

Influencer Marketing and Its Role in Consumer Behaviour and Purchase Intentions in the Fashion Industry

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Abstract- This article aims to examine the impact of marketing strategies on consumer behavior within the fast fashion industry, specifically focusing on Zara's operations in Cyprus. By exploring the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer responses, the research seeks to contribute to the understanding of effective strategies in this dynamic market.

Index- Terms: Consumer Behavior, Fast Fashion, Marketing Strategies, Social Media Marketing, Zara, Cyprus.

1. RESAECHE GAP ANALYSIS

Previous studies have examined consumer behavior within the fast fashion industry and the efficacy of marketing tactics. However, there is a scarcity of research studies that are both location-specific and marginally relevant. An example of this is the study conducted by Papasolomou et al. (2022), where they explored the awareness surrounding the fast fashion vs environment debate. Additionally, other locally produced articles (for example, Charalambous, 2023) explore the topic of sustainability. There is a restricted quantity of regionally focused dissertations on consumer behavior within the clothing sector. As an illustration, Procopiou (2021) discovered in a study involving university students that women in Cyprus resort to "shopping therapy," while men exhibit a preference for purchasing clothing online. As a result, there exists a discrepancy in comprehending the impact of marketing strategies on behavior. The current research on Zara's marketing approach is limited, with a lack of studies specifically focused on Cyprus. Furthermore, the unexplored potential of integrating various marketing elements persists. The purpose of this article is to investigate the impact of Zara's integrated marketing strategies on brand loyalty and repeat purchase intent among consumers in Cyprus.

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ARTICLE

This article addresses the void by analyzing how Zara

customizes its comprehensive marketing strategy to influence consumers' purchasing choices in Cyprus. The comprehension of consumer behavior in Cyprus empowers Zara to optimize its marketing strategies, resulting in increased efficacy and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the results can provide valuable insights for marketing strategies of other fast fashion brands that are entering or operating in Cyprus and similar markets.

This article contributes to the broader body of marketing knowledge by unveiling the impact of a combination of strategies on consumer behavior within a specific geographic context (Furaiji et al., 2012). Additionally, it provides an opportunity for further investigation into consumer behavior within fast fashion markets that possess distinctive attributes (Ridge, 2023). This article offers valuable insights to Zara, as well as other fast fashion brands and the wider field of marketing, thereby enriching our comprehension of consumer behavior in a global market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework in a study comprises a critical and organized analysis of the literature relevant to the topic, providing a theoretical contextualization and defining the key concepts. It must comprehensively contain theories, models and previous research, identifying gaps, contradictions and consensus in the literature that are important for the focus of the work being developed (Furaiji et al., 2012). The research being conducted mainly investigates the marketing strategies employed by Zara to target Cypriot customers specifically. By analyzing their advertising campaigns, special offers, and social media promotions, this article aims to understand how in recent decades, the fashion industry has experienced substantial changes.

The emergence of fast fashion, marked by quick

production cycles, trendy designs, and affordable prices, has revolutionized the conventional fashion model (McKinsey & Company, 2023). In contrast to conventional fashion houses, fast fashion firms produce new designs rapidly, capitalizing on trends and satisfying customers' desires for instant gratification. This quick turnaround results from a tight focus on cost-effectiveness and a complicated worldwide supply network (Backs et al., 2020). Fast fashion, especially popular among young consumers, has significantly impacted the apparel market. Its affordability enables frequent wardrobe updates, keeping pace with the ever-changing trends and styles promoted on social media and fashion blogs (Hayes, 2024). However, the industry is increasingly criticized for its environmental footprint, labor practices, and the overall sustainability of its high-volume, low-cost approach (Sierra, 2024).

It is crucial to understand customer behavior in the fast-moving fashion industry. Due to a wide range of options and ever-evolving preferences, these consumers have the power to either reinforce or undermine a brand (Retail Economics, 2019). Despite growing awareness of the detrimental effects of fast fashion, including its questionable labor practices and environmental destruction, consumers are drawn to it because of its price and ability to follow trends (Atique, 2024). Fastfashion giant retailers have seen a sharp increase in sales over the last ten years. This shift is largely the result of social media, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok shifting marketing strategies and trends. For example, a study on 998 female/forward/non=binary respondents age 17-23 found that 39% would be influenced in buying a particular product based on TikTok videos (MarketingCharts.com, 2021). Today's consumers place a high value on keeping up with rapidly evolving fashion trends, and social media has an enormous user base—from 970 million in 2010 to over 5.07 billion in 2024 (Petrosyan, 2024). Fast fashion appeals to customers' emotions, finances, and psyche by appealing to their desires for instant fulfillment, social standing, and self-expression. But this quick consumption has an impact on the environment, which highlights the need for sustainable substitutes (Amplify, 2024). In 2022, the global fast fashion market was projected to be valued at more than 106 billion dollars. It was predicted that this would increase significantly in the ensuing years. As illustrated in Figure 1, the global fast fashion industry is projected to reach a market value of 185 billion dollars by 2027 (Smith, 2024).

2.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

In recent decades, the fashion industry has experienced substantial changes. The emergence of fast fashion, marked by quick production cycles, trendy designs, and affordable prices, has revolutionized the conventional fashion model (McKinsey & Company, 2023). In contrast to conventional fashion houses, fast fashion firms produce new designs rapidly, capitalizing on trends and satisfying customers' desires for instant gratification. This quick turnaround results from a tight focus on cost-effectiveness and a complicated worldwide supply network (Backs et al., 2020). Fast fashion, especially popular among young consumers,

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2.2 MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

Fast fashion brands collect consumer information and preferences via various channels like social media engagement, online purchases, and loyalty programs.

These data and preferences are then used to tailor advertising campaigns, suggest products that are relevant to the consumer, and design unique shopping experiences, all of which increase consumer engagement and loyalty (Dimension Market Research, 2024). Large businesses like Zara may tailor their product offers and marketing strategies to connect with their target demographic and boost sales by understanding their preferences, motives, and decision-making patterns (Third Eye Blind Productions, 2023). Various marketing techniques are employed by fast fashion brands to establish a connection with their target demographic and stimulate sales (Kiran, 2022), as demonstrated below.

2.2.2 MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Fast fashion brands use digital marketing to impact brand awareness and perception. This comprises search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and online ads.

Precise targeting according to customer behavior and preferences is achievable with digital marketing. It is cost-effective and yields quantifiable outcomes, which facilitates real-time strategy adjustments (Izea, 2019). Fast fashion brands typically achieve greater potential success with digital marketing because of their capacity to track engagement and target particular demographics (Smith, 2024).

2.2.3 SPECIAL OFFERS

Additionally, special offers are a common strategy used by fast fashion businesses to promote recurring business and foster brand loyalty. To drive sales, many brands utilize timesensitive deals like flash sales and bundle offers, encouraging customers to act quickly and triggering a feeling of 'now or never' in customers (Zhiyi, 2021)

2.2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

Social media provides a powerful platform for fast fashion brands. They can use it to build relationships with customers, collaborate with influencers, and generate excitement for their products, leading to increased sales (Izea, 2019). Additionally, social media gives brands the chance to communicate with customers directly, exchange content, and create communities. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are widely used to present new collections and interact with followers (Smith, 2024). Moreover, by partnering with influencers, a brand's

credibility and reach can be increased.

Influencers can present products to their audience, generating genuine recommendations that appeal to prospective buyers (Nelson, 2024).

3.METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This article employed a quantitative approach with a multidimensional perspective to understand consumer behavior about Zara's marketing strategies. Descriptive methods were initially used to characterize consumer behavior patterns. Subsequently, exploratory techniques explored the factors influencing these patterns (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Following this initial exploration, the research transitioned to a deductive approach, testing a hypothesis about the relationship between marketing strategies and consumers. The next sections detail the data collection methods, analysis techniques, and the considerations taken to ensure the research's validity and reliability.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

It is important to recognize that research methodologies can be broadly categorized into two main approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The choice between these methods depends on the specific research questions being addressed, as each offers advantages and limitations. This article opted for a quantitative approach. Unlike qualitative research, which focuses on interpreting the meanings behind human actions, quantitative research prioritizes the measurement and structuring of social behavior characteristics. By employing this approach, the researchers aimed to identify measurable impacts of marketing strategies on consumer behavior. This article employed a multidimensional approach to understand consumer behavior and the variables influencing it within the context of specific marketing strategies. Descriptive methods were used to characterize consumer behavior patterns, while exploratory techniques went deeper to identify the factors behind those patterns. This exploratory phase played a crucial role in generating new questions, leading to the collection of additional data, ideas, and insights (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). The research then transitioned to a deductive approach. As outlined by Silverman (2016), this technique involves examining an established theory and formulating hypotheses based on it. In this case, the hypothesis

aimed to explain the relationship between consumer behavior and marketing strategies.

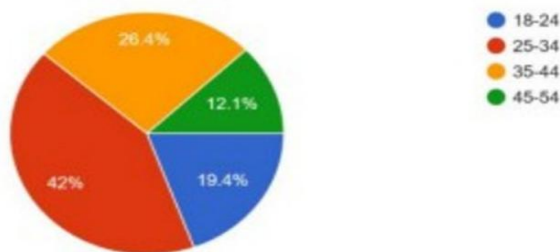
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A questionnaire set, administered as a survey, was employed to gather data on customer preferences and behaviors related to Zara. While the initial recruitment yielded 371 responses, the analysis focused on a refined sample of 355 active participants who confirmed they shop at Zara. This approach ensures the data reflects the target population of Zara customers within the Cypriot market, aligning with the research conducted for the doctoral thesis, "Decoding Consumer Behaviour in the Fast Fashion Industry: The Case of Zara in the Cypriot Market." Specifically, with an unknown population and an estimated population proportion of 50%, the selected sample secured a 95% confidence level and a 5.2% margin of error, as depicted in the table below.

3.4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS

Following the focus on Cypriot Zara shoppers, here's an illustration of the participating demographics, specifically regarding their age distribution.

FIGURE 2- AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This research will address sample size considerations for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). An estimated minimum 5:1 item-to-participant ratio was employed, as suggested by (Gorsuch, 2013) and (O'Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). Descriptive statistics like means and standard deviations were used to assess agreement with the hypothesis to ensure reliable data analysis. Additionally, EFA was conducted to validate the chosen sample size for robust factor extraction. Finally, Cronbach's Alpha was employed to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument. This ensures that items within each scale measure the intended construct effectively. This multi-pronged approach established a strong foundation for

a reliable and valid study.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The research employed SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to validate the statistical analysis of the collected data (Rahman, 2016). This data was gathered through Google Forms, facilitated real-time visualization through tables, pie charts, and other analyses upon submission. Furthermore, the data was analyzed in SPSS to test the pre-established research hypothesis, ultimately leading to the formulation of specific conclusions regarding the findings. The researchers utilized a correlation analysis to determine the relationship between the independent variable (marketing strategies) and the dependent variable (consumer behavior). Additionally, the study employed multiple linear regression analysis to explore the potential connections between the independent variables, aligning with the research question's focus on uncovering multiple relationships (Furajji et al., 2012). This statistical approach allowed for the testing of the formulated research hypothesis, which investigated the relationship between Zara's marketing strategies and consumer behavior (Rahman, 2016).

As noted above, the researchers employed Cronbach's Alpha, a recognized measure of internal consistency, to evaluate the reliability of data collected through the Likert scale. Generally, an Alpha score exceeding 0.6 suggests acceptable reliability. In this article, the calculated score is 0.857 surpassed this threshold (Furajji et al., 2012). This outcome reinforces the consistency and trustworthiness of the data, as detailed in the findings section.

3.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE

By citing Rahman (2016) and Furajji et al. (2012), this article offers valuable insights into consumer behavior and marketing strategies. However, it is imperative to acknowledge and address its limitations and delimitations. While the use of a questionnaire provides valuable data, it is susceptible to bias as participants might forget details, exaggerate their behavior, or struggle to accurately report their motivations. Additionally, the research prioritized quantitative methods, potentially overlooking the rich insights gained from qualitative approaches like in-depth interviews or focus groups. These qualitative methods can provide a deeper understanding of consumer motivations and decision-making

processes. Furthermore, the research focused on a particular set of marketing strategies and a defined set of influencing variables, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other marketing approaches and potentially missing the impact of other factors. Finally, consumer behavior can evolve, and the findings might not reflect the most current trends or respond to future changes. These limitations and delimitations highlight the need for further research to address these points and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between consumer behavior and marketing strategies.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to maintain the integrity and ethical standards of this article, the researchers prioritized the quality of data at every stage of the information-gathering and analysis process, following the guidelines established by Furaji et al. (2012). Consequently, no undue pressure was exerted on individuals who were hesitant to take part in the study. Strict confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all collected data, and no personally identifiable information will be obtained. Furthermore, the data was used exclusively for academic purposes by the researcher and their supervisor. Additionally, the researcher has taken meticulous steps to minimize plagiarism by incorporating proper citations following established university guideline.

3.9 CONCLUSION OF METHODOLOGY

This article employed a mixed methods approach to investigate consumer behavior and its relationship with marketing strategies in the context of Zara. Descriptive and exploratory methods initially characterized consumer behavior patterns and generated new

Table 2

Sample Cases

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	355	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	355	100.0

Table 3

Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	
.857	.932	3	

research questions. Then, a deductive approach focused on testing a hypothesis about the correlation between marketing strategies and consumer behavior. Data collection involved a quantitative survey targeting Zara customers. The final sample size of 355 ensured data relevance. Quantitative analysis using SPSS included multiple linear regression to assess the direct effects of multiple independent variables and correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables.

This article acknowledges the limitations of a solely quantitative approach and the potential for bias in survey data. Additionally, the focus on specific marketing strategies and variables limits generalizability. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating qualitative methods and exploring a broader range of influencing factors.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research's findings indicate that the marketing strategies employed by Zara are generally reliable. This is supported by the high Cronbach's Alpha values of .857 and .932, illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 in this article, which suggest a high level of internal consistency among the 3 strategies measured.

The item statistics reveal that consumers have a moderate response to Zara's advertising and marketing campaigns, special offers, and social media promotions, with mean scores around 3. The standard deviations are relatively close to each other, indicating a similar spread of responses across these items.

Overall, these results suggest that Zara's marketing strategies have a consistent influence on consumer behavior, as perceived by the survey respondents.

A significant portion of the Cypriot Zara customer base (36.6%) agrees that advertising and marketing campaign strategies influence their purchasing decisions. This finding, illustrated in Fig. 3 below,

underscores the importance of effective marketing strategies for Zara in reaching and engaging its target audience.

I am often swayed by advertising and marketing campaigns by Zara.

355 responses

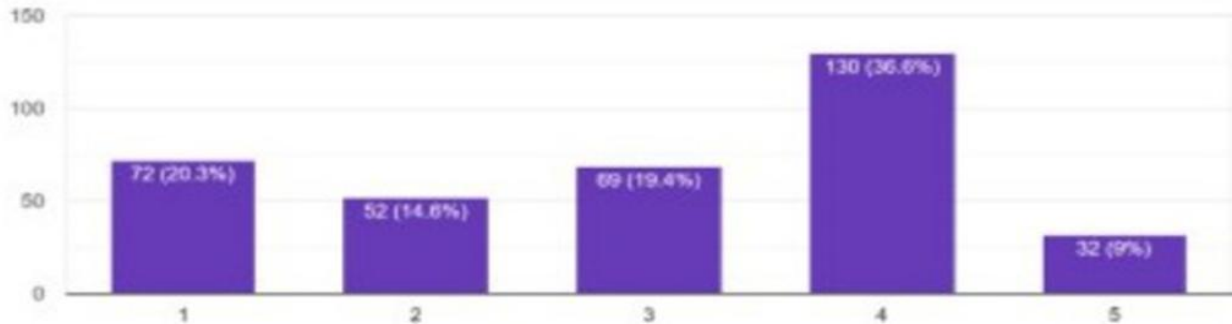


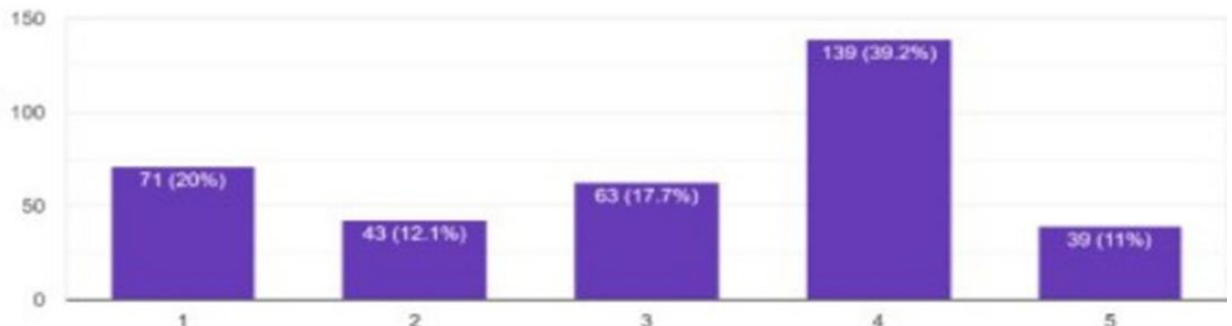
FIGURE 3- SAMPLE POPULATION RESPONSE TO ADVERTISING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

A noteworthy 39.2% of respondents indicated that special offers influence their decisions to shop at Zara, as illustrated in Fig 4. This emphasizes the potential

impact of strategic promotions on consumer behavior within the Cypriot Zara customer base.

I find loyalty programs and special offers appealing at Zara.

355 responses



Over a third (34.9%) of survey participants, as illustrated in Fig. 5, acknowledged that social media promotions influence their decisions to buy from Zara.

This significant influence highlights the potential of social media marketing strategies for Zara to engage customers and drive sales.

Social media promotions influence my purchase decisions at Zara.

355 responses

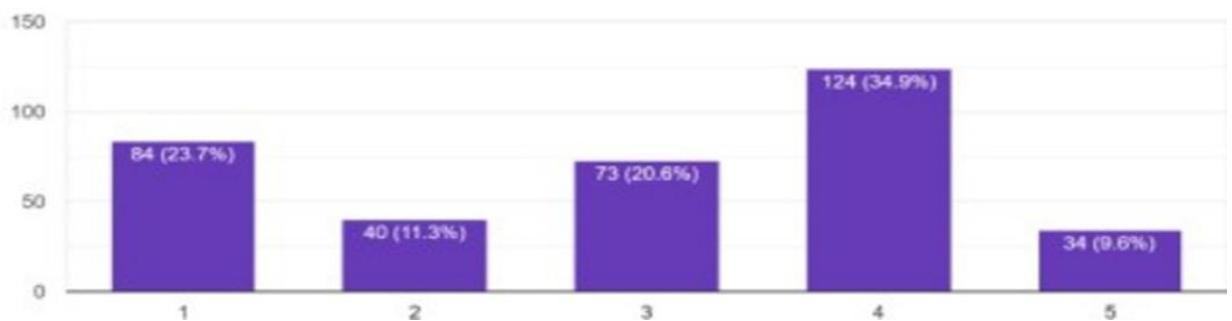


FIGURE 5- SAMPLE POPULATION RESPONSE TO SOCIAL MEDIA

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4.2 PROMOTIONS

The survey results reveal a positive influence of Zara's marketing strategies on Cypriot consumers. The average scores for agreement with statements regarding advertising, special offers, and social media promotions all fall within the moderate to high range (approximately 2.95 to 3.09). This suggests that these specific strategies resonate with the target audience. Furthermore, the combined score for all marketing strategies (9.04) reflects an even more positive picture, indicating a strong overall impact of Zara's marketing efforts.

The standard deviations, ranging from 1.30 to 1.34 for individual items and 3.49 for the combined score, suggest some variation in responses, but not to an extreme degree.

This reinforces the reliability of the data. The robust sample size of 355 participants further strengthens the confidence in these findings, indicating they are likely representative of the Cypriot Zara customer base. The results are illustrated in Table 3.

4.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The research findings hold positive implications for Zara's marketing strategies in the Cypriot market. The data suggests that a significant portion of Zara's customer base (over a third) acknowledges the influence of advertising, special offers, and social media promotions on their purchasing decisions (Figures 3, 4, & 5 in this article). This highlights the effectiveness of Zara's current marketing approach in reaching and engaging its target audience. Furthermore, the high mean scores (around 3.0) for agreement with these marketing strategies (Table 3 in this article) and the strong overall positive impact reflected in the combined score (9.04, Figure 5 of this article) indicate that these strategies resonate with Cypriot consumers. The moderate standard deviations suggest some variation in responses, but not to an extreme, which reinforces the reliability of the data.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the success of the current strategies, Zara can consider further optimization to enhance their marketing efforts. Here are some recommendations based on the findings:

- **Leverage Social Media:** With over a third of respondents (34.9%) influenced by social media promotions (Figure 5 in this article), Zara can strengthen its social media presence to further engage customers. Exploring interactive content, influencer marketing, and targeted social media advertising could be valuable strategies;
- **Tailor Special Offers:** While special offers are generally appealing (39.2%, Figure 4 in this article), Zara can explore segmenting customer data to tailor promotions to specific demographics or purchase behaviors. This could increase the effectiveness of these offers;
- **Track and Analyze:** The research emphasizes the positive impact of current marketing strategies. Zara can maintain this success by continuously tracking key metrics associated with each marketing campaign. Analyzing this data allows for ongoing refinements and optimization of future marketing efforts.

4.5 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While this article provided valuable insights, there's always room for further exploration. Here are some potential future research directions:

- **Qualitative Research:** Complementing the quantitative approach with qualitative methods like in-depth interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insights into consumer motivations and decision-making processes behind their responses to marketing strategies;
- **Longitudinal Study:** A longitudinal study tracking consumer behavior over time would reveal how Zara's marketing strategies influence purchasing habits in the long term. This could track the effectiveness of new marketing initiatives as well;
- **Global Comparison:** Examining how Zara's marketing strategies influence consumer behavior in other geographic regions would offer a broader understanding of the effectiveness of these strategies across diverse markets.

4.6 FINAL THOUGHTS

This article has demonstrated the positive influence of

Zara's marketing strategies on Cypriot consumers. By understanding these influences and continuously optimizing their approach, Zara can ensure continued success in attracting and engaging its target audience within the Cypriot market. More explicit investigation into specific aspects of marketing strategies, such as what type of social media promotions (e.g. use of influencers, influencers' message type and approach, advertisement approaches, video marketing, etc.) and which degree or manner of special offers (e.g. amount of discount, the language used – e.g. 2 for the price of 1, etc.) is most effective of consumers' behavior, would reveal more particular descriptions of marketing strategies. However, this study does reveal their overall necessity and effectiveness.

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