

EFFECT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE FUND MOBILIZATION IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IN NAIROBI

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Publication Date: May 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This paper delves into the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization endeavors for development initiatives within Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Kenya. Leveraging empirical data and case studies, the analysis scrutinizes the challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing and managing strategic partnerships among NGOs in the Kenyan context. The study draws upon the Resource-Based Theory and Stakeholders' Theory as theoretical frameworks, aligning with objectives aimed at evaluating the efficacy of strategic partnerships in fund mobilization within NGOs, examining associated challenges and opportunities, and assessing the correlation between organizational capacity and partnership success in fund mobilization efforts.

Problem Statement: Despite the recognized potential of strategic partnerships in mobilizing resources for development initiatives, their effective implementation in Kenya remains a significant challenge. Additionally, empirical evidence suggests that partnerships between diverse stakeholders often encounter obstacles that impede their ability to achieve intended goals and mobilize sufficient funds.

Methodology: Employing descriptive research methods and stratified random sampling techniques, data collection was facilitated through open-ended questionnaires, with subsequent analysis conducted using SPSS (version 28). The study encompassed a sample size of 820 employees drawn from 25 NGOs operating in Kenya.

Result: Findings reveal that although 72% of NGOs engage in strategic partnerships for fund mobilization, merely 28% perceive them as highly effective. The demographic composition of respondents skewed toward males (56.6%), with a majority (46%) holding higher education degrees. Common challenges such as misaligned objectives, power imbalances, and trust deficits were prevalent, notwithstanding the opportunities strategic partnerships afford, including access to new funding sources, resource pooling, and heightened visibility. Notably, organizational capacity emerged as a pivotal determinant of partnership success, with aspects like strategic planning and leadership garnering heightened importance.

Recommendation: Recommendations underscore the imperative of optimizing partnership strategies, mitigating identified challenges, capitalizing on available opportunities, and fortifying organizational capacity. These insights offer valuable guidance for NGOs, governmental entities, and stakeholders keen on augmenting fund mobilization endeavors through strategic partnerships.

Keywords: *Strategic partnerships, fund mobilization and Non Profit Organizations*

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by intensifying competition and dwindling resources, strategic partnerships have assumed heightened significance. Vikanenrum et al. (2020) characterize strategic partnerships as an approach that aligns organizational goals through collaborative actions and initiatives. Within this framework, collaboration aims to bolster institutional capacity by pooling resources to address beneficiary needs (Wikaningrum et al., 2020).

Fund mobilization, the process of acquiring the necessary funds to initiate or advance a project post-contract award, serves as the impetus for launching endeavors (Mcdaniel, 2016). It encompasses activities aimed at fundraising, garnering support, attracting media attention, cultivating partnerships with influential stakeholders, and refining organizational structures to enhance assistance capabilities. This includes income-generating initiatives, in-kind donations, fundraising campaigns, and collaborative ventures.

The global population is projected to continue its ascent, with estimates suggesting a population of 9.5 billion by 2050 (Bokombe, 2020). This growth trajectory, coupled with escalating resource demands, portends a looming crisis in resource availability. Furthermore, ensuring access to modern energy sources remains a pressing concern, particularly in developing nations like Kenya, where burgeoning populations strain existing energy infrastructure, exacerbating environmental concerns (Wambungu, 2023).

Numerous studies have sought to elucidate the nexus between fundraising endeavors and international collaboration. For instance, Diandra and Putra (2019) explored the impact of social networks on crowdfunding outcomes in the United States, highlighting the positive influence of collaboration on total revenue generation. Similarly, research by Men (2014) investigated the effects of collaboration structures on the performance of 135 manufacturing firms in East Java, Indonesia, revealing a significant impact on organizational outcomes.

In the face of market uncertainties, businesses are increasingly turning to strategic alliances and partnerships to navigate challenges and achieve objectives. Zhang (2021) examined the effects of collaboration on businesses in China, drawing insights from a sample of 243 Chinese companies, and concluded that collaboration yields tangible benefits for business operations. Likewise, Demirbağ et al. (2021) underscored the significance of strategic collaborations in bolstering organizational sustainability through enhanced sales, foreign exchange, and resource sharing.

A study conducted by Samuel (2023) in Nigeria underscored the pivotal role of collaboration in capital raising endeavors. While organizations expressed satisfaction with the collaborative efforts undertaken, there remained disparities in perceptions regarding the efficacy of these initiatives in augmenting production quotas and capital influx. Consequently, the study advocates for prioritizing the cultivation of social relationships to optimize organizational performance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the recognized potential of strategic partnerships in mobilizing resources for development initiatives, their effective implementation in Kenya remains a significant challenge. Empirical evidence suggests that partnerships between diverse stakeholders often encounter obstacles that impede their ability to achieve intended goals and mobilize sufficient funds. For instance, Bishoge (2020) identified significant collaboration between NGOs and the Kenyan government to promote community development, yet effectiveness is hampered by factors such as complexity, trust issues, and governance inconsistencies. The study revealed that 75% of organization partnerships experienced delays due to bureaucratic hurdles and miscommunication between partners. Additionally, 60% of associations reported difficulties in mobilizing reserves, with donors expressing concerns regarding responsibility and transparency.

Moreover, Brass (2012) highlighted that border management and management practices influence the organization and functioning of entities in Kenya, including NGOs and donors. Cultural disparities such as organizational differences, ideological conflicts, and communication challenges further impact collaboration and asset creation in key organizations (Tarigan & Siagian, 2021). Kimani and Mwaura (2017) conducted a study on public-private partnerships (PPPs) in Kenya's infrastructure sector, revealing that 55% of PPP projects experienced cost overruns, leading to delays and diminished outcomes. Additionally, only 30% of PPP activities attracted private

investment as initially anticipated, underscoring challenges in financial mobilization and risk-sharing arrangements.

Mutua's study examined partnerships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and local government authorities in Kenya's rural areas, uncovering that 65% of surveyed associations faced challenges in sustaining community cooperation beyond the initial project phase. Capacity-building needs and limited resources were cited as major barriers to long-term collaboration and sustainability.

While previous studies have delved into the challenges facing cooperation in Kenya, more recent and comprehensive studies are warranted to elucidate the country's evolving legal framework, political landscape, and economic environment. Most existing studies were conducted over a decade ago, creating a gap in understanding the current landscape and the challenges confronting cooperative financiers. Although the existing literature provides valuable insights, there is a dearth of specific knowledge examining the interplay between factors such as law and regulation, cultural leadership practices, communication efficacy, utility, and accountability in fostering effective partnerships in Kenya's financial services sector. This study aims to bridge this gap through an in-depth examination of these various challenges and their impact on resource mobilization efforts.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of strategic partnerships for effective fund mobilization in NGO'S in Kenya.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To assess the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization effectiveness in NGOs.
- ii. To examine the challenges and opportunities associated with strategic partnerships for fund mobilization in the NGO sector.
- iii. To examine the relationship between organizational capacity and the success of strategic partnerships in fund mobilization for NGOs

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed investigative approach with a sequential explanatory design. The target population comprised organizational staff, chosen for their firsthand knowledge and up-to-

date information about their respective organizations, unlike individuals who receive updates only during quarterly or annual meetings. A sample of 890 top managers from 50 NGOs in Kenya was selected using a simple random sampling procedure due to the broad nature of the target population. The sample size was determined using the scientific method developed by Yamane (1967), resulting in a representative sample for the study.

Data collection was conducted using online-administered questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, charts, and graphs, were utilized to analyze quantitative data. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were computed using SPSS (Version 28), and the analyzed information was presented through figures, tabulations, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data were analyzed based on each objective and presented in narrative form.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI), and a formal letter from the school was provided to the organizations for data collection purposes. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants, and confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed about available resources for assistance, and data collection was conducted using self-administered questionnaires without any personal identification.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resource-Based Theory

This study is guided by two foundational theories: the resource-based theory and stakeholder theory, with a specific focus on the resource-based theory. Resource-Based Theory (RBT) is a management strategy that underscores the significance of an organization's internal resources and capabilities in achieving competitive advantage and superior performance. It posits that companies, including non-profit organizations, offer goods and services and can strategically leverage their unique resources to create competitive challenges that are difficult for competitors to replicate.

Central to RBT is the notion that company resources are valuable, rare, and non-substitutable. These resources encompass financial assets such as equity and earnings, physical assets like machinery, human capital including skills and intelligence, and organizational assets such as collaboration mechanisms, trust, processes, and knowledge management systems. RBT advocates

for organizations to focus on developing and leveraging their distinctive resources and capabilities to gain and sustain competitive advantages.

While RBT offers valuable insights into cooperative relationships, it has faced criticism for its tendency to overlook internal dynamics, decision-making processes, and power structures within organizations. Additionally, it has been faulted for its narrow focus on economic gains at the expense of social and ethical considerations. Nevertheless, RBT remains relevant in providing strategies for NGO managers to optimize their operational plans and enhance organizational performance by effectively harnessing resources from various strategic partners.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory (ST) emerged in the 1980s, challenging the traditional notion that profit maximization for shareholders is the sole objective of organizational strategy. Developed notably by Richard Edward Freeman, ST advocates for a broader perspective, recognizing the importance of value creation for various stakeholders beyond shareholders, including communities, customers, suppliers, employees, and financiers.

According to ST proponents, stakeholder management involves identifying and prioritizing stakeholders, managing relationships, negotiating contracts, and facilitating communication channels. By acknowledging the diverse interests of stakeholders, ST provides a framework for understanding and managing collaborative partnerships, thereby contributing to the effective functioning of organizations.

While both resource-based theory and stakeholder theory offer valuable insights into collaborative partnerships, their application may encounter challenges, particularly in developing countries like Kenya. Nevertheless, these theories offer essential frameworks for navigating the complex and dynamic landscape of collaborative partnerships, considering the multifaceted factors that influence their creation and outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

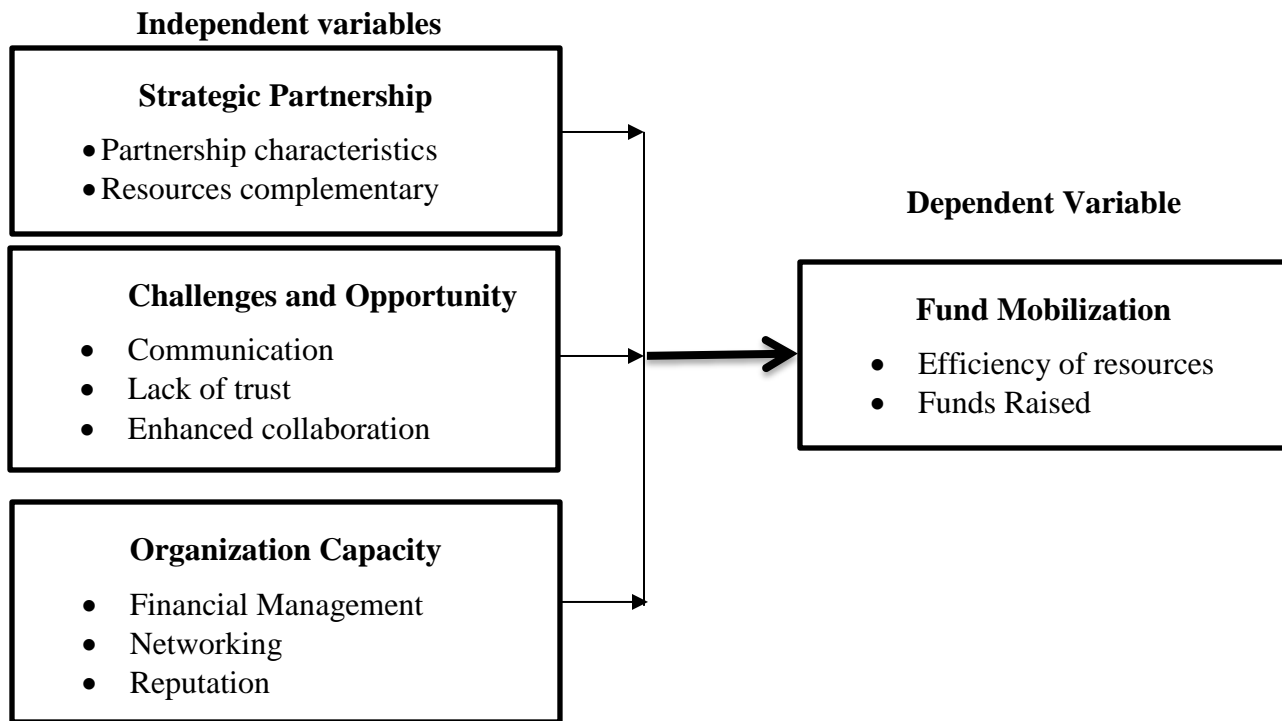


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Partnerships

Numerous studies have explored the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization within NGOs, yet significant research gaps persist. For instance, Murtaza et al. (2019) examined the role of partnerships in fostering NGO financing in Pakistan, revealing that collaborations with government agencies and private entities enhanced NGOs' fundraising capabilities. However, this study's scope was limited, and it failed to consider the long-term sustainability of funding. Similarly, Acar and Guo (2021) investigated the effect of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization in environmental NGOs in the United States. Their findings suggested that collaborations with corporations and foundations correlated with increased fundraising success, particularly for smaller NGOs. Nevertheless, this study did not differentiate between various partnership types and their specific impacts.

In contrast, Patil and Liese (2021) analyzed the Worldwide Fund's experience in mobilizing resources through strategic partnerships across various stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive management, stakeholder alignment, and innovative financing mechanisms for effective resource mobilization. However, further research is warranted to comprehensively examine the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization effectiveness across diverse NGO sectors, geographic regions, and organizational types. Additionally, investigations are needed to assess the long-term sustainability of mobilized funds and the potential risks associated with different partnership models.

Challenges and Opportunities

Harir (2015) investigated the challenges faced by NGOs in fundraising, using the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as a case study. The study highlighted issues such as competition from other NGOs, donor relations, and donor policies, underscoring the reliance on external funding sources and the need for diversified income streams. Similarly, Lee and Clerkin (2019) explored the opportunities and challenges of strategic partnerships between NGOs and organizations in the United States, identifying benefits such as resource sharing and increased visibility, alongside challenges like organizational culture clashes and reputational risks. Moreover, Kapiga and Ndung'u (2020) examined the challenges of forming and maintaining strategic partnerships for fund mobilization in Tanzanian NGOs, citing obstacles such as misaligned goals and partnership trust issues.

While existing studies offer valuable insights, further research is required to comprehensively analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with strategic partnerships across diverse NGO sectors, organizational types, and geographic contexts. Additionally, investigations should explore strategies to mitigate challenges and maximize opportunities within these partnerships.

Organizational Capacity

Studies by Sanchez-Barrios et al. (2021) and Chowdhury and Ahmad (2020) delved into the role of organizational capacity in facilitating successful strategic partnerships for fund mobilization in Colombian and Bangladeshi NGOs, respectively. They found that NGOs with robust financial management, human resource management, and monitoring and evaluation systems were more effective in leveraging partnerships for fund mobilization. However, further research is needed to examine the relationship between specific dimensions of organizational capacity and the success

of strategic partnerships for fund mobilization across various NGO sectors and geographic regions. Additionally, inquiries should focus on strategies to strengthen organizational capacity to support successful partnerships and fundraising efforts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Data from the Study

Data responses were obtained from 890 respondents affiliated with NGOs in Kenya, comprising the entirety of the sample population. Each respondent received a questionnaire, resulting in the distribution of 890 questionnaires. Of these, 820 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 92.1%. As posited by Loru (2020), a sample size of 50% is deemed effective for comprehensive data collection.

Table 1: Demographic Responses

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	490	59.6%
Female	328	40%

The data presented in the table indicates that male respondents accounted for 59.6% of the total, while females constituted 40%. This distribution suggests a predominant presence of male employees in managerial roles across various NGOs in Nairobi, reflecting their higher involvement in strategic decision-making and policymaking processes. The findings underscore the importance of promoting gender diversity within organizational leadership. To achieve equitable representation, there is a compelling need for NGOs to actively recruit and empower more female professionals, particularly in top management positions, fostering a balanced and inclusive workforce composition.

Table 2: Education level responses

Education Level	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	48%
Certificate	5%
Diploma	18%
Master's Degree	29%
Total	100%

The analysis revealed that a substantial portion of managerial personnel within Nairobi-based NGOs possess a bachelor's degree, comprising 48% of the respondents. Conversely, only 5% held certificates, while 18% held diplomas. Interestingly, a notable proportion of respondents held master's degrees, indicating a preference for higher education qualifications among managerial staff. This trend suggests that Nairobi NGOs predominantly recruit individuals with bachelor's and master's degrees for managerial roles. The prevalence of higher education qualifications among respondents implies their adeptness in articulating the study's focal issues effectively. Moreover, a significant number of respondents reported having more than five years of experience within these organizations.

To address the first objective concerning the independent variable of strategic partnership and its role in achieving the study's aims, respondents were solicited for their perspectives on the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization. This was accomplished through the administration of close-ended questionnaires designed to capture their insights and opinions on the subject matter.

Table 3: Strategic partnership on fund mobilization effectiveness in NGOs

Does your NGO engage in strategic partnerships for fund mobilization?	Yes 620 (75.61) No 180 (21.95%)
Has your NGO engaged in strategic partnerships for fund mobilization?	No 72% Yes 28%
If yes, how effective were these strategic partnerships in mobilizing funds for your NGO?	a) Highly effective (28%) b) Moderately effective (41%) c) Slightly effective (24%) d) Not effective (7%)
To what extent did strategic partnerships contribute to increasing your NGO's overall funding?	a) Significant increase (19%) b) Moderate increase (36%) c) Slight increase (31%) d) No increase (14%)

The findings suggest that strategic partnerships have yielded a positive impact on the effectiveness of fund mobilization for NGOs, as indicated by 69% of respondents reporting at least a marginal increase in overall funding attributable to these partnerships. However, only 28% of respondents perceived strategic partnerships as highly effective in mobilizing support, indicating opportunities for enhancement. These results underscore the potential advantages of strategic partnerships while

also signaling the need for NGOs to refine their partnership strategies to maximize fund mobilization effectiveness.

Table 4: Challenges and opportunities associated with strategic partnerships for fund mobilization in the NGO sector

What were the main challenges faced by your NGO in forming and maintaining strategic partnerships for fund mobilization? (Select all that apply)	A) Misaligned objectives 42% b) Power imbalances 37% c) Lack of trust 51% d) Cultural differences 29% e) Compliance with regulations 24% f) Other (please specify) 8%
What were the main opportunities provided by strategic partnerships for fund mobilization? (Select all that apply)	a) Access to new funding sources 68% b) Resource sharing 58% c) Increased visibility 49% d) Knowledge sharing 32% e) Capacity building 41% f) Other (please specify) 6%

The findings underscore the significant challenges encountered by NGOs in establishing and maintaining strategic partnerships, with the foremost reported challenge being the need for trust, identified by 51% of respondents. Additionally, misaligned objectives (42%) and control imbalances (37%) were prevalent obstacles. Effectively addressing these challenges through robust communication, clear goal-setting, and equitable partnership structures appears to enhance the success of strategic partnerships. Conversely, the results also indicate that strategic partnerships offer valuable opportunities for NGOs, particularly in terms of accessing new funding sources (68%), sharing resources (55%), and enhancing visibility (49%). Leveraging these opportunities appears to contribute to improved support mobilization and organizational development.

Table 5: Organizational Capacity and the success of strategic partnerships in fund mobilization for NGOs

How would you rate your NGO's organizational capacity in the following areas? (Rate each area on a scale of 1 to 5)	a) Leadership and governance 3.6 b) Financial management 3.2 c) Human resource management 3.4 d) Monitoring and evaluation 3.1 e) Strategic planning 3.7 f) Communication and collaboration 3.5
To what extent did your NGO's organizational capacity contribute to the success of strategic partnerships for fund mobilization?	a) 18% reported a very high extent b) 31% reported a high extent c) 36% reported a moderate extent d) 11% reported a low extent e) 4% reported a very low extent

The findings suggest that NGOs generally perceive their organizational capacity to be moderate, with strategic planning (3.7) and leadership and governance (3.6) receiving the highest average ratings. However, areas such as financial management (3.2) and monitoring and evaluation (3.1) were rated relatively lower, indicating potential areas for improvement. Importantly, the results demonstrate a significant correlation between organizational capacity and the success of strategic partnerships for support mobilization. A combined 49% of respondents indicated that organizational capacity contributed to a high or very high degree to the success of these partnerships, while 15% reported a low or very low degree of contribution.

These findings underscore the importance of enhancing organizational capacity, particularly in areas such as financial management, human resource management, and monitoring and evaluation, to enhance the effectiveness of strategic partnerships for support mobilization in NGOs.

In summary, the empirical findings from the sample of 820 respondents provided valuable insights into the impact of strategic partnerships on fund mobilization effectiveness, the challenges and opportunities associated with these partnerships, and the relationship between organizational capacity and partnership success. These results informed NGOs' strategies for leveraging partnerships, addressing challenges, and strengthening organizational capacity to optimize support mobilization efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The NGOs, Cultivate straightforward communication and construct trust with potential partners through clear objective setting and regular dialogue. Invest in capacity-building activities to support areas like financial administration, human resource management, and strategic planning, subsequently expanding availability for strategic partnerships. Tailor organization approaches adjusting organizational objectives and use openings for asset sharing and visibility.

The government should establish and maintain laws and regulations to promote and support participation, transparency, accountability, and equitable distribution of risks and rewards. Organizations must nurture stakeholders through processes that encourage open communication and trust. Encourage the adoption and expansion of new financing methods, such as financing, impact investing, and blended financing models, to drive transportation, support, and talent.

Communication, management, partners, resources, and capacity building should be implemented to improve stakeholders' skills and capabilities in these areas' mobilization, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation. Create platforms and networks to share good work, lessons learned, and success stories, with collaboration and financial support from Kenya and other developing countries. The research shows that by implementing these recommendations and addressing the issues identified, Kenyan organizations and stakeholders can effectively promote collaborative working and provide better resources to achieve sustainable development and national and international development goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The study delves into the multifaceted realm of strategic partnerships within the NGO sector, focusing on their impact on fund mobilization effectiveness, associated challenges and opportunities, and the significant role of organizational capacity. Through closed-ended questionnaires and theoretical insights from a sample of 820 respondents, the research offers valuable insights into these dimensions.

Firstly, strategic partnerships significantly enhance fund mobilization for NGOs, with 72% of respondents reporting engagement in such collaborations. However, only 28% found them highly effective, suggesting room for improvement. Nonetheless, the majority reported at least a slight increase in overall funding, highlighting the potential benefits of strategic collaborations.

Secondly, the research underscores the challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing and maintaining strategic partnerships. Challenges such as misaligned objectives and power imbalances have emerged as significant barriers. However, opportunities such as accessing new funding sources and enhancing visibility provide avenues for NGOs to leverage partnerships for organizational advancement.

Lastly, the research emphasizes the beneficial relationship between organizational capacity and partnership success. Strengthening areas such as financial management, human resource management, and monitoring and evaluation can significantly enhance the effectiveness of strategic partnerships in fund mobilization endeavors.

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