

# Crisis Management in Professional Basketball Organizations

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The importance of the crisis concept in sports and the hardly reversible nature of the crises prove the importance of the topic.

**Aim:** To examine the crisis management skills of professional basketball team managers. The crisis management skills of the team managers were also analyzed based on several demographic variables.

**Methods:** The sample group for the study consists of 56 team managers who worked in Turkish basketball leagues in the 2021–2022 season. "Crisis Management Scale" developed by Sayın (2008) was used as the data collection tool.

**Results:** As a result of normality analyses (Kolmogorov, Smirnov), to analyze the data, in addition to the arithmetic mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and frequency (f), in independent paired comparisons, the Independent Sample t-Test, and the Mann-Whitney U-test, having non-parametric equivalents, were employed, and in the analyses of group means greater than two, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was used.

**Conclusion:** It was found that there were significant differences in crisis management in terms of sex and professional experience, but no significant difference was found in terms of other variables.

**Keywords:** Basketball team managers, the crisis in basketball, the crisis in sports, sports organizations

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, countries live in an era of interaction in which economic, sporting, and social interactions are unavoidable, hence, there may be confusion in specific institutions and organizations depending on the time (Atılğan, 2018). Some confusions and challenges may be beyond the coping capabilities of individuals, institutions, and organizations and may throw them off balance (Çalışkan, 2020). These confusions and problems may evolve into a crisis phenomenon that involves the entire world in a short time (Atılğan, Kaplan, 2018). Natural disasters occurring anywhere in the world, economic routs, and similar crises affect all social, cultural, and sports fields in the contexts of informatics and interaction. In managing the crises encountered, it is essential to move through this process with the least damage possible, make inferences from the process, and make plans. Nowadays, sports are a development and status indicator. Therefore, sports' values acquired from the past to the present make the management phenomenon valuable. Initially, sports management crises result in a loss of respectability and value. Sports managers should analyze what happened in the past well and create a mechanism to make the right decision with strategic evaluations (Atılğan, 2018). In sports organizations, the crisis management skills of the sports managers should align with the aims and objectives of the organization.

In crisis management, all events that could generate a crisis should be analyzed in order to prevent organizations from experiencing one, and it must be ensured that reasonable actions are taken. Necessary plans made to move through crises with the least damage possible are for dissolving the crisis in the most effective way and managing the situation with the least damage possible (Sayın, 2008). It is a process that aims to improve negative situations encountered by making the right decisions within the scope of previously determined strategic plans. In the crisis management process, the communication gap shows the obstacles in the dissolving process of the crisis due to the disagreements within the organization and the time limit. The organization managers should find a way to create the best solution and conclude by planning specific coordination (Yıldırım, 2018, Gezer, 2020, Sezgin, 2003). Perason and Clair (1998) defined crisis management as the systematic attempts to prevent crises or to put effort into managing the crises encountered effectively by members and external stakeholders.

Sports are an organizational sector established by humanity. When compared to other sectors, the sports sector is characterized by rapid processes emergence, narrow start and end intervals, and the ability to make decisions spontaneously and reflexively. In comparison to other industries, sports organizations are distinguished by the length, difficulty, and expense of the planning phase, as well as the short duration of the implementation phase. In sports organizations, there is an obligation to reach the perfect conclusion. Otherwise, irreparable consequences may show up. For example, a minor problem that shows up before Usain Bolt's 100m final run or during the run may cause an international scandal. Additionally, it might cause irreparable crises for host countries. Consequently, the number of crises that may be encountered is a lot more when compared to other organizations. In this respect, the crisis and crisis management topics in sports are particularly crucial and cannot be ignored.

If an evaluation in terms of crisis environments and crisis management in sports organizations is made, it can be said that predictable or unpredictable crises may emerge in a process. Since sports are a concept that concerns international societies, there are so many intersecting organizational processes in the preparation phase or during the execution. Therefore, crises are encountered in the sports field (Atılğan, 2018). When these crises occur, it is vital to effectively handle them without compromising the goals and objectives of the sports organization. Within this context, "crisis management in sports" is defined as the measures taken against the deviations of goals and objections, the corruption of the functioning system, making plans, and managing the process in sports organizations (Şirin, Eratlı Şirin & Metin, 2020). Crisis management, a vital need for sports organizations, includes essential information and findings. Strategies should be developed, and plans should be made to manage the crisis process well in the case of unexpected situations. Due to the distinctive features of sports organizations and the differences in facilities, time, people in charge, contestants, and weather conditions in every case, high levels of effort and the specialization of senior executives are necessary for the planning phase because sports organizations need detailed planning. Numerous obstacles may be encountered, such as senior executives not fulfilling their responsibilities, moving outside of the plan, changes in environmental conditions, and technical difficulties (Devocioğlu, 2003).

**Significance of the study:** The importance of the crisis concept in sports and the hardly reversible nature of the crises prove the importance of the crisis management concept. Therefore, this study that seeks to highlight the crisis and management processes from the perspective of basketball clubs, federations, management

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positions, and organizations is deemed significant in terms of sports literature.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

In this study, a cross-sectional screening method based on quantitative data is used to compare the crisis management skill levels of team managers working in professional basketball leagues. The sample group consists of 56 team managers who worked at professional female and male basketball teams at the levels of first and second leagues in the 2021–2022 season.

**Data Collection Tool:** The Crisis Management Scale was used in addition to the demographic information form given to the sample group. Sayın (2008) developed the Crisis Management Scale (CMS), consisting of 45 articles, to assess managers' attitudes toward crisis management. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for the entire scale was calculated to be 0.85. It was graded on a five-point scale: "1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Occasionally, 4=Usually, 5=Always." According to the factor analysis, the 45 articles on the scale are classified into six dimensions (Early Warning Signals, Preparation and Prevention, Prevention of Spread of Damage During the Crisis, Reparation, and Recovery, and Learning). The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated to be 0.940. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the crisis management scale's six-factor structure. To facilitate managers' responses, the articles, which are gathered into six sub-factors compatible with the literature, were presented in three different sections (Pre-Crisis, During Crisis, Post-Crisis). The lowest possible score is 45, while the highest possible score is 225. The increase in score means the crisis management skills are better.

**Data Analysis:** To express the data obtained from team managers who worked in the Turkish basketball leagues in the 2021–2022 season with numeric values, the data were transferred to a computer environment, and necessary data analyses were performed. A normality test was performed for the sample group before analysis, and the normality of the data was tested according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Skewness-Kurtosis values, and graphical analyses. In addition to the arithmetic mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and frequency (f) in data analysis, the Independent Sample t-Test and Mann Whitney-U test were employed in independent pair wise comparisons, and the ANOVA test was utilized when comparing the means of more than two groups.

**RESULTS**

To determine whether or not the crisis management scores of the team managers differ based on gender, an Independent Sample t-Test analysis was performed, and the results are shown in Table 1. A significant difference in favor of ( $\bar{x}$ =145.22) males was found in terms of the crisis management skill levels of female and male team managers ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

No significant difference was found in terms of the skill levels of female and male managers in both pre-crisis and post-crisis ( $p > 0.05$ ). A significant difference was found in terms of the skill levels of female and male managers during a crisis ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

No significant difference was found ( $p > 0.05$ ) in terms of the crisis management skill levels of team managers according to the age variable ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

When looking at the scale in general, no significant difference was found in terms of team managers' crisis management skill levels according to the educational background variable ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 4).

A significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management skills of team managers according to the professional experience variable ( $p < 0,05$ ) (Table 5).

When looking at the scale in general, no significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management skills of team managers in pre-crisis and post-crisis ( $p > 0.05$ ). A significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management skills during a crisis ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 6).

No significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management levels of team managers according to the league level variable ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 7).

No significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management levels of team managers according to the variable of receiving/not receiving Sports Management training ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 8).

No significant difference was found in terms of team managers' crisis management skill levels according to the variable of receiving/not receiving a certificate in sports management ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 9).

No significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management skill levels of team managers according to the variable of average daily working time ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 10).

No significant difference was found in terms of the crisis management skill levels of the team managers according to the variable of receiving/not receiving a Team Manager License ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 11).

No significant difference was found in terms of team managers' crisis management levels according to the priority variable during a crisis ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 12).

When Table-13 was examined, it was detected that financial problems are the most common crisis type encountered by the team managers with a rate of 60.71%. They stated that the second most common crisis type is communication problems with a rate of 26.78%, and the third most common crisis type is athletes' performance, which is 37.5%. It was detected that due to the lack of financial resources, financial problems are the most common problem type encountered by the clubs in Turkish basketball leagues (Table 13)

Table 1: Independent Sample t-Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to the Sex Variable

	Groups	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	p
Team Managers	Men	44	145,22	15,33	2,315	0,024*
	Women	12	132,16	23,55		

\* $p < .05$

Table-2: Independent Sample t-Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Sub-Dimension of The Scale According to the Sex Variable

	Groups	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	p
pre-crisis	Men	44	39,68	6,56	-1,429	0,159
	Women	12	36,41	8,54		
during the crisis	Men	44	65,97	7,02	-2,149	0,036
	Women	12	60,50	10,38		
post-crisis	Men	44	39,58	6,54	-1,757	0,085
	Women	12	35,25	9,81		

Table 3: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Age Variable

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	1654,913	4	413,728	1,305	,281
Within Groups	16164,801	51	316,957		
Total	17819,714	55			

Table 4: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Educational Background Variable

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	876,623	2	438,312	1,371	,263
Within Groups	16943,091	53	319,681		
Total	17819,714	55			

Table 5: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Professional Experience Variable

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	2262,035	2	1131,017	3,853	,027*
Within Groups	15557,679	53	293,541		
Total	17819,714	55			

\*p&lt;.05

Table 6: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Sub-Dimensions of The Scale According to The Professional Experience Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
pre-crisis	Between Groups	127,537	2	63,768	1,285	,285
	Within Groups	2629,446	53	49,612		
	Total	2756,982	55			
during the crisis	Between Groups	657,009	2	328,505	5,934	,005*
	Within Groups	2933,830	53	55,355		
	Total	3590,839	55			
post-crisis	Between Groups	179,575	2	89,788	1,548	,222
	Within Groups	3073,282	53	57,986		
	Total	3252,857	55			

Table 7: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The League Level Variable

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	819,298	3	273,099	,835	,481
Within Groups	17000,416	52	326,931		
Total	17819,714	55			

Table 8: Independent Sample t-Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Variable of Receiving/Not Receiving Sports Management Training

	Groups	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	p
Bachelor of sport managing	Yes	14	140,42	20,53	-,477	,639
	No	42	143,09	17,29		

p&gt;.05

Table-9: Independent Sample t-Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Variable of Receiving/Not Receiving a Certificate on Sports Management

	Groups	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	p
Certificate for Sport Managing	Yes	45	140,95	18,59	1,245	,219
	No	11	148,45	14,54		

p&gt;.05

Table-10: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores of Team Managers from The Scale According to The Variable of Average Daily Working Time

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1298,076	2	649,038	2,082	,135
Within Groups	16521,638	53	311,729		
Total	17819,714	55			

Table-11: Mann-Whitney U Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Variable of Receiving/Not Receiving a Team Manager License

	Groups	n	$\bar{x}_{sitra}$	$\sum_{sitra}$	U	Z	p
License for Team Manager	I have	50	28,41	1420,50	145,500	-,119	,905
	I don't have	6	29,25	175,50			

p&gt;.05

Table-12: ANOVA Test Results on The Comparison of Scores from The Scale According to The Variable of Priority During Crisis

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	156,303	2	78,152	,234	,792
Within Groups	17663,411	53	333,272		
Total	17819,714	55			

Table-13: Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of Team Managers from the Crisis Management Scale according to the variable of the most encountered crisis within the team

Crisis Type-1	n	$\bar{X}$	SS
Finance	34	139,29	19,19
Discipline of Team	8	144,25	16,95
Communication	8	142,62	16,49
Unsuccess scores	3	157,66	10,21
Staff	1	169,00	-
Member of Board	1	147,00	-
Agents	1	156,00	-
Athletic Performance	-	-	-
None	-	-	-
Total	56	142,42	17,99

Crisis Type-2	n	$\bar{X}$	SS
Finance	-	-	-
Discipline of Team	6	130,83	22,75
Communication	15	144,20	15,72
Unsuccess scores	7	138,71	19,22
Staff	2	140,00	24,04
Member of Board	8	145,75	12,08
Agents	4	150,75	12,33
Athletic Performance	4	144,25	20,80
None	10	143,10	23,22
Total	56	142,42	17,99

Crisis Type-3	n	$\bar{X}$	SS
Finance	-	-	-
Discipline of Team	-	-	-
Communication	1	136,00	-
Unsuccess scores	4	133,00	13,03
Staff	1	156,00	-
Member of Board	6	141,83	21,68
Agents	5	146,60	18,84
Athletic Performance	21	141,95	17,38
None	18	143,72	19,97
Total	56	142,42	17,99

## DISCUSSION

According to the t-test results based on the gender variable, it has been found that the gender factor has a significant effect on the crisis management skill levels of the team managers when Table-1 is evaluated. Similarly, Balaban (2018) concluded in his study that there was no significant difference in the gender variable when comparing people working in separate roles in the field of crisis management. Karataş (2021) discovered that the gender element had no effect on the professional work ethics and behavior levels of team supervisors in his study. The fact that there are few female basketball league managers and that male club managers with larger numbers are more likely to face problems may contribute to this finding.

The ANOVA test findings (Table-3) based on the age variable of the team managers revealed that the age factor had no effect on the team managers' crisis management ability levels. In his study to assess the crisis management abilities of managers in sports organizations, Atılğan (2018) found no statistically significant difference in competence levels pre-and post-crisis. In a study conducted in the education sector by Sayın (2008), it was discovered that managers' scores in the pre-crisis sub-dimension did not differ based on age. Işık (2012), on the other hand, found that the average score of managers in the "25-34" age group of the crisis moment sub-dimension was considerably higher than the different age groups in his study in the mountainous sector. Işık determined that, compared to other age groups, managers in the 25-34 age range have a more appropriate and constructive perspective on what needs to be done in times of crisis. Persons have crisis management skills regardless of age because individuals who have taken on the duty of management in sports clubs should have adequate equipment, knowledge, and experience. It may be stated that managers, regardless of age,

should possess crisis management skills in order to safeguard best the interests of the club for which they work, to prevent the athletes' efforts from being wasted, and to keep the clubs from facing a crisis.

The ANOVA test findings (Table-4) based on the variable of team managers' educational status revealed that the educational status factor had no effect on team managers' crisis management skill levels. Similarly, Atılğan (2018) discovered no statistically significant difference in pre-crisis and post-crisis skill levels of managers in terms of educational status variable but found a significant difference in crisis management skill levels in his study to measure the crisis management skills of managers working in sports organizations ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the health sector, Işık (2012) discovered a statistically significant difference between the averages of the scores given to the items of the "crisis scenario" sub-dimension based on the education level of the managers. It has been discovered that individuals studying in the field in which they work have higher competence levels than health administrators studying in other fields. The study's findings indicating team managers' crisis management capabilities are unaffected by their educational background indicate that a high school diploma or an undergraduate degree has no bearing on team managers' crisis management skills. The fact that the team managers' education levels are centered between high school graduates and undergraduate graduates, that is, the education levels of the participants are near to each other, can be attributed to the lack of variation in crisis management skill levels. Watcher (2006), Adamson, and Peacock (2007) underlined the effect of education on school preparation for crises as a consequence of their research and proposed that education be addressed.

According to the ANOVA test results (Table 5), based on the professional experience variable of the team managers, the professional experience factor was beneficial to the crisis management skill levels of the team managers ( $p < 0.05$ ). In other words, it has been determined that professional experience is essential for crisis management skills. In his study of managers in sports companies, Atılğan (2018) discovered a difference in crisis management skill levels between managers with a seniority of 25 years and above and managers with a seniority of 15 years and below. It has been discovered that managers with 25 years or more seniority have significantly greater crisis management skill levels than managers with 15 years or less seniority. According to the study conducted by Sayın (2008) in the education sector, the scores obtained by the managers in the pre-crisis sub-dimension vary according to the professional seniority variable. The study's key finding is a statistically significant difference between the participants' years of professional experience and their crisis management skill levels. Based on this result, sports managers with many professional years have encountered many crises over time, and because they have more experience than managers who have just started the profession, their crisis management skill levels are higher, and professional experience plays a vital role in crisis management.

According to the ANOVA test results (Table-7) done on the team managers' league categories variable, the league category factor was not beneficial to the team managers' crisis management ability levels ( $p > 0.05$ ). In other words, there may not have been a significant difference based on the variable of team managers working in different leagues because team managers working in different leagues do similar work in all teams with a similar business model and maintain their relationships with both managers and athletes in similar models. In fact, while many team managers work in various teams or leagues each year, they continue to manage their crisis management abilities in the same manner. In this regard, there may be no difference between crisis management ability levels. Hence, Karataş (2021) discovered that the difference between the league levels of team managers and the professional work ethical behavior levels was not statistically significant.

According to the results of the ANOVA test (Table-8) on whether the team managers received training in the field of sports management at the university, there was no effective difference between those who received training in the field of sports management at the university and those who did not, based on the team managers' crisis management skill levels. This is considered to be due to the fact that the educational background of the sample group is focused on the range of high school graduates and university graduates. Although there is no difference, it is essential for the organization to obtain sports management education at the university and to carry out the tasks in a healthier and more competent method during the managers' work in national teams and clubs (Uyar, Sunay, 2009). Furthermore, it is believed that providing precedence to managers trained in sports management and those obtaining sports management training in clubs in terms of human resources will be critical in bringing sports to the required level. Christensen (2001) concluded that all school personnel require in-service training in crisis prevention, crisis management, and crisis response.

According to the results of the ANOVA test (Table-9) on whether team managers received certificates in sports management in addition to university education, there was no significant difference in crisis management skill levels of team managers between those who received a certificate in the field of sports management and those who did not ( $p>0.05$ ). The issue's significance for basketball organizations will be appreciated when at least one licensed team manager is assigned to the technical teams (staff) of clubs functioning in leagues in accordance with basketball regulations. Many countries that have been FIBA members in recent years, for example, have implemented a three-stage (A-B-C) certificate program and require team managers to complete these pieces of training. As a result, it is critical to determine whether the team managers in the sample group have acquired a "team manager certificate" and which categories these certificates fall into. The fact that team managers' crisis management skill levels are not statistically significant when those with basketball team manager certificates are compared to those who do not can be interpreted as the manager certificate program not yet being effective enough and training studies in this area still in their initial stages. In his research, Edwards (1992) attempted to determine the impact of a training session for secondary school principals and vice-principals on their management of a school crisis. School principals and helpers were trained in five scenarios that simulated school crises such as attacks, kidnappings, firearms, gangs, school district violence, and hostage-taking. The research findings suggest that the training is beneficial, with managers who attended the training seminar scoring much higher than managers who did not participate in the training. As a result of the study, the need for crisis management education for school administrators was stressed, and additional research was suggested. Duff (2007) sought to enhance the school's crisis management strategy further and implement an effective emergency preparedness training program in his study in response to the problem that workers at a private school were ineffective and unable to take initiative in a crisis. First, a literature analysis was undertaken to analyze the school's crisis management plan, and it was ensured that the plan was designed in compliance with the school. Furthermore, an emergency preparedness training program was established by evaluating the needs and characteristics of the school's workers. The findings revealed that all of the respondents (100%) need crisis management training and less than 40% were aware of the school's crisis management plan. Positive feedback on the training demonstrated that the developed training program was effective. As a result of the research, a crisis communication strategy was devised, a crisis counseling unit was established, and the school implemented a comprehensive staff training program that included relationships with area emergency response organizations.

According to the ANOVA test results (Table-10), which were based on the results of the evaluation of the team managers'

working hours, the factor of average working time in a day was not beneficial to the crisis management skill levels of the team managers ( $p>0.05$ ). According to the findings of the study, the element of average working time in a day had no effect on the crisis management skill levels of team managers. The lack of a statistically significant difference between the participants' average working time per day and their crisis management skill levels in the study can be viewed as evidence that average working time per day is not an effective variable in crisis management. In other words, "low, medium, and high" working hours for team managers to effectively manage the crisis process have no bearing on their crisis management abilities.

According to the ANOVA test results (Table-11) done based on the variable of whether or not the team managers have a "team manager license," whether or not the team manager has a license is not effective on the crisis management skill levels of the team managers ( $p>0.05$ ). Administrative issues are one of the reasons for club failure. It is believed that designating the levels of the federation's team management license and making it compulsory will assist in the development of basketball organizations.

The ANOVA test results (Table-12), which were done based on the priority status of the team managers during the crisis, revealed that the priority variable factor during the crisis had no effect on the team managers' crisis management skill levels. During a crisis, managers must act quickly to bring the situation under control. It is believed that the priority during the crisis is irrelevant because the crisis in the clubs will touch a large group of people who have banded together to achieve a shared purpose. In other words, because basketball administrative processes vary and develop quickly, it is critical to achieving a satisfactory outcome in a crisis, regardless of priority order.

Another aspect of the study discovered that financial woes in the firm are the most common sort of crisis that team managers confront. Due to global economic volatility and quick changes in exchange rates, it has been seen that complications develop in the payment of player salaries. Another cause of financial woes is that sports organizations have difficulty getting sponsors.

As a result, it can be stated that the reason many analyses do not reveal a statistically significant difference between crisis management and demographic variables is that the research is conducted between individuals who work in the same working environment and are constantly interacting with one another, as well as that management culture is common.

Sports administration is a subset of public administration. Because sports are a public service that is provided to the public. While the provision of services in the sphere of health and education to the public as a right of citizenship is considered a public service, it should not be overlooked that sports are also a social service supplied to the public (Katkat, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

The successful management of crises in basketball clubs during crisis periods necessitates a high level of crisis management skills among those in managerial positions. As a result, the quality of basketball services will improve, and the coordination of human and material resources in the basketball market will be more effective. Basketball is a system in and of itself, and clubs are sub-stakeholders. Because a failure in a subsystem would have a negative impact on the operation of the main system, it is critical that all organizational work in all subsystems be completed entirely and at optimal levels. In this context, it is believed that the requirement of managing each sports club by well-equipped team managers will be a vital step in achieving sporting success. While the CEO system is in practically every area, well-equipped team managers are required to be on duty for the development of global basketball.

The whole basketball organization will work smoothly as long as basketball teams' organizational procedures run smoothly.

Sporting success will be easier to accomplish if organizational problems are resolved.

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