



**‘PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHICAL LEADERSHIP’:
DEVELOPING CRITICAL MINDSET
FOR EFFECTIVE PASTORAL MINISTRY
IN AFRICA**

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Abstract:

Many issues of concern have been raised by different scholars about leadership and human endeavours in Africa over ages; issues pertaining to relationship, communication, attitude, position, power, politics, policies, influence and the likes. The demand of leadership is so enormous, task-full and delicate. The various attempt of different scholars across the globe to determine what leadership should be or should look like had led to many propounded theories, styles, principles, and techniques of exhibiting leadership. Many scholars and a host of others had written and or researched on leadership in various aspects which could be regarded as areas involving pro-activeness of leaders; attitude; qualifications of leaders; qualities; problems of leadership; theories of leadership; styles of leadership; philosophy of leadership and contemporary issues in leadership. All of their positions cannot be undermined in leadership discuss, especially in Africa and beyond; although none of these aforementioned and other scholars had written directly on psycho-philosophical leadership. The researcher’s drive on embarking on this work rested on his observation of some problematic issues that devastate the Church in Africa as a result of inadequate or proper inquiry into the problem and a logical approach to resolving such issues. The desire to see pastors in Church in African become inquiry-based and problem-solving leaders is the motivation for the work. Hence, the thrust of this paper is to present psycho-philosophical approach to leadership; intimating pastors as leaders on the necessity of developing critical mindset without undermining the Spirit of God in handling critical issues that are devastating the Church in Africa so as to ascertain efficacy of pastoral ministry through inductive-thinking, critical and deep-thinking; as well as raising the consciousness of pastors as leaders to the fact that pastoral call is not a call to lazy or myopic exhibition but that which requires thorough inquiry and

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problem-solving approach. The real power of leadership lies in the ability of the leader to think deeply and productively.

Keywords: psycho-philosophical leadership, critical mindset, effective pastoral ministry

1. Introduction

Over the years, many issues of concern have been raised by different scholars about leadership and human endeavours in Africa; issues pertaining to relationship, communication, attitude, position, power, politics, policies, influence and the likes. The demand of leadership is so enormous, task-full and delicate. The various attempt of different scholars across the globe to determine what leadership should be or should look like had led to many propounded theories, styles, principles, and techniques of exhibiting leadership. Many scholars and a host of othersⁱⁱ had written and or researched on leadership in various aspects which could be regarded as areas involving pro-activeness of leaders; attitude; qualifications of leaders; qualities; problems of leadership; theories of leadership; styles of leadership; philosophy of leadership and contemporary issues in leadership. All of their positions cannot be undermined in leadership discuss, especially in Africa and beyond; but none of these aforementioned and other scholars had written directly on psycho-philosophical approach to leadership exhibitions.

People approach leadership based on individual peculiarities; personal understanding and worldview; personality of the individual; exposure to life and situation; environmental influence; level of knowledge acquired; principles of life or scriptural interpretation; situation or circumstances and lots more. Different leadership theorists may have propounded their theory based on experiment; observation; feedback from teachings; research; personal experience and or testimonies of others, yet the fact remains that leadership exhibition is a product of individual mindsets and worldview as well as response to situation or circumstances.

Leadership involves a leader's approach to the use of influence, power and authority; this becomes visible in the leader's mode of communication and conductⁱ which are products of thinking or reasoning. It is factual that different leaders use varying leadership approach that are either peculiar to them via personality or situational, based on occurrence and demand of the time, yet the problem associated with people and leadership itself persists. As leadership is generally task-oriented in its entire sphere, leadership in the African Church is of no exception. Critical issues dominate the Church in Africa which requires urgent attention. These issues would be briefly discussed in the paper.

ⁱⁱ Such as Adetunji (2010); Ishola (2010); Obaje (2005); Brown (1979); Hocker & Wilmot (1997); Holmes (1997); Manusof (1993); Avolio (2010); Bass & Steidlmeier (1999); Ishola-Esan (2010); Kolawole (2010).

2. Conceptual Clarification of 'Psycho-Philosophical Leadership' and 'Critical Mindset'

Psycho-philosophical leadership is conceived in this article to be an ideological concept that could be adoptable in leadership. The idea is extracted from 'Philosophical Counseling' also known as 'Philosophical Practice' in counseling.ⁱⁱ It is a contemporary movement (which may be psychologically referred to as 'Therapy for the Sane') in practical philosophy with Peter Koestenbaum, 1978; Gerald B. Achenbach, 1982 and philosopher Guenther Witzany, 1985 as the prominent proponents.ⁱⁱⁱ The movement thus led to the formerly called 'the American Society for Philosophy, Counseling and Psychotherapy' and now known as National Philosophical Counseling Association (NPCA) founded in 1992 by three American Philosophers Elliot D. Cohen; Paul Sharkey; and Thomas Magnell. The group emphasized 'Critical Thinking' as requisite for effective counseling process.^{iv}

The activities common to this group (NPCA) include the examination of client's arguments and justifications; the clarification, analysis and definition of important terms and concepts; the exposure and examination of underlying assumptions and logical implications; the exposure of conflicts and inconsistencies; the exploration of traditional philosophical theories and their significance for client issues; the initiation of projects for common goods; and all other related activities that have historically been identified as philosophical.^v Exploring the heart of the concept of Philosophical Counselors, in the opinion of the writer, similar ideological concept can be applicable to pastoral leadership so as to ascertain effectiveness in the obligatory roles of a Church in Africa pastor. 'Philosophical leadership' is adoptable for helping rational and mentally healthy pastors of Church in Africa to clarify worldviews and goals in the face of challenges or difficult issues.^{vi} It is believed that anyone who would lead a congregation should be sane.

The features of Philosophical Counseling can be adopted for Philosophical leadership conception based on the following assumptions.

Table 1: Philosophical Counseling Conception adapted for Psycho-philosophical Leadershipⁱⁱⁱ

In Philosophical Counseling;	For Psycho-philosophical Leadership;
Counselors and their clients engage in structured conversations that incorporate self-reflection on values and goals	Leaders and their followers would engage in organized dialogue that incorporate self-reflection on values, goals and policies
Has the capability to support people's development of their own personal philosophies and empowers them to reach their highest human aspirations and ideas	Leaders would possess the ability to support the holistic development of their followers and empowers them to reach their highest human aspirations as well aiding them to fulfill their purpose for living
Could help an individual to curtail obnoxious	Would aid an individual leader to curtail abhorrent

ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from; Brendel. D. (19th September, 2014). Managing Yourself: How Philosophy Makes You a Better Leader. In *Expert Prospective Series: Growth Strategies for Business Leaders*. <https://hbr.org>. Accessed, 5th October, 2017.

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behaviours through critical thinking and improve his 'positivity' by facilitating self-reflection on personal character and value	behaviour through critical/deep-thinking (thinking before acting) and improve his positivity by facilitating self-reflection on personal character, value and the sense of judgment of the leader
Examines client's arguments and justifications	Would also examine peoples' propositions, opinions and arguments before concluding
Makes clarification, analysis and definition of important terms and concepts;	Would make clarifications, analyze and define important terms and concept for clear understanding during dialogue
Ensure exposure and examination of underlying assumptions and logical implications	Would examine and expose the underlying assumptions of peoples' position and their logical implications via probing
Exposes conflicts and inconsistencies in conversations	Would expose the conflicting ideas and contradictions in dialogue (leaders must be good listeners and logical analyzers)
Explore traditional philosophical theories ^{iv} and their significance for client issues	Would explore both traditional philosophical theories and 'Biblical-philosophical' practices and their significance for peoples' issues
Initiate projects for common goods	Would initiate projects for behavioural change

Based on the above assumptions and premises, in the opinion of the writer, adopting 'Psycho-philosophical Leadership' conception for pastoral leadership has the capability of empowering leaders to implement an enhanced process of dialogue, consensus building and communicative rationality^v with his leadership team.^{vii} Therefore, psycho-philosophical leadership in the context of this paper is *embracing deep-thinking and logical reasoning in the practice or exhibition of leadership obligations which could be applicable to all forms of leadership both within the Church organizations and secular bodies in Africa*. When these (deep-thinking or critical thinking and logical reasoning and presentations) are coupled with Grace and Power of God alongside positive behavioural change, they will position the leader to lead firmly and productively through a perfidious time.

Meanwhile, there is a thin line of difference between philosophical leadership and a philosophy of leadership. *Philosophical leadership* according to this article is characterized by deep-thinking, logical reasoning and rational behaviour tamed toward problem-solving. It focuses on the actions of leaders with respect to response to issues

^{iv}Traditional philosophical theories include *Meta-theory* -positions about the formation and content of theorems, such as Kurt Godel's incompleteness theorem; *Political theory* (positions that underlie a political philosophy such as John Rawls' theory of justice Ethical theory and meta-ethics- positions about the nature and purpose of ethical statements such as the ethical theory of Immanuel Kant; *Critical theory*- in its narrow sense, a Western European body of Frankfurt school of Marxist thought that aims at criticizing and transforming, rather than merely explaining, social structures. In a broader sense, "critical theory" relates to a wide variety of political, literary, and philosophical positions that take at least some of their inspiration from the Frankfurt School and its dialectic, and that typically contest the possibility of objectivity or aloofness from political positions and privileges (Gamer & Rosen, 1967).

^v Communicative Rationality is a theory or set of theories which describes human rationality (agreement via reason or reasonableness) as a necessary outcome of successful communication. The view of Reason in this context is concerned with clarifying the norms and procedures by which agreement can be reached (Habermas, 1992).

and situations, most especially in difficult situations; while a *Philosophy of leadership* according to Kolawole is the ability of a leader to possess right conception of his roles and responsibilities within a stipulated set goals, objectives and policy which the follower must strictly adhere to.^{viii} Leadership in the philosophical view could be seen as the practice of continuously envisioning opportunities for growth within complex, dynamic environments, built on core principles.^{ix}

On the other hand, critical mindset is exerting of critical thinking. Critical thinking is the activity of looking at the possible meaning and significance of claims^x; it is the process of developing and refining knowledge and using it to inform efforts to improve practice proceeds through a never-ending sequence of claims to knowledge and counter-claims.^{xi} Developing critical mindset in the context of this paper is the ability of the pastor to develop a probing, investigative and dialoging mindset through deep thinking, coupled with good analytical skills and information processing for him to be able to handle all issues (difficult or casual) emanating from the Church and the society at large.

3. Biblical Injunctions for Philosophical Leadership Conception

Some secular or contemporary philosophers and psychologists^{vi} and some others based their inquiry skills and assumptions on Socratic philosophical 'method of inquiry' which is referred to as 'Socratic Questioning' and held as his leadership virtues toward knowledge acquisition.^{xii} In the same vein, Christian philosophers would not only base theirs on this and any other philosopher, but also on the Scripture. There are many inquiries and responses to issues in the Bible that are philosophical in nature, but focus would be limited briefly only to that of Christ Jesus.

Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry was a '*leader par excellence*'. He was a brilliant thinker who adopts logical arguments to disprove the claims of His critics and situated the truth of His views in a more reasonable and logical ways. He clearly adopted a variety of reasoning strategies in His debates on different topics and issues of concern, most especially when reacting or responding to sensitive issues. Groothuis identified and classified Jesus' reasoning strategies which informs His responses as follows; *escaping the horns of dilemma*; *a fortiori arguments* -appeals to evidence and *reduction ad absurdum* arguments.

Escaping the Horns of Dilemma recorded the tricky situation of Jesus while He was being questioned about after-life (Matt. 22: 23-28). Jesus developed a well-articulated critical thinking that propelled His logical responses to issues that could have placed Him in a state of dilemma.^{xiii} If Christ was lazy of critical thinking and logical responses, He would stylishly shy away from many of most questions with pious and unrelated utterance.

^{vi} such as Dewey (2007); Biesta & Miedema (2000); Gallapher (2012); Egan (1997); El-Hay & Abd-Allah (2015); Gultek (2014); Izard (1990) McDermid (2006); Bereiter & Scardamalia (2005); Brink-Budgen (2010); Almon (1994) Joyce & Weil (1986)

Jesus also adopted a *Foritori* ('from the stronger') approach to issues through His adoption of pity but persuasive forms (Jn. 7: 21-24; Lk. 11: 11-12; 12: 4-5; 6-7; 24: 27-28; 14: 1-6; 18: 1-8). Jesus adopted persuasive arguments to demonstrate that He was both a philosopher and an apologist who rationally defended His worldview in discussions with some of the best thinkers of His days (*Ibid*). Many pastors run away from difficult issues that could possibly test their competency or pose them serious challenge to thinking and reasoning. Christ's philosophical and apologetic nature which was reflected in His exercising authority should be part of the identity of His followers and His 'called'. This will eventually not put off spiritual competency but enhance one's authority in Christ.^{xiv} "Jesus' high estimation of rationality and His own application of arguments indicate that Christianity is not an anti-intellectual faith. Followers of Jesus today should emulate His intellectual zeal, using the same kinds or arguments He Himself used".^{xv}

Jesus also used *Reduction ad Absurdum* (*Reduction to Absurdity*) as means of attending to issues. This strategy takes one or more ideas and demonstrates that they lead to an absurd or contradictory conclusion. This would then prove that the original or initial ideas must be false^{xvi} but appearing to be true. Jesus' inquiry from the Pharisees about their thought and knowledge of who Christ is in Matthew 22: 41-46 is an example of this strategy. His response to their answer (with their conception that Christ is the Son of David as they quoted Psalm 110:1) silenced them and the entire audience and threw them into a state of perplexity.

Jesus is not presented in the course of this paper as a philosopher with respect to trying to build a philosophical system around Him from a mere finite human mind as the secularists would assume but to logically present Him a man with valid Truth who would not attend to or adjudge issues irrationally. Exploring the mind of Christ in action in several stories from the Gospels, it is visible that His life was encapsulated with sharp, clear and cogent thinking attributes that worth emulating. The teaching components of Christ because He is the divine Master should not necessarily be the only focus of Christians and Church in Africa leaders, but to also focusing on His hard work, prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit as well as striving to emulate His intellectual virtues because Christians and Pastors as leaders are called to walk as He did (1 John 2: 6).^{xvii}

Jesus' teachings on the beatitude in Matthew 5, most especially in verses 17 to 19 cover basic topics of philosophy as well as His response to the Jews while attempting to stone Him in John 10: 31-34 issued His authoritative and logic teachings and response to issues.^{xviii} Presenting Jesus as a worthy thinker can be a powerful apologetic tool to reach unbelievers who wrongly assume that Christian belief is a matter of blind faith or irrational belief. As Christ, the founder of Church in Africa is a great thinker, Church in Africa leaders are not expected to demean human mind (Matt. 22: 37-39; Rom. 12: 1-2).^{xix} Church in Africa leaders who demean reasoning and disintegrate faith and reasoning or intellectual capabilities are admonished to reclaim the Christian intellectual tradition and as well learn to integrate faith and learning through deep thinking and holistic education so that they can possess Christ-like character in their worldview and

execution of their leadership roles and obligations in the Church in Africa and the society.^{xx}

4. Difficulties Associated with Pastoral Leadership in Africa

Pastoral ministry is full of some certain difficulties which pose serious challenges to the obligation of the pastor in effectively discharging his duties in the Church in Africa as a leader. Literally, one may possibly categorize these challenges to be spiritual; physical; emotional and so on. Simon Ishola reported that the main difficulty associated with pastoral leadership is majorly relational difficulties emanating from poor relationship among members and between pastors and members.^{xxi} Call to pastoral leadership demands that leaders be aware of total competencies in the discharge of their duties^{xxii}; the demands require effectual reasoning and logicity in presentations.

It might be difficult to divorce capability of handling difficult or critical issues that look philosophical from challenges of pastoral leadership. Most of the time when issue of philosophy is mentioned, what comes to the mind of many is that, it is against God, but contrarily philosophy dig deep to investigate by asking the questions of what, why, how and sometimes where. Philosophical leadership in the context of this paper is conceived to be an attempt to develop critical and probing mindsets in leaders who would not take or receive and act on information hook line and sinker but would ask questions philosophers would ask before acting or judging. Philosophical, critical and or technical issues require similar approach to tackle them.

Critical issues dominate the Church. The Church in Africa encompasses various issues and challenges that make it difficult to differentiate the Church from secular organizations. Some of the issues are identified^{vii} to be crisis resulting from improperly handled or poorly settled misconceptions, misunderstanding between two individuals or groups. Difficult issues affecting the Christian Church in Africa are mainly relational problems^{xxiii} which could be problems emanating from homes (families- nuclear or extended), from the society or other social institutions at large. Some of the issues can be identified as being minor, critical and complex in nature.

Issues that are critical require critical approach from soft intelligential leadership appliances (principles and techniques based on intelligence and revelation). Pastoral leadership is no joke. Herein lies the glorious paradox that inhabits the heart of Christian leadership^{xxiv}, that only those who can think thoughtfully and critically are worthy of leadership mandate; this is because the leadership in Africa Church, especially in the contemporary time needs to adopt inductive-thinking and problem-solving leadership approach. This was also exemplified by Jesus Christ as earlier discussed. Deep thinkers dig deep on issues and problems to ascertain appropriate solution. Overwhelmingly, it seems hard for some pastors to attend appropriately to some of the issue that could be waging war against the Church in Africa, because of its

^{vii} Identified by Adetunji (2010); Hocker & Wilmot (1997); Holmes (1997); Leets & Giles (1996); and Manusof (1993)

technicality and complexity, and are not ready to possibly take full brain-task responsibility.

5. Qualities of a Psycho-philosophical Leader

Many theorists and scholars have widely written on different leadership concept and the qualities related to such. Some of these include democratic leadership; charismatic; transformational^{xxv}; autocratic; bureaucratic; laissez-faire^{xxvi}; transactional; paternalistic; relational and political leadership.^{xxvii} All of these had being under exploitation for a while featuring the different qualities peculiar to each, but seems there have been no direct reference made or any exploitation visible with respect to philosophical formation of leadership other than establishing a philosophy for leadership operation.

It has been observed and researched by many authors^{viii} that none of the earlier mentioned styles of leadership is capable of actualizing managerial/ministerial fulfillment in singleton but with a collection of some others. Moreover, the collection of two or three or more had seems to be incapable of addressing some critical issues in some organizations; this writer opines that the inclusion of philosophical approach to leadership alongside other styles would record more effectiveness in managerial and ministerial obligations.

Therefore, the writer projects the following as qualities that are expected to be possessed by a philosophical leader: *Systemic*: ability to possess average knowledge in all areas of life and field of study. An effective leader is expected to be universal in knowledge; *Systematic*: quality of being logical, orderly, organized, efficient, consistent and methodological. An effective leader must know how to put thoughts and ideas in order; *Intuitive*: quality of being spontaneous. An effective leader must possess the ability to response to impromptu and unplanned issues adequately. He must be prepared for anything and everything at all times; *Altruistic*: ability of being self-sacrificial; *Relativistic*: this is the way resumes are compared to arrive at the most valuable ideas.^{xxviii} Leadership is not a matter of comparing the best virtues of all assembled members in conflicting situations but the ability of the leader to arrive at the most effective virtue applicable to resolve situations per time; *Apologetic*: quality of being advocate, ability to stand for and be ready to defend one's cause, faith, distinctive and beliefs. An effective denominational leader must be capable of defending his faith and practices logically in the midst of difficult situations; *Criticality*: ability of being able to be mindful, serious, and reasonable. An effective leader must be involving in careful judgment about the good and bad parts of issues. Not just being one sided to enact judgment.

Others includes: *Elicit*: quality of being able to evoke information. An effective leader must be to draw out; bring out; bring forth information from people. He must be able to use logic and reasoning to arrive at truth; *choosy*: ability of the leader to choose the best appropriate approach to handle situations; *Soundness*: quality of brilliancy,

^{viii} Such as Burns (1985); Chrislip & Carl (1995); Gardner (1996); Wheatley (2001); Michael (2010);

trustworthiness, articulate, and intelligent. A sound leader is a solution provider; *Emotional objectivity*: ability to divorce emotional feelings from situations, and address issues objectively. Effective leaders must not be bias and sentimental; Fibrous: quality of toughness, not easily discouraged. Leadership is fibrous and tough, it is not easily torn by discouragement... leadership possesses leaders; leaders do not possess leadership^{xxx}; *Supporting*: ability to facilitate and support subordinates' effort toward task accomplishment and shares responsibility for decision making after vote of confidence; as well as; coaching; visionary; enthusiasm; empathy; agility, and the likes. Anyone who would be a philosophical leader must possess the power of critical thinking conferred in his mind. Such would never be lazy in attending to critical issues but must be sound and prepared for all situations to provide valid and most relevant answers to confusions around him.

6. Practical Ways to Developing Critical Mindset for Effective Pastoral Ministry

There are different misunderstandings and misconceptions in different organizations including the Church in Africa. These require serious and productive attention resulting from a sound and intelligential mindset. Critical mindset as discussed earlier is a subset of critical thinking (see page 5). Many people have attributed this term (critical thinking) to be applicable only to philosophy, most especially logic.^{xxx} It is imperative to know that the attribution of several ministers in condemning philosophy seems rampant as some sees it to be a doctrine that negates God. On the contrary, philosophy raises questions and seeks to provide answers to them. 'This is search for knowledge; not an art of deception'.^{xxxii} Critical mindset is developing an effective problem-solving attitude by ministers of the gospel.

Nathan (2001) identified some practical ways to developing critical mindset which is adaptable for effectiveness in pastoral ministry and organizational set up. They include:^{xxxii}

- **Step 1: Identifying and defining problems:** while dealing with issues in the Church in Africa (or any organization), the first thing to do is to inquire what the problem is (what is the problem?). Identify the problem correctly and define in clear forms what the problem is all about. When problems are not adequately identified, they cannot be correctly handled;
- **Step 2: Analyzing the Problem:** here inquiry is made on 'what brought about the problem'. There is the need for the pastor to investigate history, probe issues, explore ideas and scrutinize thoughts before venturing to identify the best approach to handle the issue;
- **Step 3: Collecting Data:** data collection is not limited to academic research. It is also applicable to domestic investigations. Here, the pastor is required to access information from different quota; not limited to the information provided by the parties involve. Valid and valuable data collected are vital tools for determining the approach for solution;

- **Step 4: Establishing the Cause:** here, the pastor, need to ask 'why is the problem occurring? Determine whether the issue is internally caused or externally initiated;^{xxxiii}
- **Step 5: Seek the Best Approach for Resolution:** this is the stage where the deep-thinking ability of the pastor is most required. The pastor here requires a combination of the sources of knowledge (inspiration, intuition, and perspiration), so as to be able to identify the best approach to providing solution to the situation at hand;^{xxxiv}
- **Step 6: Evaluate your Approach:** there is the need for the pastor to evaluate the processes involved in his process of handling issues in the Church in Africa. Pastors as leaders is required to 'work like his life' to bear the scrutiny of his own tough evaluation. The ability for the pastor to engage in self-evaluation is capable of become a better philosophical leader.^{xxxv}

These procedures can be explored for both urgent and a long term issues. The ability of the pastor to adequately and effectively use the procedure will be determined by the level of soundness and his ability of self-development toward this course. Similarly, Welter & Egmon (2006) presented eight skills required of a leader to be innovative, good decision maker and problem-solver in leadership. They include *observing* (seeing beyond the obvious); *reasoning* (moving from the known to the undetermined); *imagining* (envisioning the future before it arrives); *challenging* (pushing for higher and deeper thinking); *decoding* (choosing with consequences in mind); *learning* (keeping a developmental mindset); *enabling* (exercising leadership from the outside in); and *reflecting* (looking backward, forward & inward).^{xxxvi}

7. Conclusion

Adopting Psycho-philosophical Leadership concept for effective pastoral ministry in Africa does not disengaged the reality of spirituality, faith and belief in God; it does not also condemn other approaches to leadership, rather a contribution so that effectiveness can be more ascertained in every form of leadership within and outside the African communities. The ability of a pastor to integrate faith, knowledge and reason is of great advantage for his leadership exhibition. Hence, 'Psycho-Philosophical Leadership' conception would help individual pastors/leaders to develop a critical understanding of different issues, through focus on reviewing investigated information. It will increase their appreciation of what it is possible to achieve through professionally conducted investigations of modest scope or components of larger events; informing their thinking about the scope and focus on their approach to resolving issues; and help them learn about major findings, generalizations and concepts connected with a diversity of important areas in their attempt of enquiry, process of pursuing justice and act of resolution or problem-solving.

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