORDS:

Counterproductive behaviors, organizational constraints, distributive organizational justice, procedural organizational justice, interpersonal conflicts

1. Introduction

The study of counterproductive workplace behaviors is a topic of major interest in the field of organizational psychology and human resource management. These behaviors include any actions of individuals that harm the organization or its members, either by reducing productivity, deteriorating the organizational climate or increasing operational costs. In the context of the military organization, which relies on discipline, cohesion, and efficiency to achieve performance, counterproductive behaviors can have particularly serious

consequences, even affecting the safety and morale of individuals.

2. Counterproductive behaviors

Counterproductive workplace behavior analyzed as a general construct, is a set of actions that directly affect the organization or its members, and are done intentionally. These include: abusive behavior towards others, physical and verbal aggression, intentionally performing work incorrectly, sabotage, absenteeism, tardiness, etc. Specifically analyzed, it can be divided into: actions that focus on the person targeted, such as rudeness, verbal,

emotional, physical abuse, and actions that focus on the person who is the perpetrator of the behavior, on the intrinsic or extrinsic motives, such as retaliation, aggression and violence.

We will further present a series of conceptualizations of the concept, considering that the nuances in which it manifests itself are quite varied. The study conducted by Andersson & Pearson (1991) who explored the effects of politeness and lack thereof in the work environment, focused in particular on workplace rudeness defining this term as, actions performed without consideration for others in the work environment, violating established norms of respect, which can damage interpersonal relationships, employee morale and negatively influence organizational performance. Abusive leadership, has been analyzed by Tepper (2000) as, subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in a sustained pattern of verbal and nonverbal hostile behaviors, excluding physical contact. Included in this category are examples such as: using pejorative terms to describe someone, raising one's voice when someone expresses disagreement, intimidation by threatening to fire, keeping necessary information secret, humiliating or undermining the person in front of colleagues. Finally, petty tyranny, in which managers tend to excessively control subordinates and treat them in an arbitrary, indifferent and punitive manner, violent behavior and retaliation, an action taken in response to a perceived wrong done by another person, with the intent to cause discomfort, harm or punish the person (Ashforth, 2016).

In other studies, we also find the term dysfunctional workplace behavior, which according to Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly & Collins (1998) is that behavior motivated by an employee or a group of employees that has negative consequences for an individual within the organization or for a group of individuals within the organization and even for the organization itself.

Another counterproductive behavior would be psychological terror or mobbing, which is defined by Leymann & Zapf (1996) as that action within the work environment involving hostile and unethical communication that is systematically directed by one or more persons towards an individual who, because of these actions, is pushed into a defenseless position and kept there by continuous harassing activities. Behaviors associated with bullying in the organization can be: ignoring the person in meetings, insults, discrediting their ideas, achievements and skills. Mobbing is a destructive process, it consists of hostile actions which, taken in isolation, may seem harmless, but through repetition are found to have harmful effects (Zlate, 2007). Thus, mobbing is not represented by quarrels, ridicule, cutting retorts or ironic remarks between colleagues, but only when they are practiced systematically and over a long period of time, thus disrupting the organizational environment and the relations between employees.

3. Typologies of counterproductive behavior

The study of counterproductive behaviors in organizations is a rather broad field. Prior to the 1980s, there was a considerable amount of research on individual counterproductive behaviors in the workplace, such as petty theft, sabotage, slow and sloppy performance, tardiness and absenteeism. However, due to the lack of an accepted framework or theory for the analysis of such behaviors, these studies have each been perceived as an investigation of a specific type of behavior, rather than as an effort to explore counterproductive workplace behavior in a more general sense. In order to establish the basic structure of counterproductive behaviors in organizations, we will review a number of studies that have been concerned with categorizing behaviors by certain characteristics.

A first grouping of counterproductive behaviors was made by Hollinger & Clark (1982) based on the criterion of specific manifestation of the behavior. Thus, two categories are delineated. The first category, *property deviance*, which focuses on situations in which employees acquire or damage tangible property or assets of the organization without authorization and *production deviance* which refers to behaviors that violate formally prescribed norms that differentiate the minimum quality and quantity of work.

The classification of dysfunctional behaviors by Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly & Collins (1998) was based on who primarily bears the costs of these behaviors. This resulted in two main categories: *behaviors that harm people's well-being* and *behaviors that harm the organization*. Behaviors detrimental to human well-being include behaviors that harm other people, verbal, physical and emotional violence, sexual harassment, general unsafe workplace practices, and behaviors that harm oneself, such as drug or alcohol abuse, smoking. Behaviors detrimental to the organization fall into two other sub-categories, behaviors that have specific costs, absenteeism, tardiness, misuse/theft of property, destruction of property, violation of laws, codes and regulations, and behaviors that have general costs, behaviors that violate organizational policies, destabilize impression management, disrespect confidentiality and maintain a constant in poor performance.

Robinson & Bennett (1995) noted that previous studies did not include interpersonal analysis of counterproductive behaviors and decided to broaden the structure created by those before them by adding a scale to measure the severity of the behavior. Thus, the dimensions along which deviant behavior is classified are: organizational or interpersonal and minor or major. This gives four quadrants: *production deviance*, *property deviance*, *political deviance* and *personal aggression*. The production deviance contains the relatively minor but

still harmful deviant behaviors to the organization such as shortening working hours, taking long breaks and wasting resources. The category containing serious deviant behaviors that are harmful to the organization such as sabotaging equipment, misreporting hours worked, and stealing from the organization has been termed production deviance. Political deviance defines the behavior as engaging in social interaction that puts other people at a personal or political disadvantage, and contains minor and personally harmful behaviors such as spreading rumors about co-workers, showing favoritism, and blaming co-workers for your mistakes. The last category contains serious deviant behaviors that harm individuals, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and stealing from peers, has been termed personal bullying and defined as aggressive or hostile behavior towards other people.

Spector et al, in a 2006 study, using data from 3 previous studies, were able to classify 33 of the 45 counterproductive behaviors found in the "*Counter Work Behavior Checklist*" into four essential categories: *withdrawal*, *abuse of people*, *sabotage*, and *production deviance*. Withdrawal consists of behaviors that restrict time spent at work below the level required by the organization, such as absence, lateness, going home early, taking longer breaks than authorized. Abuse, refers to harmful behaviors directed towards colleagues or other people that cause either physical or psychological harm through threats, mean-spirited comments, ignoring or undermining the person's ability. Sabotage or creating harm refers to wasting materials or supplies, damaging equipment or property, or destroying the work environment. Lastly, production deviance is a category that refers to more passive counterproductive behaviors, such as performing work incorrectly or slowly or neglecting instructions. This classification is based on the analysis of similarities and differences in the causes and consequences of counterproductive behaviors.

Gruys & Sackett (2003), building on previous studies and assuming that individuals who engage in one form of counterproductive behavior are likely to engage in others, have conducted one of the most detailed analyses. In their paper entitled “Investigating the Dimensionality of Counterproductive Work Behavior”, they compiled a list of 87 behaviors and based on this, they drew up a classification based on 11 categories: “*destruction of property, theft and related behaviors, poor quality of work, inappropriate use of information, insecure behavior, inappropriate verbal actions, inappropriate use of time and resources, poor attendance at work, alcohol use, drug use, inappropriate physical actions*”.

In the same study, another typology of counterproductive behaviors was conducted using the multidimensional scaling technique. Two dimensions were noticed: organizational-interpersonal and task relevance. Task relevance represents the extent to which the categories include behaviors that are related to work tasks. Thus, at the first extreme of the task relevance dimension we find the categories: inappropriate use of time and resources and poor quality of work, which include behaviors directly related to the way employees carry out their activities and fulfill their job responsibilities. At the opposite pole are the categories of inappropriate physical actions, theft and related behaviors, inappropriate verbal actions and destruction of property, which are not part of normal or necessary activities for the performance of work tasks. Depending on the interpersonal-organizational dimension the above categories are divided into the corresponding quadrants taking into account who is the target of the counterproductive behaviors, the organization or the individual.

These studies have been an important step towards a better understanding of the structure or dimensionality of counterproductive behaviors in organizations. By analyzing the relationships between various counterproductive behaviors, researchers have helped to make the prediction and

prevention of dysfunctional workplace behaviors more effective.

4. The aim and methodological approach

Investigating and understanding counterproductive behaviors within a military organization is essential along with identifying and analyzing the factors that may predict and influence them. In a military organization, where order, discipline, and cohesion are crucial for effective functioning and achievement of objectives, dysfunctional behaviors can have extremely serious consequences and can affect missions and personnel safety. Therefore, this research aims to examine different predictors of counterproductive behaviors within the military organization among students. By identifying and understanding these predictors, effective strategies and policies can be developed to prevent and manage counterproductive behaviors, thereby helping to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the military organization.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the presence of counterproductive behaviors and determine the predictors that influence them. The chosen research methodology is quantitative. Thus, **the objectives** proposed to be achieved are: to analyze the correlation between a number of predictors of counterproductive behaviors (organizational constraints, interpersonal conflicts, perception of procedural and distributive organizational justice) and counterproductive behavior. We point out that these determinants were chosen because of the sample, namely military students/cadets. And the second objective is the comparative analysis of how perceptions of the predictors of counterproductive behaviors vary according to the faculty to which the students belong.

The universe of the population is represented by students of the first, second and third years of study at “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu.

In this study, stratified probability sampling was used, which implies the definition of homogeneous strata within and heterogeneous between them. Thus, if the population universe is $N=893$, the

confidence level $\chi=1.96$, the margin of error $d=0.05$ and the estimated proportion $P=0.5$, the sample size is $s=137$, the stratification criterion considered being the faculty profile, as can be seen in Table no. 1.

Table no. 1
Distribution of students by faculty

Faculty	No. of students	Share of students	No. of students in the sample	Approximation
Faculty of Military Management	313	35.05	48.02	48
Faculty of Military Sciences	316	35.39	48.48	48
Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences	264	29.56	40.5	41
Total:	893			
Sample	137			

5. Analysis of predictors of counterproductive behaviors among military students

The analysis of predictors of counterproductive behaviors among military students was based on the *Occupational Stress/Emotion/Counterproductive Behavior Model*, described in the paper "Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in response to job stressors and organizational justice: Some mediator and moderator tests for autonomy and emotions" by Spector et al (2006). The measurement scales used to analyze the organizational predictors of counterproductive behaviors are: the *Organizational Constraints*

Measurement Scale (Spector & Jex, 1998), the *Interpersonal Conflict at Work Measurement Scale* (Spector & Jex, 1998). And perceptions of organizational justice were measured by the *Distributive and Procedural Justice Measurement Scale*, which was developed by Niehoff & Moorman (1993).

5.1. Processing and interpreting data from the Interpersonal Conflict Scale

The analysis on the *Interpersonal Conflict* questionnaire will be carried out by observing the means of the answers for each question in relation to the variable faculty.

Table no. 2
Average of responses that make up the interpersonal conflict dimension analyzed by faculty

Faculty		1. How often do you get into conflicting discussions with colleagues/ teachers/officers?	2. How often do you face yelling from others in the educational institution?	3. How often do you encounter rude behavior from others at college?	4. How often do you experience unpleasant actions from others at college?
Military Sciences		2.18	2.38	2.13	2.13
Military Mgmt.		2.24	2.59	2.56	2.63
Admin. Sciences		2.20	2.55	2.73	2.55
Total	Average	2.21	2.52	2.48	2.46

From the analysis of the mean values it can be observed that there is no major difference in the level of interpersonal conflict perceived by students belonging to different faculties, but there are still means that exceed the average level of interpersonal conflict. This aspect could indicate problems in the students' communication process with the military or teaching staff, or an unfavorable organizational climate, which may trigger the possibility of the emergence of behaviors that harm the organization and/or its members.

5.2. Processing and interpreting data from the Organizational Constraints Measurement Scale

The questionnaire dedicated to the assessment of organizational constraints measured the extent to which students perceive that they are unable to perform their tasks due to lack of resources, wrong instructions, lack of involvement of colleagues or commanders, etc.

Table no. 3
Looking at the average of responses that make up the organizational constraints dimension analyzed by faculty

	Faculty			
	Mil Sciences	Mil Mgmt.	Admin Sciences	Total
1. Inadequate equipment or materials.	1.92	2.17	2.05	2.06
2. Organizational rules and procedures.	2.23	2.39	2.47	2.37
3. Other colleagues.	2.18	2.34	2.18	2.24
4. Your Commandant / Commanding officer.	1.85	2.14	1.83	1.96
5. Lack of necessary equipment or materials.	1.97	2.29	2.05	2.13
6. Inadequate training.	2.18	2.15	2.05	2.13
7. Interruptions by others.	2.02	2.44	2.20	2.25
8. Lack of necessary information about what to do or how to do it.	2.25	2.53	2.40	2.41
9. Conflicting Requirements.	2.48	2.53	2.30	2.45
10. Inadequate help from others.	2.13	2.51	2.05	2.27
11. Wrong instructions.	1.90	2.37	2.23	2.19

The organizational constraints that prevent most students from accomplishing their tasks are: lack of necessary information about what needs to be done or how, conflicting demands and inadequate help from others. Closely followed by: organizational rules and procedures, interruptions from others and other colleagues. The lowest score is item 4 "Your commanding officer", which suggests that the officers in the academy do not present an obstacle in the process of

accomplishing tasks, and the next is item 1 "Inadequate equipment or materials", thus lack of resources is not a problem either. In contrast, the highest scores are found in the questions related to communicating all the data needed to complete the task and lack of help from colleagues or inadequate help, which indicates a problem in communicating tasks and instructions and a problem with teamwork.

5.3. Processing and interpreting data from the Distributive Justice Measurement Scale

Distributive justice, in the case of this questionnaire, measures students' perceptions

of the fairness of the distribution of resources. Thus, to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?", we analyzed the level of agreement and the average per faculty.

Table no. 4
Looking at the average of the responses that make up the distributive justice dimension analyzed per faculty

	Faculty			
	Mil Sciences	Mil Mgmt.	Admin Sciences	Total
1. My study schedule is correct.	2.83	2.83	2.85	2.83
2. I believe the balance/bursary payment level is correct.	2.05	2.22	1.97	2.10
3. I think my workload is pretty fair.	2.72	2.71	2.83	2.75
4. Overall, the rewards I get here are pretty fair.	2.57	2.36	2.45	2.45
5. I feel that my academic responsibilities are fair.	3.03	2.97	2.98	2.99

Analyzing the mean of each question we find that the highest score (3.03) is for item 5 "I feel that my academic responsibilities are fair" in the Faculty of Military Science, indicating student satisfaction with the level of responsibility given. The next averages as a score are 2.85 for item 1 and 2.83 for item 3, which support the overall level of satisfaction of students in the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences with their workload. Within the statement "I think the level of monthly pay/scholarship is fair" we can find the lowest scores for all faculties, but the students of the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences perceive the most strongly the unfairness of rewards in relation to the tasks to be fulfilled. In the distributive justice analysis, a high level of the dimension indicates a low level of perceived unfairness.

5.4. Processing and interpreting data from the Procedural Justice Measurement Scale

While distributive justice presents the level of perceived fairness of the distribution of rewards and tasks, procedural justice is concerned with the

perceived fairness of how procedures are implemented. In the questionnaire, students were asked to express their level of agreement with statements expressing the extent to which they are involved in the decision-making process. The Faculty of Military Science has the highest scores for the statements "Decisions related to student activities are made by the management in an impartial manner" (2.75), "All decisions related to student activities are consistently applied to all affected students" (2.70) and "Students have the right to challenge or appeal decisions made by management" (2.67) which indicates a perception of high fairness on the consistency of applicability of decisions, assurance of the right to appeal decisions and impartiality in decision making among students. At the same time, the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences shows the lowest score for the last statement suggesting that students in this specialization perceive unfairness in the process of challenging management decisions. And, students in the Faculty of Military Management have a negative view of how management ensures that student concerns are met.

Table no. 5*Looking at the average answers to the questions in the procedural justice dimension*

	Faculty			
	Mil Sciences	Mil Mgmt.	Admin Sciences	Total
1. Decisions related to student activities are made by management in an impartial manner.	2.75	2.54	2.47	2.58
2. Management ensures that all student concerns are met before making decisions related to student activities.	2.55	2.27	2.23	2.34
3. To make formal decisions, management collects accurate and complete information.	2.60	2.46	2.38	2.47
4. Management clarifies decisions and provides additional information when requested by students.	2.65	2.66	2.38	2.58
5. All decisions related to student activities are applied consistently to all affected students.	2.70	2.59	2.50	2.60
6. Students have the right to contest or appeal the decisions made by the management.	2.67	2.39	2.08	2.38

The differences between the average scores of the dimension *Procedural Justice* are not high, but it can be observed that the Faculty of Military Science has a higher score than the other two faculties, meaning that the students in this faculty have a low perception of procedural injustice.

6. Data processing and interpretation of the Counterproductive Behavior Measurement Scale

Analyzing Table no. 6 we observe that questions 2 and 3 have a rather high average for the Faculty of Military Management compared to the others, they refer to complaints related to petty and external things, the latter could damage the

image of the institution if they are executed regularly. In addition, questions 8 and 9 which refer to counterproductive behaviors in interpersonal relationships also show comparatively higher score for the same faculty. The questions related to absenteeism have the lowest score “You were absent from classes on the grounds that you were ill, although you were not” (1.13), “Have you been late for classes or labs without permission” (1.20) in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, which could indicate that due to the rules of the organization students have lower absenteeism rate or the level of conscientiousness is higher.

Table no. 6*Looking at the average of the answers that make up the counterproductive behavior dimension analyzed per faculty*

	Faculty			
	Mil Sciences	Mil Mgmt.	Admin Sciences	Total
1. You intentionally wasted academy materials or resources.	1.43	1.61	1.20	1.44
2. You complained about little things about college.	1.97	2.41	2.10	2.19
3. You have told others outside the university how terrible the university is.	1.95	2.12	1.85	1.99

	Faculty			
	Mil Sciences	Mil Mgmt.	Admin Sciences	Total
4. You have been late to classes or labs without permission.	1.45	1.61	1.20	1.45
5. You have been absent from classes on the grounds that you are sick, even though you were not.	1.35	1.51	1.13	1.35
6. You insulted someone about their academic performance.	1.38	1.73	1.25	1.49
7. You laughed at someone from the academy about their personal life.	1.33	1.61	1.18	1.40
8. You ignored someone in the academy.	1.65	2.22	1.63	1.88
9. You started a fight with someone from the academy.	1.75	1.97	1.60	1.80
10. You insulted or laughed at someone from the academy.	1.50	1.75	1.38	1.57

The averages indicate that in “Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy of Sibiu, there is not much counterproductive behavior. We can say that the average of the responses of the students from the Faculty of Military Management is higher, but not significantly so.

7. The correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable

To analyze the correlation between the previously identified predictors and counterproductive behavior, a regression analysis was conducted to determine how each independent variable, *interpersonal conflict*, *organizational constraints*, *distributive and procedural justice*, influence the dependent variable *Counterproductive Behavior*. Interpretation of the results was based on the coefficient of determination (R-squared), which indicates the proportion of variance in

counterproductive behavior explained by each of the aforementioned independent variables.

Table no. 7 shows the values of the correlation coefficient between the predictor *Interpersonal Conflict* (IC) and the dependent variable *Counterproductive Behaviors* (CWB). The coefficient suggests a moderate correlation between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (R Square) value is .160, thus interpersonal conflict contributes to 16% of the observed changes in counterproductive behaviors. The Adjusted R Square value suggests that the chosen predictor is relevant and does not overscale the model. In our analysis we will focus on the coefficient of determination, which indicates that the predictor *Interpersonal Conflict* contributes significantly to the variation in counterproductive behaviors, explaining 16% of the total variation.

Table no. 7

The influence of the interpersonal conflict predictor on counterproductive behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.400 ^a	.160	.154	.57293
a. Predictors: (Constant), CI/individual				
b. CI contributes to 16% of the observed changes in CWB				

The regression model presented in Table no. 8 suggests that organizational constraints contribute more than conflict to the variance in individuals' counterproductive behaviors, explaining 24.4% of the total

variance. Thus, organizational constraints are an important predictor of counterproductive behaviors, but there are other factors that need to be examined for a complete understanding of them.

Table no. 8

The influence of the predictor organizational constraints on counterproductive behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.493 ^a	.244	.238		.54362
a. Predictors: (Constant), CO/individual					
b. CO contributes 24% of the observed changes in CWB					

In the case of the *Distributive Justice* predictor, it is indicated that its contribution to the variation of counterproductive behaviors is very low, with a percentage of 0.4%.

Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value of -.003 shows that this predictor is not significant and that other factors should be investigated to explain the variation.

Table no. 9

The influence of the predictor Distributive Justice on Counterproductive Behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.062 ^a	.004	-.003		.62383
a. Predictors: (Constant), JD/individual					
c. JD contributes to 0.4% of the observed changes in CWB					

The correlation between the variables *Procedural Justice* and *Counterproductive Behavior*, presented in Table no. 10, is extremely weak with a value of .032, and the value of the coefficient of determination of .001 suggests that only 0.1% of the variation in the dependent variable

counterproductive behavior can be explained by the predictor variable *procedural justice*. The current model does not provide useful insight into the relationship between procedural justice and dysfunctional behaviors.

Table no. 10

The influence of the procedural justice predictor on counterproductive behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.032 ^a	.001	-.006		.62471
a. Predictors: (Constant), JP/individual					
b. JP contributes to 0.1% of the observed changes in CWB					

Based on the analyses presented previously, the premise from which we started, namely that the predictors: interpersonal conflict, organizational constraints, perception of justice are associated with counterproductive

behaviors in educational institutions is not fully verified. We can argue that high levels of interpersonal conflict and organizational constraints are associated with variations in counterproductive behaviors, but low levels

of distributive justice and procedural justice do not have a significant impact on these behaviors according to the data presented.

8. Conclusions

Considering that the range of counterproductive behaviors is so vast, and the analyzed predictors are only one piece of a whole puzzle, future studies that analyze personality factors in relation to the results obtained in the present study are recommended.

In the dynamic and diverse context of the work environment in a military organization, combined with its particularities, understanding and managing counterproductive behaviors becomes increasingly important for organizational success. Since the prevention and management of these behaviors becomes a strategic priority for organizations in general, greater concern should be given to identifying their predictors.

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