Study on Impact of Perceived Value and Brand Image on Purchase Decision of Metro Households, for Edible Oils in India

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Abstract

Edible oil is one of the important constituents of Indian food. A majority of the dishes are prepared by using oil in the cooking process. India is the fourth largest oilseed producing country in the world, next only to USA, China and Brazil, harvesting about 25 million tons of oilseeds against the world production of 250 million tons per annum. Although, India is a major producer of oilseeds, per capita oil consumption in India is only 10.6 kg per annum which is low compared to 12.5 kg per annum in China, 20.8 kg per annum in Japan, 21.3 kg per annum in Brazil and 48.0 kg per annum in USA.19. Though several studies on the subject of consumer behaviour have been undertaken abroad, the explorations on the subject in the metro households' context have been limited in numbers. It was, therefore, considered meaningful to explore whether the metro consumers displayed similar pattern of decision making or differed significantly. It was also considered relevant to study the impact of perceived value and brand image while choosing a brand of edible oil by close to 2.2 crore people in Mumbai. Various marketing variables considered for the study are household income, religion, knowledge, social status, price, place (availability), perceived quality, and WOM (word of mouth publicity) on the purchase decision of edible oil by the households in Mumbai city.

Keywords: Edible Oil, Perceived Value, Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Marketing Variables.

1. Introduction

Oil is a liquid substance obtained by crushing certain agricultural seeds. Many kinds of oils are available for use. Some of them are edible and others are non-edible. Edible oils are sometimes used for non-edible purposes also, but not vice versa. Fat is an essential nutrient for man and its source is edible oils.

Since ancient days, edible oil has been an inevitable part of Indian cooking with its liberal to moderate usage; without which, Indian inhabitants would not relish their meals. Indians have developed diverse food habits, tastes, and preferences due to the impact of many religions, cultures, and subcultures. Although, oil is one of the major commodities consumed in every household kitchen; health consciousness among the metro households has altered its usage by the edible oil type, namely, refined or filtered (Kachhi Ghani) and the amount of nutrients the edible oil encompasses (Kulkarni & Srivastava, 2018). With an advent of new innovations, changes in taste, likes and dislikes related to food items; consumers' behaviours keep on changing frequently as the edible oil is an important element of household cooking (Kulkarni & Kolhatkar, 2017). According to Kahle and Kim, in today's increasingly competitive market, consumers must choose between a number of items or brands that differ only slightly in price or function; nonetheless, their final selection is influenced by the image they associate with dissimilar brands. The same approach applies when choosing an edible oil brand, with oils being differentiated depending on the quantities of important fatty acids such as MUFA, which contains omega-3 nutrients, and PUFA, which contains omega-6 nutrients. In a highly fragmented Indian edible oil sector, marketers of edible oils must stay on top of customer tastes, anticipating consumer preferences in terms of which products / brands of edible oil they would choose from those on offer (Kulkarni & Kolhatkar, 2017).

Today, the organized sector in Indian edible oil business has emerged as one of the fastest growing sectors in recent times creating branded oil sales, though branded oils marked currently low in India, both in terms of volumes and share, they are expected to grow due to improved thrust by major players like Marico Limited, Cargill India Private Limited, Adani Wilmar Limited, Ruchi Soya Industries Limited, Con Agro Foods, ITC Agro-Tech, Godrej Foods, Vippy Industries, Prestige Foods, S M Dyechem, Vijaya Oils and a few mid-sized, regional edible oil companies such as Mantora Oil Products Ltd, Modi Naturals, Amrit Banaspati, Tara Health Foods, Priya Foods, Healthy Heart Foods, Gemini Oils, KS Oils etc; offering a larger number of product choices before consumers to choose from and given these choices, consumers are now able to compare many features such as quality, price, and value for money, absorption capacity, brand image etc. to decide which product they want to buy for their need satisfaction (Narayana, Sarabhai, & Khan, May, 2014). Edible oils are the primary source of unsaturated fats and vitamin E in human diets, and they're used in both commercial and domestic cooking all over the world

Brands play a leading role in customer decision making. There are many factors or attributes of consumers affecting their views and decisions. In today's increasingly competitive marketplace, consumers differ in their perceptions; they would necessarily hold different images for any specific brand and often have to make a choice among a range of products or brands in the market that differ very little in its price or function. Brand image has been an important concept in consumer behaviour research and is a crucial factor influencing the purchasing of luxury product decisions. Keller (1997) demonstrates that the brand image is essential in apparel purchase behaviour because it impacts consumers' preferences and purchase intentions as well as their willingness to pay a premium price and recommend the brand to

others. Thus, when consumers hold a strong and constructive brand image, they will be more likely to evaluate the product positively, regardless of price (Tekin, Yiltay, & Ayaz, 2016).

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Urban household:

'Urban household' is considered to be the group of people living together and sharing food from a common kitchen. *Urban households* are the families residing in the city of Mumbai (Marovelli, 2019).

2.2 Consumer behaviour towards edible oil:

Consumer behaviour studies the characteristics of individual consumers by way of any or all the four segmentation types, viz. – demographic, geographic, psychographic and behaviouristic variables in an attempt to comprehend people's needs, wants and desires; vis-à-vis it also tries to assess the influence on consumers from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general; with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer (Anju Thapa, 2012); as the family members are the users, while in most of the cases, a housewife plays the role of a buyer and payer for the edible oil for her household consumption.

2.3 Purchase decision:

Consumer purchasing decisions reveal how successfully a company's marketing approach corresponds to market demand. As a result, marketing starts and ends with the customer. Consumer behavior is difficult to forecast, even for specialists in the industry, according to research (Armstrong & Scott, 1991). According to Salgado-Beltrán; et al. (2012), purchase decisions are influenced by the consumer's brand loyalty vs brand awareness, as well as influential elements such as people, price, location, and/or advertising, and hence their views and attitudes toward a product or service (Kulkarni & Srivastava, 2018). The relationship between perceived value (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Hoffman & Novak, 1996), attractiveness (Liao, 2006; Boschetti, 2012), and purchase decision (Simonson, Carmon, & OCurry, 1994; D'Astous & Jacob, 2002; Diels, Wiebach, & Hildebrandt, 2013) is frequently observed in marketing studies. Consumer purchase decision, according to Zethaml (1988), is influenced by perceived quality, value, objective price, and commodity characteristic. Higher the perceived value, higher will be the purchase decision (Kulkarni & Srivastava, 2018). Purchase intention, according to Keller (2001), can be viewed as a key signal for predicting consumption behavior. Gensch (1987) documented that customer form brand preferences to reduce the complexity of the purchase decision process (Kulkarni & Srivastava, 2018). For a consumer to buy a brand they must first be made aware of it. Kumar et al. (1987) examined the factors influencing the buying decision for various food products (Narayana; et. al., 2014).

2.4 Brand Image of edible oil for urban households:

Academicians and practising managers agree that branding has evolved into a strategic instrument, and research on the importance of brand preference have been highlighted in a competitive market space. Brand *image has an increasing* reputation when feelings and images are connected with the brand, and a well-known and acknowledged brand image is one of a company's most valuable assets (Kahle and Kim, 2006) (Tekin, Yıltay, & Ayaz, 2016). As stated by Dobni and Zinkhan (1990), The perceived quality of a brand; subjective and perceptual phenomena generated through consumer interpretation of different associations; impacted and moulded by marketing activities, situational variables, and the brand

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awareness, perceiver's qualities are all that lead to brand image. Reality's perception is more essential than reality itself (Tekin, Yıltay, & Ayaz, 2016). As per Keller (1997), Perceived quality and *Brand image* are important when buying things since it influences preferences and purchase intentions, such as paying a premium for a brand and promoting it to others (Krishnakumar & Kala, 2014).

2.5 Brand preference:

Customers' brand choice is determined by their attitudes about the brand and the strength of their belief in it, as defined by Fischbein's (1970) value expectancy model, which shows that a customer's attitude toward an object is a function of how important a belief and a belief about an object are to him/her (Panda, Brand Positioning, 2016). Consumers have a brand preference for an established brand during the firm's long existence in the market, according to Dinlersoz and Pereira (2007), but they have less brand preference for a particular brand when they are introduced to a new or unfamiliar product category (Narayana; et. al., 2014). According to Singh; et al. (2008), brand preference refers to a consumer's hierarchical prioritisation of a brand as a result of their patronage and cognitive comprehension of the brand; whereas, according to Suwen and Mark (2008), food habits, location, household heads' education, and other demographic variables have significant effects on the choice of edible oils for consumption (Narayana; et., 2014).

2.6 Perceived Value:

At the most abstract level, Ritva Marketta Toivonen (2012) suggests that perceived value is a two-dimensional construct that includes product tangibles and intangibles. According to Saran and Tzokas (1998), the tangible component consists of the physical object that can be felt, satisfies consumers' basic needs, and includes technical characteristics such as durability and functionality, use properties, ease of use, and appearance, whereas the intangible component consists of the object's immaterial characteristics, satisfies consumers' extended needs, and includes intangibles such as image and supplier reliability (Toivonen, 2012). Toivonen (2012) has further stated that the value of the physical product is more essential to consumers than the quality of the intangible product.

2.7 WOM (word-of-mouth):

According to Kundu and Rajan (2017), WOM has a significant impact on customer behaviour, and its influence can be moderated by tie strength, stickiness, loyalty, and monetary influence (Kundu & Rajan, 2017). According to M. Trikha (2019), traditional marketing tactics such as personal selling, advertising, and sales promotion are less effective than word-of-mouth. Customers are paying more attention to this these days as a result of various marketing methods. The two primary types of word-of-mouth are *negative WOM* and *positive WOM*. Positive WOM creates gaps in buyers' minds, discontent among desires, and poor image building of items, whereas negative WOM creates gaps in buyers' minds, unhappiness among desires, and poor image building of products (Trikha, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

Research objectives:

1. To analyse the consumer behaviour in purchase of edible oils
2. To study the effect of demographical factors on purchase decisions
3. To evaluate the role of perceived value in decision making

4. To Evaluate the role of brand image in decision making

3.1 Descriptive Research Design:

Since the variables for the research were identified to evaluate the relationship between independent, and dependent variables; this research was descriptive in nature, which was based on both, secondary and primary data. Secondary data was collected via research papers, journals, books; while the primary data was collected by sharing the self-administered, well-structured questionnaire created in Google Forms, with prospective respondents, and the data was collected through a combination of *convenience* and *snowball sampling* techniques. The raw data received via Google Forms from 234 respondents, was then coded, ensuring no missing values and/or errors left; which was then fed to the SPSS software for further analysis. The data analysis was done using a descriptive *analysis* test for the variables under Likert Scale, followed by a frequency *analysis* test for the *demographic data.* While the *brand preference* of the respondents was shown using the graphical presentation given by Google analytics.

3.2 Sample Design:

Sample size of minimum 300 respondents (*n = 300*) was planned for this study. *Descriptive analysis* was done, followed by *frequency analysis* of the variables under Likert Scale research, with a target audience of urban households in the city of Mumbai, ranging in the age group of from 25-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56 and above. However, the actual responses received were 78 (*n=78*) for this study.

3.3 Data collection:

The secondary data was collected via research papers, journals, books; while the primary research was carried out by the self-administered, structured questionnaire with an intended minimum sample size of 50 (*n=300*) respondents was shared to the residents of Mumbai city. Data collection was done through a combination of *convenience* and *snowball sampling technique,* by sharing the self-administered, well-structured questionnaire created in Google Forms, with prospective respondents.

3.4 Limitations

1. This study encompassed the respondents of Mumbai only
2. Time constraint have imposed major limitations to the study and forced to   restrict the respondents within a stipulated time.
3. The information provided by the respondents was purely based on their perception only. The quality and reliability of the data collected were subject   to the prevailing condition.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Descriptive statistics:

Table-III below shows the *descriptive statistics* of the *nine variables* of the Likert scale, viz.- *Household income, Religion, Culture & Sub-culture, Knowledge, Social status, Price, Place (Availability), Quality,* and *WOM (word-of-mouth)*:

Table-III: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you think that Household Income influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.5769	1.24336
Do you think that Religion influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	2.2436	1.20805
Do you think that Culture & Sub-culture influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	2.8462	1.32975
Do you think that Brand image influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.8718	1.25210
Do you think that Social Status influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.1923	1.34896
Do you think that Price influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.6923	1.34172
Do you think that Place (Availability) influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.5128	1.15931
Do you think that perceived Value influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.8462	1.30012
Do you think that Word of Mouth (WOM) influences the purchase decision of the edible oil?	234	1.00	5.00	3.4103	1.16704
Valid N (list wise)	234				

From the above Table-III, it is observed that the '*Brand image*' with the Mean of 3.8718 (and a standard deviation of 1.25210) influences the purchase decision of edible oil; followed by ' *Perceived Value*' (Mean = 3.8462, Std Dev = 1.30012); '*Price*' (Mean = 3.6923, Std Dev = 1.34172); '*Household income*' (Mean = 3.5769, Std Dev = 1.24336); '*Place*' (Mean = 3.5128, Std Dev = 1.15931); '*WOM*' (Mean = 3.4103, Std Dev = 1.16704); '*Social Status*' (Mean = 3.1923, Std Dev = 1.34896); and '*Culture & sub-culture*'; while the Mean of '*Religion*' being 2.2436, with a standard deviation of 1.20805.

4.2 Frequency distribution
The *frequency distribution* was done for all the 234 responses, with no missing values.

Statistics

Gender

N	Valid	234
	Missing	0

4.2.1 Gender: Table-IV below shows the frequency distribution for *Gender*

Table-IV: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	111	47.4	47.4	47.4
	Male	123	52.6	52.6	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	100.0	

It can be observed from the above table that 47.4% (37) respondents were females, and 52.6% (41) respondents were males.

4.2.2 Age: Table-V below show the age group of the respondents:

Table-V: Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25 to 35 Years	189	80.8	80.8	80.8
	36 to 45	15	6.4	6.4	87.2
	46 to 55	24	10.3	10.3	97.4
	56 and above	3	1.3	1.3	98.7
	5.00	3	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	100.0	

From the above table, it is observed that 80.8% respondents were the Millennials (1981-96), and Generation Z (1997-2012); followed by 10.3% (8) respondents belonging to Generation X (age group 46-55); 6.4% (5) respondents belonged to Generation Y (age group 36-45).

4.2.3 Religion: Table-VI below shows the frequency of religion.

Table-VI: Religion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hindu	213	91.0	91.0	91.0
	Muslim	6	2.6	2.6	93.6
	Buddhist	6	2.6	2.6	96.2

Christian	9	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	234	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from the above table that 91% (71) respondents were *Hindu*; followed by 3.8% (3) *Christian*; and 2.6% each (2) belonged to Muslim, and Buddhist respectively.

4.2.4 Income: Table-VII below shows the *income* groups of the respondents:

Table-VII: Income (Currency in INR)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than equal to 10000	30	12.8	12.8	12.8
	10001 to 50000	96	41.0	41.0	53.8
	50001-75000	57	24.4	24.4	78.2
	Above 75000	51	21.8	21.8	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	100.0	

It can be observed from the above table that 41% (32) respondents belonged to the income group of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000; while 24.4% (19) respondents belonged to the income group of Rs. 50,001 to Rs. 75,000; followed by 21.8% (17) respondents earning more than Rs. 75,000; while 12.8% (10) respondents were earning less than Rs. 10,000.

4.2.5 Usage of edible oil for domestic cooking:
Pie Chart-I below shows that 96.2% respondents use edible oil for domestic cooking; while 3.8% said that they don't use edible oil at all for domestic cooking:

Chart-I: Usage of edible oil for domestic cooking
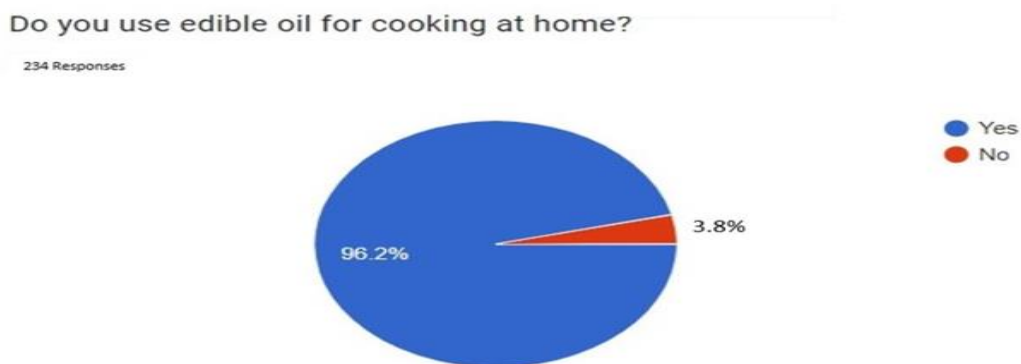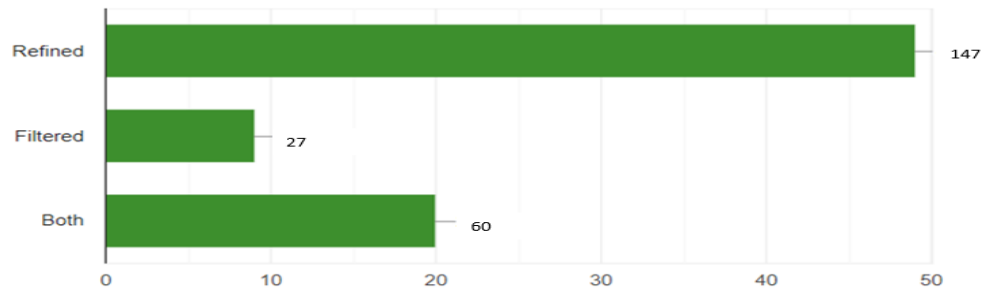

4.2.6 Type of edible oil used for domestic cooking:
Chart-II below shows that 62.8% (*n=147*) respondents use *refined* edible oil; 11.5% (*n=27*) respondents use *filtered* edible oil; while 25.6% (*n=60*) respondents have been using both, filtered and refined edible oils for domestic cooking.

Chart-II: Types of edible oils used for domestic cooking

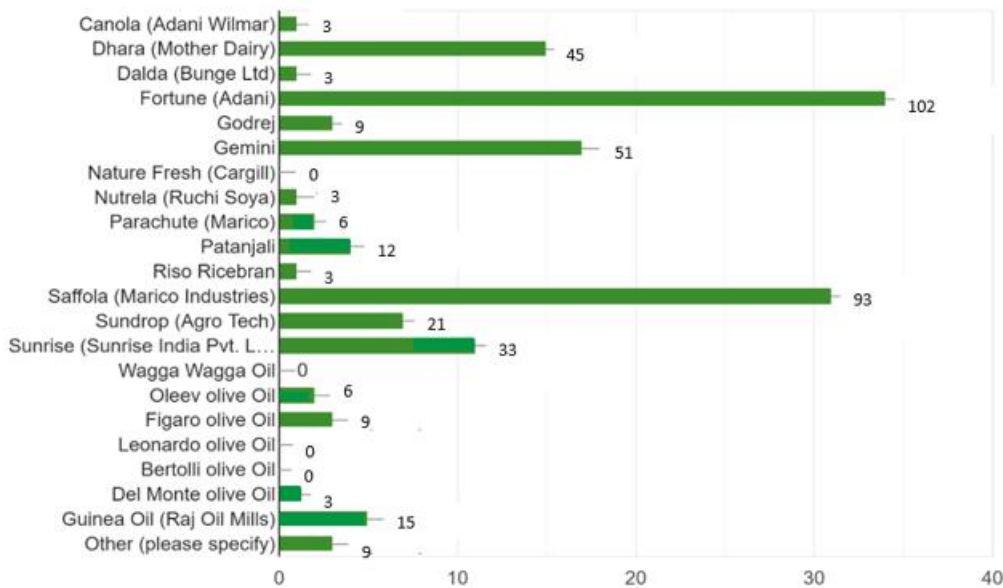Do you use refined or filtered oil for cooking at home? (Please tick he correct box)

234 Responses

Refined	147
Filtered	27
Both	60

4.2.7 Edible brand/s preference for domestic cooking:

Chart-III below shows the edible brand preference by the respondents:

Chart III: Edible brand preference by the respondents

Which brand of edible oil do you normally use? (Please tick the right options, which can be multiple options also)

234 Responses

Brand	Value
Canola (Adani Wilmar)	3
Dhara (Mother Dairy)	45
Dalda (Bunge Ltd)	3
Fortune (Adani)	102
Godrej	9
Gemini	51
Nature Fresh (Cargill)	0
Nutrela (Ruchi Soya)	3
Parachute (Marico)	6
Patanjali	12
Riso Ricebran	3
Saffola (Marico Industries)	93
Sundrop (Agro Tech)	21
Sunrise (Sunrise India Pvt. L...)	33
Wagga Wagga Oil	0
Oleev olive Oil	6
Figaro olive Oil	9
Leonardo olive Oil	0
Bertolli olive Oil	0
Del Monte olive Oil	3
Guinea Oil (Raj Oil Mills)	15
Other (please specify)	9

It can be seen from the above chart that *43.6% (102)* respondents preferred *Fortune refined oil (Adani)* brand; followed by *39.7% (93)* respondents preferred *Saffola (Marico Industries)* brand. *Gemini* stood as the 3rd choice for *21.8% (51)* respondents; while *19.2% (45)* respondents preferred *Mother Dairy's Dhara*,

and *Sunrise Industry's Sunrise* was preferred by *14.1% (33)* respondents. Surprisingly, the market leader in mid-80s through mid-90s; the *Agro Tech's Sundrop Super Refined Sunflower oil* was preferred by only *9% (21)* respondents, followed by *Raj Oil Mills' Guinea Oil* by only *6.4% (15)* respondents; and *7.7%)* respondents preferred *Olive oils.*

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study on impact of perceived quality and brand image towards edible oil purchases has been challenging and interesting one. The researcher has attempted to study not only the personal profile factors or characteristics of the respondents but also the perception of the sample consumers and relate the same to the branded edible oils.

The *five key factors,* namely, '*Brand image'* (with a *mean* of *3.8718*); edible oil *'Perceived Value'* (with a *mean* of *3.8462*); edible oil '*price*' (with a *mean* of *3.6923*); '*household income'* (with a *mean* of *3.5769*); and the '*WOM'* (with a *mean* of *3.4103*), there has been a strong awareness about the types, and brands of edible oils available, based on which, the households of Mumbai city have been making their purchase decision for **Branded Edible Oil.** It is worth noting that there has been a strong impact of *'Brand image'* about the edible oils due to advertising by way of both, *Above-the-line*, and '*Below-the-line*' activities [where, ATL = PORT (print, out of home, radio, television), and BTL = sales promotion, in-shop campaigns, gift hampers, POP (point of purchase), viz.- posters, danglers, buntings, wall paintings, glow signs, flyers, etc.]; promoting the edible oil (e.g.- Saffola) through medical practitioners, social media platforms, email marketing, direct marketing, etc.

To conclude, the awareness among the consumers about the consumer rights, existence of consumer forums, etc, the Government role in framing necessary guidelines, rules and regulations and the execution of the same by its machinery, traders and businessmen role in their social responsibility as a whole with single voice and mind can create healthy business environment for the prosperity of the nation as a whole.

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