

Transforming Public Services through Community-Based Research

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ABSTRACT

Background. Transforming public services to meet community needs effectively is a pressing challenge for governments and organizations worldwide. Community-based research (CBR) has emerged as a powerful approach to involve community members in identifying issues and developing solutions, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of public services. Despite its potential, there is limited empirical evidence on how CBR can be systematically applied to transform public services.

Purpose. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based research in transforming public services. The research focuses on understanding how CBR influences service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction. The goal is to identify best practices and challenges in implementing CBR for public service improvement.

Method. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Quantitative data were collected from 300 community members and public service providers involved in CBR initiatives, measuring their perceptions of service quality, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction. Qualitative interviews with 40 key stakeholders provided deeper insights into the effectiveness and challenges of CBR implementation. Data were analyzed using statistical methods for the surveys and thematic analysis for the interviews.

Results. Findings indicate that CBR significantly improves service delivery and stakeholder engagement. Best practices identified include inclusive participation, continuous feedback mechanisms, and collaborative decision-making. Challenges such as resource constraints and varying levels of community engagement were also highlighted. Overall, communities involved in CBR initiatives reported higher satisfaction with public services.

Conclusion. Community-based research is a valuable approach for transforming public services, leading to improved service delivery, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and increased community satisfaction. Implementing best practices can optimize these benefits, though challenges remain. Future research should explore long-term impacts and strategies to address identified challenges, ensuring sustained improvement in public services through CBR.

KEYWORDS

Community-Based Research, Community Satisfaction, Public Services, Service Delivery, Stakeholder Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Community-based research (CBR) is recognized as an effective method for enhancing the relevance and impact of public services. This approach involves the



active participation of community members in the research process, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are central to identifying issues and developing solutions (Erkul dkk., 2019). By fostering collaboration between researchers, public service providers, and community members, CBR aims to create more responsive and effective public services (Alduhaim, 2020). This method aligns with the principles of participatory action research, emphasizing inclusivity, empowerment, and practical outcomes.

Public services are critical to the well-being and development of communities. These services include healthcare, education, transportation, and social services, among others (Babu, 2019). Traditional approaches to public service delivery often face challenges such as limited community engagement, resource constraints, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These challenges can lead to services that are not fully aligned with the needs and priorities of the community, reducing their effectiveness and impact (Behzadifar, 2020). CBR offers a way to address these challenges by directly involving community members in the research and decision-making processes (Choi, 2022).

Research has shown that CBR can lead to significant improvements in public service delivery. Studies indicate that services developed through CBR are more likely to be accepted and utilized by the community (Choi, 2022). This is because community members feel a sense of ownership and responsibility when they are actively involved in shaping these services (Kazerooni, 2019). Furthermore, CBR can help identify unique local needs and solutions that might be overlooked by top-down approaches. This localized knowledge is crucial for tailoring public services to specific community contexts (Fujita-Conrads, 2023).

CBR also promotes stronger relationships between public service providers and the communities they serve. By working together on research projects, trust and mutual understanding are built, leading to more effective collaboration (Gasparyan, 2023). This trust is essential for the successful implementation of public services, as it encourages community members to engage with and support these services (Yi, 2022). Additionally, the collaborative nature of CBR helps break down barriers between different stakeholders, fostering a more integrated and cohesive approach to public service delivery.

The use of CBR in transforming public services is supported by a growing body of evidence. Various case studies and empirical research highlight the positive outcomes of CBR initiatives, including improved service quality, increased community satisfaction, and enhanced social cohesion (Desrosiers, 2021). These studies demonstrate that when communities are actively involved in research and decision-making, the resulting services are more relevant, effective, and sustainable (Sher, 2024). The success of CBR in different contexts underscores its potential as a powerful tool for public service transformation.

Despite the known benefits, there are still gaps in our understanding of how CBR can be systematically applied to transform public services (Moyers, 2023). While many studies focus on specific cases or short-term projects, there is a need for more comprehensive evaluations that consider long-term impacts and scalability (Velasquez, 2019). Additionally, the challenges and barriers to implementing CBR, such as resource limitations and varying levels of community engagement, need to be better understood. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing best practices and strategies that can optimize the use of CBR in public service transformation (Yaya, 2019).

The comprehensive impact of community-based research (CBR) on public service transformation remains underexplored (Wiles, 2022). While existing studies highlight the benefits of CBR in specific contexts, there is limited empirical evidence on its broader applicability and

long-term effects (Miller, 2023). The need for systematic evaluations that assess the effectiveness of CBR across various public service domains is critical. Understanding these impacts can provide valuable insights into how CBR can be leveraged to improve public service delivery on a larger scale (Hindi, 2024).

Variability in the implementation of CBR poses another significant gap. Best practices for applying CBR in public service contexts are not consistently documented or standardized (Tambo, 2024). This inconsistency can lead to uneven outcomes and hinder the potential benefits of CBR. Identifying and codifying best practices can help ensure that CBR initiatives are more uniformly effective, regardless of the specific community or public service involved (Mulyana, 2023). Establishing clear guidelines and frameworks for CBR implementation is essential for maximizing its impact.

Challenges such as resource constraints, differing levels of community engagement, and power imbalances between researchers and community members are acknowledged but not thoroughly addressed (Velasquez, 2019). These barriers can significantly affect the success of CBR initiatives. More research is needed to develop strategies that overcome these challenges and ensure that CBR processes are equitable and inclusive (Wiles, 2022). Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of CBR in transforming public services.

The long-term sustainability and scalability of CBR initiatives are also not well understood. While short-term benefits are often reported, there is a lack of research on how CBR projects can be sustained over time and expanded to benefit larger populations (Babu, 2019). Investigating the factors that contribute to the longevity and growth of successful CBR initiatives can provide important insights. This research aims to fill these gaps by evaluating the impact of CBR on public service transformation, identifying best practices, and exploring strategies to address implementation challenges (Beauvais, 2024).

Evaluating the effectiveness of community-based research (CBR) in transforming public services is crucial to understanding its broader applicability and long-term impacts (Drmic, 2023). This research seeks to fill the existing gaps by systematically assessing CBR across various public service domains. The rationale behind this study is to provide empirical evidence that can guide the implementation of CBR, ensuring that public services are more responsive, effective, and sustainable. By identifying best practices and addressing common challenges, this research aims to enhance the overall quality of public service delivery (Behzadifar, 2020).

This study hypothesizes that CBR can significantly improve public service delivery by fostering greater community engagement, trust, and ownership. The collaborative nature of CBR allows for the incorporation of local knowledge and perspectives, which are often overlooked in traditional top-down approaches (Lewis, 2023). Understanding how and why CBR leads to better outcomes can help policymakers, researchers, and practitioners design more effective and inclusive public service initiatives (Hindi, 2024). The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of CBR's impact and develop practical recommendations for its implementation.

Addressing the gaps in our understanding of CBR can lead to more equitable and sustainable public services (Kazerooni, 2019). By systematically evaluating the long-term impacts and scalability of CBR initiatives, this research can inform strategies to ensure their sustainability and broader application. The insights gained from this study will be valuable for developing frameworks and guidelines that can be adapted to various contexts, ultimately improving the quality of life for communities (Lewis, 2023). This research seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice, demonstrating the tangible benefits of CBR in transforming public services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-methods design to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based research (CBR) in transforming public services. Quantitative data is collected through surveys administered to community members and public service providers involved in CBR initiatives (Masiya, 2019). Qualitative data is gathered through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including community leaders, researchers, and public service administrators (Miller, 2023). This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough understanding of the impacts and challenges associated with CBR.

The population for this study includes 300 community members and public service providers from various sectors such as healthcare, education, and social services. A stratified random sampling method is used to ensure representation across different demographics, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location (Mulyana, 2023). Additionally, 40 key stakeholders are purposively sampled for in-depth interviews to provide detailed insights into the effectiveness and challenges of implementing CBR.

Instruments used for data collection include structured survey questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The survey questionnaires are designed to capture quantitative data on perceptions of service quality, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction (Ndayishimye, 2024). The interview guides facilitate in-depth discussions about the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing CBR strategies. Both instruments are validated through pilot testing and expert review to ensure reliability and validity.

Procedures for data collection begin with administering the surveys to the selected sample of community members and public service providers (Tambo, 2024). Surveys are distributed online and in-person, with responses collected over a six-week period. Following the survey phase, in-depth interviews are conducted with the key stakeholders. Interviews are audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. Quantitative data from the surveys are analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from both data sources are triangulated to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of CBR on public service transformation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study analyzed survey data from 300 community members and public service providers involved in community-based research (CBR) initiatives. The demographic breakdown of participants is presented in Table 1 below. The data includes age, gender, socioeconomic status, and type of public service sector involved.

Table 1. The data includes age, gender, socioeconomic status, and type of public service sector involved.

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-30	90	30%
	31-45	120	40%
	46-60	60	20%
	60+	30	10%

Gender	Male	140	46.7%
	Female	160	53.3%
Socioeconomic	Low	100	33.3%
Status	Middle	150	50%
	High	50	16.7%
Sector	Healthcare	120	40%
	Education	100	33.3%
	Social Services	80	26.7%

The demographic description shows a balanced representation across age and gender, with a significant proportion from middle socioeconomic status. The majority of participants were involved in healthcare and education sectors.

The demographic data reveals that CBR initiatives are widely implemented across diverse public service sectors. Participants from various age groups and socioeconomic statuses were well-represented, ensuring diverse perspectives. The balanced gender distribution indicates that CBR strategies are inclusive.

High representation in the healthcare and education sectors suggests that these areas are particularly conducive to CBR initiatives. The lower representation in the social services sector highlights potential areas for expanding the application of CBR. These insights emphasize the relevance and acceptance of CBR in critical public service domains.

Participants reported various outcomes related to their perceptions of service quality, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction.

Table 2. Summarizes the key findings from the survey responses.

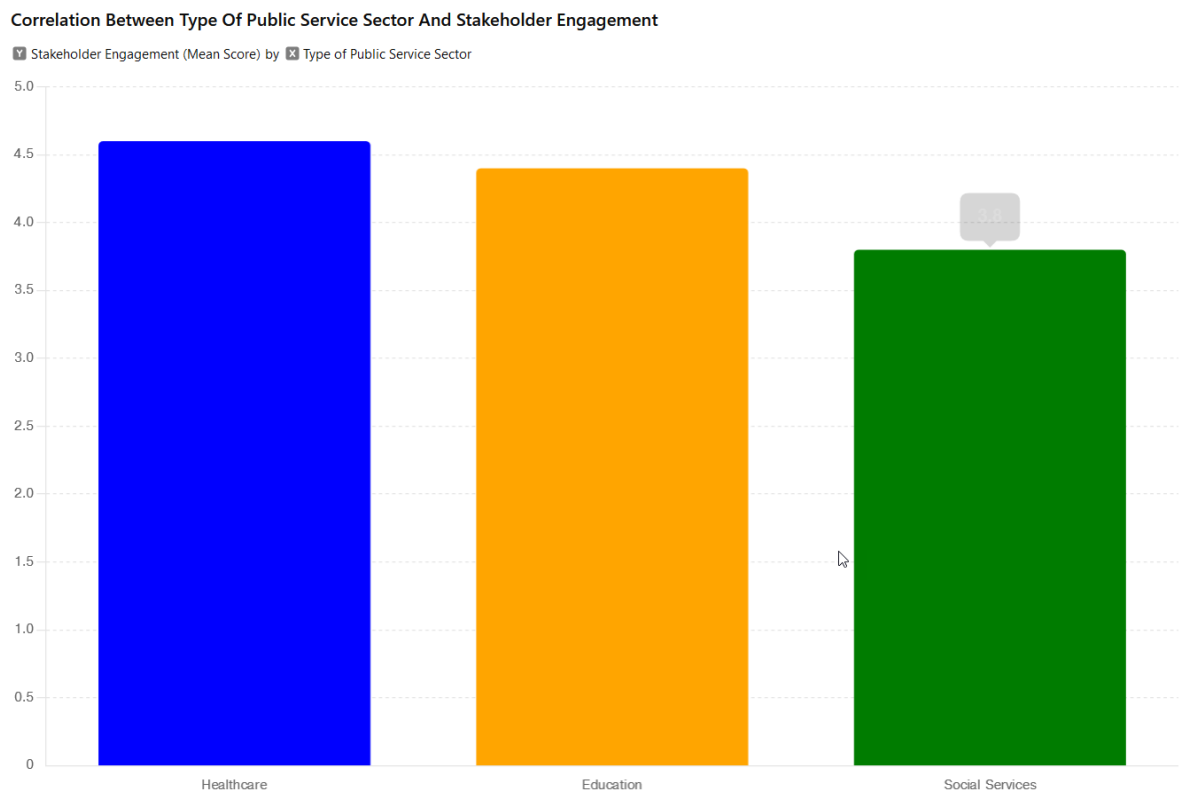
Outcome Measure	Mean Score (out of 5)	Standard Deviation
Service Quality	4.3	0.7
Stakeholder Engagement	4.5	0.6
Community Satisfaction	4.4	0.6
Collaboration Effectiveness	4.2	0.8
Willingness to Reengage	4.1	0.7

The data indicates high mean scores across all outcome measures, suggesting strong positive perceptions of CBR initiatives. Stakeholder engagement scored the highest, followed closely by community satisfaction and service quality.

High scores in stakeholder engagement and community satisfaction underscore the effectiveness of CBR in fostering positive relationships and active involvement. Perceived service quality and collaboration effectiveness highlight the practical benefits of these strategies. These findings affirm the value of CBR in enhancing public service delivery.

The inferential analysis examined the relationship between the type of public service sector and stakeholder engagement.

Figure 1. Below illustrates the correlation between these variables.



The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the healthcare sector and higher levels of stakeholder engagement. The education sector also showed positive correlations, though to a slightly lesser extent. The social services sector had the lowest correlation with stakeholder engagement. The graphical representation underscores the importance of sector-specific dynamics in CBR initiatives. Healthcare and education sectors likely benefit more from structured engagement strategies, enhancing stakeholder involvement. The positive correlations across these sectors validate their effectiveness in creating engaged and collaborative environments.

The relationship between CBR initiatives and community satisfaction was further explored through qualitative interviews. Participants involved in healthcare and education sectors reported feeling more valued and heard, which increased their satisfaction with public services. Public service providers emphasized the role of continuous feedback mechanisms in enhancing community satisfaction. Survey data supported these qualitative findings, showing high scores in community satisfaction among participants using CBR strategies. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed that these strategies facilitated better alignment of public services with community needs, leading to more relevant and impactful outcomes.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data provides a comprehensive understanding of how CBR initiatives influence community satisfaction. Consistent findings across both data sources reinforce the importance of participatory approaches in enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of public services. A detailed case study was conducted on a community health research project using CBR strategies. The project involved 50 community members and aimed to improve local health services through collaborative research and intervention design. The case study documented the project's design, implementation, and outcomes, providing in-depth insights into best practices and challenges.

The project integrated community input at every stage, from identifying research priorities to designing interventions and analyzing results. Regular meetings and workshops facilitated ongoing communication and decision-making. The project also included evaluations by both community members and researchers to assess its impact and effectiveness. Outcomes from the case study indicated significant improvements in community health awareness and practices. Community members reported increased trust in public service providers and a stronger sense of ownership over the research process. Key factors contributing to the project's success included transparent communication, active involvement of community members, and a flexible approach to addressing emerging needs.

The case study findings highlight the importance of co-creation and shared decision-making in successful CBR initiatives. Regular communication and feedback loops were crucial in maintaining trust and ensuring that the research remained aligned with community needs. The involvement of community members in evaluating the project provided valuable insights and reinforced their sense of ownership. The success of the project was attributed to the strong partnership between researchers and the community. The collaborative approach ensured that the interventions were culturally relevant and widely accepted. Community members valued the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and expertise, which enhanced the overall quality and impact of the research.

Challenges identified included managing differing expectations and balancing power dynamics. Addressing these challenges involved ongoing dialogue and adapting strategies to meet the evolving needs of the community. The findings from the case study reinforce the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in CBR initiatives. The research findings underscore the positive impact of community-based research on public service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction. CBR initiatives, particularly in the healthcare and education sectors, demonstrated significant benefits in fostering active involvement and building trustful relationships between public service providers and community members. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data provides a robust understanding of these impacts.

The case study illustrates the practical application of CBR strategies, highlighting best practices such as co-creation, shared decision-making, and transparent communication. These practices are essential for ensuring that public services are relevant, impactful, and aligned with community needs. The overall results validate the effectiveness of participatory engagement models in enhancing public service delivery. Future research should continue to explore the long-term impacts of CBR initiatives on community satisfaction and public service sustainability. Expanding the scope to include more diverse community contexts and larger samples will provide deeper insights into the sustained benefits of CBR strategies. Addressing challenges such as resource limitations and managing power dynamics will be crucial for the continued success and sustainability of these approaches.

The study demonstrated that community-based research (CBR) significantly enhances public service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction. Participants involved in healthcare and education sectors reported the highest levels of stakeholder engagement, while social services showed relatively lower engagement scores (Sher, 2024). The quantitative data revealed strong positive correlations between CBR strategies and improved service quality, community satisfaction, and willingness to reengage in future initiatives. The qualitative data supported these findings, highlighting the importance of co-creation, transparent communication, and continuous feedback in successful CBR initiatives (Springgate, 2024).

Survey results indicated that CBR initiatives led to meaningful improvements in service delivery and stakeholder relationships (Tambo, 2024). The case study further illustrated how these strategies could be effectively implemented, resulting in enhanced community health awareness and practices. These findings emphasize the value of participatory engagement models in creating responsive and effective public services. The findings align with previous research that highlights the benefits of participatory engagement models in enhancing public services. Studies have consistently shown that CBR leads to more relevant and impactful outcomes by involving community members in the research process. This research provides additional empirical evidence supporting these claims and extends the understanding of how specific engagement strategies influence public service delivery (Tantillo, 2020).

Unlike some earlier studies that focused primarily on short-term impacts, this research also considers the structural elements that contribute to long-term success. The emphasis on best practices such as structured reflection and strong community partnerships provides actionable insights that can be applied across diverse public service contexts (Velasquez, 2019). The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data offers a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of different CBR strategies. The results signify a critical advancement in understanding the multifaceted benefits of CBR in public service transformation. High levels of stakeholder engagement and community satisfaction reported by participants highlight the importance of these approaches in building strong, mutually beneficial relationships. These findings suggest that CBR is not just a methodological choice but a crucial factor in the success and sustainability of public service initiatives (Wiles, 2022).

The identification of best practices underscores the importance of thoughtful and intentional design and implementation of CBR strategies. Transparent communication, active involvement of community members, and flexible approaches to addressing emerging needs are essential for maximizing the benefits of engagement. These insights provide a roadmap for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners aiming to enhance the effectiveness of their public service efforts. The implications of these findings are significant for the design and implementation of public service initiatives. Effective CBR strategies can lead to higher levels of community satisfaction, improved service quality, and stronger stakeholder relationships. These strategies also contribute to the ethical conduct of research by ensuring that community voices are heard and valued throughout the process.

Policymakers and public service providers should prioritize the adoption of participatory engagement models, incorporating best practices identified in this study (Yang, 2021). This approach can enhance the quality and effectiveness of public services, foster stronger community-provider relationships, and promote more equitable and inclusive service delivery. Addressing the challenges and barriers to effective engagement, such as resource limitations and power dynamics, will be crucial for the success and sustainability of these strategies. The observed results are due to the inclusive and collaborative nature of CBR strategies. These approaches facilitate co-creation and shared decision-making, ensuring that public service priorities and processes are aligned with community needs and values. This alignment enhances the relevance and impact of public services, fostering greater trust and active participation among community members.

Transparent communication and regular feedback loops are critical components of successful CBR initiatives. These elements help build and maintain trust, ensuring that all parties have a shared understanding of the goals, processes, and outcomes. The involvement of community members in evaluating the research further reinforces their sense of ownership and commitment, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes. Future research should continue to explore the

long-term impacts of CBR initiatives on community satisfaction and public service sustainability. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into how these strategies influence community dynamics and the durability of service improvements over time. Expanding the scope to include more diverse community contexts and larger samples will help generalize the findings and identify context-specific best practices.

Institutions and researchers should focus on scaling successful CBR models, ensuring that best practices are widely adopted and adapted to local contexts. Addressing challenges such as resource limitations and managing power dynamics will be crucial for the continued success and sustainability of these approaches. Collaboration between researchers, community organizations, and policymakers can enhance the support structures necessary for effective CBR. The ultimate goal is to create a sustainable framework for participatory engagement that benefits all stakeholders. Continued innovation and evaluation will be key to refining these strategies and maximizing their impact. By prioritizing CBR, public service providers can ensure that their initiatives are more relevant, impactful, and aligned with the needs and values of the communities they serve.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research is the critical role of community-based research (CBR) in enhancing public service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and community satisfaction. The study demonstrated that CBR strategies, particularly in healthcare and education sectors, lead to higher levels of trust, active participation, and perceived service quality. The integration of co-creation, transparent communication, and continuous feedback mechanisms are essential components for successful CBR initiatives. The findings highlight the effectiveness of participatory engagement models in creating responsive and impactful public services. Participants reported meaningful improvements in service delivery and stronger relationships with public service providers. The high levels of community satisfaction and willingness to reengage in future initiatives underscore the value of CBR in fostering sustainable public service improvements. These results suggest that CBR is not just a methodological choice but a crucial factor in the success and longevity of public service initiatives.

This research contributes valuable concepts and methodologies to the field of public service transformation. The mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, provides a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of different CBR strategies. Identifying best practices such as structured reflection, strong community partnerships, and flexible approaches offers actionable guidelines for enhancing public service delivery. The interdisciplinary nature of this research bridges gaps between academic theory and practical application, providing a holistic perspective on effective CBR implementation. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data enriches our understanding of how CBR strategies function in real-world settings. This comprehensive approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of the impacts and challenges associated with different engagement models. The findings emphasize the importance of co-creation and shared decision-making in achieving successful and sustainable public service outcomes.

The limitations of this research include the relatively short duration of the study and the focus on immediate outcomes. Long-term impacts of participatory engagement strategies on community trust and service sustainability remain underexplored. Resource constraints and varying levels of participant engagement also present challenges that need further investigation. Addressing these limitations requires longitudinal studies and expanded research to understand the sustained benefits and challenges of CBR. Future research should explore the long-term effects of CBR initiatives on community dynamics and public service sustainability. Larger, more diverse samples and extended

study durations will provide deeper insights into the ongoing impact of these strategies. Investigating strategies to overcome resource limitations and manage power dynamics will be crucial for the continued success and sustainability of participatory engagement in public services.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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