Purchase Intention of Tourism Products and Services Promoted Through Facebook among Millennial in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the extent of the effectiveness of the use of social media in promoting tourism products that can attract the attention and trust of customers to buy packages through social media. The study is significant for the tourism industry players to identify their potential customers from Facebook users. Data collection process was conducted through the dissemination of questionnaire which is by using google form for the social media users who have used the social media services in purchasing travel agency's packages via websites. The research used quantitative and descriptive research design. Questionnaire is divided into two parts whereby Part A is about demographic profile, and Part B is on the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. Data analysis was carried out by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. As a result of the survey, there are several answers that were provided by the users, one of which is that they are satisfied with the purchase of travel agency packages online because it saves time. Meanwhile, there are also customers who are less satisfied and have refused to use the social media to buy these packages because they cannot negotiate on the packages that they want. From the analysis conducted, it has made it easier to understand the extent to which the use of social media can help in promote the travel agency packages. Also, it shows that most of the Facebook users in Malaysia are from millennials generation who are more likely to purchase tourism products and services promoted on social media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, we can see various internet usage throughout the world. It can be said that almost the entire world uses the internet in carrying out their day-to-day live activities and tasks, including those who use the internet in their field of work - it is to make it easier for them to interact with their friends through social pages. However, the use of the internet can be seen to be more helpful in this tourism trade because of the existence of the internet which makes the world without limitations. There are many opportunities for businesses to continue in enhancing the products they have on social media. This also contributes to the usage of the internet in the tourism industry as well as being able to facilitate them to market their products which when they were previously forced through hardships to promote the products that they have which requires a high cost for advertising on television and where the use of tools for promotion is limited and not all travel agents can use tools to promote their products. In this article, the existence of the internet has led to the existence of social pages where these social pages can provide opportunities in advertising their products. They only use social websites such as social networking pages like Facebook, Twitter, You Tube Linked, Google Plus, Instagram, and Flickr, which can now be accessed through portable devices (Tan, 2018).

According to Farshid and Elizabeth (2021), in the tourism perspective, social media has significantly transformed the way tourists look for the information, plan their vacations and share their experiences with others. Websites and forum-specific applications, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the various social media types. In these days, modern travellers make decisions to undertake trips or vacations and these decisions are mostly influenced by friends and relatives' recommendations and through online comments as well as also from third party's information (Kassegn & Sahil, 2020). Hence, these influences from the social media had affected tourists' decision to purchase tourism products through Facebook.

In market transactions, consumer interaction tends to allow customers to continue to rely on purchasing rather than making sales as well as to co-create interest by creating interpersonal relationships in lasting partnership exchanges between dealers and buyers (Sashi, 2012). These interactions change the traditional exchange relationship roles of both seller and customers. Indeed, customers often add value through content generation and even become ardent advocates for the products of the seller and can influence peer-to-peer interaction buying decisions of others.

Facebook is also one of the social media platforms that influence people to purchase products. Facebook is a free popular social media platform for social networking which allows registered users to create accounts, upload photographs and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. Facebook is simple to use and available to all. Even the least skilled people can sign up and start posting on Facebook. Although it was established to keep in touch or reconnect with long-lost friends, it quickly transformed into the darling of businesses that can target various audience closely and deliver advertisements directly to the people most likely to want their products or services.

Facebook makes it easy for its users to share photos, text messages, videos, status posts, and feelings. The page is interactive to various clients and a regular daily rest. Facebook does not permit adult content, unlike some social network sites. These adult contents are banned from the site when users transgress or when they are reported. Facebook provides a customizable set of privacy controls to enable users to protect their information from reaching third-party people. Facebook users can also sell or promote tourism products to consumers because it is easy to access.

Tourism product is "a mixture of tangible and intangible elements such as physical, cultural and man-made properties, attractions, services and activities around a particular centre of interest that represents the core of the destination marketing mix and generates an overall tourist experience including emotional aspects for potential customers. Recently, Facebook has added support to its marketplace platform for home services. This update allows home service professionals to market their services in their local areas to others Facebook users from all over the world which share similar interest.

According to DeVaney (2015), the generation of millennials were born between 1980 and 2000. The early events in the millennials' lives were globalism; the attacks on September 11,2001 and the Internet Age (National Endowment for Financial Education, 2015 in DeVaney, 2015). Besides that, millennials are known as the "digital natives". This is because, it has been pointed out by DeVaney (2015) in her journal article that most of the founders of the following companies have been found to be millennials such as Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on.

1.1 Problem Statement

Nowadays, Facebook has become one of the mediums for the travel agency to promote and sell the tourism products and services toward the Facebook users that have the potential to be their customers. This research was conducted because the previous research was limited as they were not focusing to collect the data from the other regions. According to Madahi and Sukati (2012), in Kuala Lumpur and Cyberjaya data analyses is restricted to the younger generation. Future studies may integrate data from consumer segments from different regions to get better results and improve test validity. Besides that, we need to understand the characteristics of millennials because they can influence other people to buy tourism products and services (Euromonitor, 2015).
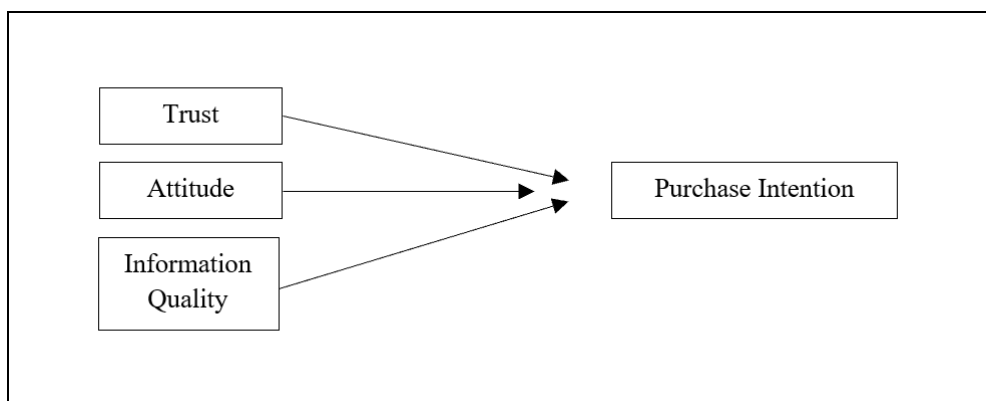

Figure 1. Online Travel Purchase Intention Model (Adapted from Wen, 2012)

1.2 Hypothesis Statement

H1:   Trust has a significant influence on intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook among millennials.

H2:   Attitude has a significant influence on intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook among millennials.

H3:   Information quality has a significant influence on intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook among millennials.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media

Consumer historically have used the Web to gain information, review, and purchase products and services. The growth of social media platforms helps in mushrooming the tourism business expand. It also reflects the trend of social media in causing a significant impact on the business's images revenues, and longevity. According to Hautz et at. (2017), the emergence of social media enables the marketing messages not solely generated by the organisation, but it can now be accessed equally by the users.

There are many social media platforms that can be found on the net and are widely used by all range of generation. For students, Facebook helps as a private niche network. Sharing media sites like MySpace, YouTube, and Flickr focuses on sharing videos and pictures. Meanwhile, Instagram is identified as a significant social media platform (Shuqair & Cragg, 2017). Hanna and Puitit (2014) classified that there are researchers that emphasized on the value of Instagram being the efficient tools for tour operators and travel agents in promoting destinations. Mercadal (2017) quoted that the social media development enables the tourism companies to launch their marketing campaigns by targeting a large population. This is due to the wide features and components which are available on social media platforms for the tourism industry usage.

As social media is considered a part of digital marketing, it could increase brands' awareness and is able to spread among the targeted groups. With the emergence of Web 2.0, the users of social media are also increasing, and it shares a high value content, attracting the prospects (Meslat, 2018). This enables many tourism service providers to promote their products as they will be highly visible by the consumer with the help of social media. According to Atadil (2011), his study on the perception of tourism customers' social networks shows that the participants received information about the hotels through social media intensively. The information provided in the social media also plays an important role in determining tourists' selection. According to Zivkovic et al. (2014), tourists are heavily influenced by social media and it has become the tools for them to make travel decision making.

The diffusion of ICTs inevitably influenced the tourism industry and created a new business environment, whereby the tourists are becoming the co-marketers, co-designers, co-producers and co-consumers of travel and tourism experiences (Sotiriadis, 2017). Hence, social media is essential in developing the tourism industry by its ability to promote their experiential qualities as well as making it easier for the consumer to make purchasing decision (Ban et al., 2015). This is also crucial for the tourism firms to create an interest in their properties, promoting, attract media attention, create awareness and recognition of their brand (Eroz & Dogdubay, 2012).

2.2 Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites providing a forum for users to build personal profile pages and attach friends and send messages. Brandwatch (2016) stated that there are 1.71 billion active users monthly with 50 minutes time spent per day on average (Stewart, 2016). The accessibility of Facebook via mobile phones makes it as a prominent tool for many people and it is considered as one of the easiest tools to search for information and reference.

Facebook is also famous among travellers as it is used as the source of information and it is a tool for them to share experiences and as a reference for travel planning (Michopoulou, 2013). Although the Facebook can be seen as a platform to pull the potential travellers, it can also be a platform to post complaints, feedbacks, and ratings (Pantano & Di Pietro, 2013). This however, according to Ben-Shaul and Reichel (2018), can be a positive relation in terms of brand engagement and the user. It can help in creating the brand awareness as well as indirectly promote the business. Facebook has then come with a 'business page' on which the business can create targeted market and engage with current or potential customers (Phelan et al., 2013). This helps especially to tourism and hospitality service provider to market effortlessly and enable them to identify the potential customers.

Other researcher Liu, Wu, and Li (2018) addressed that posts on luxurious vacation can gain a lot of interests among the users and it increases the intention to visit the locations. The results were later confirmed by Marder et al. (2018) and she noted that the millennials are the potential travellers to such places that they see in Facebook posts.

2.3 Millennials and Social Media

Internet and social media are synonyms to the young users. Cantoni and Rapetti (2015), in their research indicated that the 1980's starting from 1981 – 1994 are the Generation Y or also known as millennials. They also named the millennials as *'Digital Natives'* due to the generation Y youngsters having high abilities in tackling the technology and digitalisation. The millennials distinctive characteristic is their willingness to change, optimistic, and their abilities to search for information that is related to technologies. This generation is also known as the generation that is almost always online as they are active on social media, championing the online shopping sites, technological savvy, able to look for instant information, entertainment, and social relationship online (Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020). Hence, the millennials certainly give an important impression and impacts towards the economy development in terms of economy, as well as tourism.

The millennials are already a huge population, and their buying power makes them an enticing option for most consumer industries. The millennials have therefore become an interesting population to research as they have different behaviour relative to other ages, which is why researching them acquires value and significance (Smith, 2011). As social media is a big support system in the development of tourism services, the most active groups are the young users or millennials (Kachniewska, 2015). They see that the platform as a tool for them to review, search, compare, and purchase. It can also be a platform where they exchange opinion on the products and services which are available. Purchasing, tourism packages or services online can be somehow risky, however, with knowledge on technology, the millennials can reduce the risk (Werenowska & Rzepka, 2020).

2.4 Trust

Trust in purchasing is also one of the most important things in the world of online sales on social pages. If we can see that today many social media users are using it as a trading spot for selling goods and promote the products. Purchasing online somehow can be quite risky as consumers can only see the images and merely experience the products after they are purchased and have arrived in front of their door. Facebook, and some other platforms have 'fan page' or 'business page' to provide information on certain products and services. These fan pages help the consumers to exchange information and validation on the products, hence, gaining the trust on business products and services (See-To & Ho, 2014).

Studies done by Munar (2013) indicated that trustworthiness level on the type of internet-based information is based on the social media credibility such as Facebook (social media), microblogging (twitter), blogging sites (travel blog), and review sites (Tripadvisor). The searching process, reviewing, purchasing, give a sense of satisfaction to the customer and gaining them trusts on online transaction (Mikalef, Giannakos & Pateli, 2013).

2.5 Attitude

Consumer attitude is determined by trust in term of online products they purchased (Rahman et al., 2018). A good information quality, online security, and consumer worth timing leads to consumer satisfaction in online purchasing (Katawetawaraks & Wang, 2011). Apart from that, the data saved by the online stores on consumers' personal details and purchased enables the attitudes of re-purchase decisions (Liao et al., 2012). Another influence is that the advertising can also influence consumers' attitude to purchase the products and services, such as when the advertisement appears in social media and Facebook feeds (Wang et al., 2012). Since this study is conducted in the context of social media, subjective norm would be a vital influencing factor as social influence among users is very high in the social media website (Sin, Nor & Al-Agaga, 2012).

2.6 Information Quality

Each social media platform site can be different in terms of functionality and usage. Despite the differences, these social media platforms can create various connections and deliver information faster. It is important for the social media to have a good, precise, and quality content for the information to be accurately delayed to the target audience. Online products and services need to have precise, honest, and good quality information to gain trust. It must be concise, detailed, and up-to-date details (Tatpornpan, 2017). Quality services is divided into two - quality and quality dimensions of process quality. Such satisfaction information is a key determinant of behavioural intention. Unsatisfied customers will go to another site. To avoid this, a website must provide customised, accurate, updated, and in-depth product descriptions. The quality of the information on the site is that the online seller will influence the intention to buy the trip online. Customers will choose one specific online shopping site over another depending on the quality of the information on the website, which in turn will affect customers' satisfaction (Costa, Viladecans, Machuca, & Viadiu, 2018).

3. METHOD

This research utilised quantitative approach and descriptive research design. The data then was collected only once to allow the research to answer those research questions. The collection of data for this research was conducted within two months through online survey. Online method has been used as the survey method because it is more convenient for this research. The unit analysis for this research is individually which will be represented by the Malaysian millennial Facebook users who have purchased the tourism products and services through Facebook. This research also will look on the relationship between these factors which are trust, attitude, information quality and intentions to purchase. Online questionnaire was distributed to the Malaysia travel agencies Facebook page to reach their customers.

The main target population of this study is the Malaysian millennial Facebook users who have purchased tourism products and services through Facebook. Millennials are individuals from the generation that were born between 1980 and 2000 (DeVaney, 2015). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia in 2019, the population for millennials generation in

Malaysia which are those in the age group of 19 years old until 39 years old is 12 004 peoples.

3.1 Data Collection and Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was carried out by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The first process that was established after the data was collected is the descriptive statistics which includes the frequencies and percentages for demographic data. After that, the Cronbach's Alpha has been used to measure the reliability of the questions that have been listed on the questionnaire and regression analysis has been done to test the entire hypothesis. The Cronbach's Alpha is a tool that was used to indicate if each of the item measures the same characteristics and is relevant to the subject that is needed to be measured. Regression analysis is a statistical tool that has been used to interpret the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. It is conducted to know how strong the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables whether the relationship is negative or positive as well as showing the proper way to describe the relationship.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Trust

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Trust

	Measurement Items for Trust	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	There are 3rd party approvals and tight measures to assure the security of my transactions.	3.32	1.164
2	There is reliable testimonial by the past consumers.	3.81	1.018
3	I think purchasing through Facebook is more trustworthy.	3.31	1.032
4	They provide me with clearer statements assuring my privacy and security.	3.36	1.161

Table 1 shows that the highest mean among the items in the trust factor is 3.81 meaning that most of the respondent agreed with the statement which is "there is reliable testimonial by the past consumers". However, the statement for "I think purchasing through Facebook is more trustworthy" showing the lowest mean among the items in the trust factor which is 3.41 which means there are moderate number of respondents that agreed to the statement.

Table 2. Model Summary for Trust and Intention to Purchase

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.095[a]	.009	.006	.84222
a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust				

Table 3. Coefficients[a] for Trust and Intention to Purchase

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.177	.224		14.157	.000
	Trust	.116	.064	.095	1.821	.069
a. Dependent Variable: Intention						

Based on Table 2 and Table 3, trust factor can explain 0.09% (R^2=0.009) of the millennial Facebook users' intentions to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. The

beta coefficient value (β=0.116, p=0.069, p>0.05) produced by the trust factor indicates that the hypothesis which is trust factor cannot affect the intentions to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by the Malaysian Millennial Facebook users is accepted because the p-value is more than 0.05.

3.2 Attitude

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics on Attitude

	Measurement Items for Attitude	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Shopping for travel products through Facebook is more convenient for me.	3.84	0.954
2	It takes me less time to purchase travel products through Facebook.	3.82	0.942
3	It is fast to complete a transaction through Facebook.	3.72	0.992
4	It is easy to interact with the person who handling the travel products online.	3.82	0.970
5	There is a greater assortment of travel products to choose from through the Facebook.	3.82	0.945
6	I can find more high-quality travel products that are available through Facebook.	3.40	0.969
7	I can get a better rate for the travel products through Facebook.	3.61	1.026
8	Most of the travel products through Facebook offer better value for my money.	3.52	1.026

Table 4 shows that the highest mean among the items in the attitude factor is 3.82 meaning that most of the respondent agreed with the statement which is "it takes me less time to purchase travel products through Facebook", "it is easy to interact with the person who handling the travel products online" and "there is a greater assortment of travel products to choose from through the Facebook". However, the statement for "I can find more high-quality travel products that are available through Facebook" was found to show the lowest mean among the items in the attitude factor which is 3.40 indicating that there are still moderate number of respondents that agreed to the statement.

Table 5. Model Summary for Attitude and Intention to Purchase

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.114[a]	.013	.010	.84045
a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude				

Table 6. Coefficients for Attitude Factor and Intention to Purchase

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.043	.245		12.398	.000
	Attitude	.145	.065	.114	2.211	.028
a. Dependent Variable: Intention						

Based on Table 5 and Table 6, attitude factor can explain 1.3% (R^2=0.013) of the millennial Facebook users' intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. The beta coefficient value (β=0.145, p=0.028, p<0.05) produced by the trust factor indicates that the hypothesis which is attitude factor can affect the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by the Malaysian Millennials Facebook user is accepted because the p-value is less than 0.05.

4.3 Information Quality

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics on Information Quality

	Measurement Items for Information Quality	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Travel products through Facebook presents more customized information.	4.01	1.169
2	There are more in-depth product or services descriptions that are available through Facebook.	3.94	1.268
3	There is more accurate information on the travel products through the Facebook.	4.10	1.159
4	Information is easily accessible through the Facebook.	4.09	1.120

Table 7 shows that the highest mean among the items in the information quality factor is 4.10 indicating that most of the respondent moderately agreed with the statement which is "there is more accurate information on the travel products through the Facebook". However, the statement for "there are more in-depth product or services descriptions that are available through Facebook" showing the lowest mean among the items in the information quality factor which is 3.94 indicating that the respondents still agreed to the statement.

Table 8. Model Summary for Information Quality and Intention to Purchase

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.105[a]	.011	.008	.84137
a. Predictors: (Constant), Information Quality				

Table 9. Coefficient for Information Quality and Intention to Purchase

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.074	.253		12.135	.000
	Information Quality	.125	.062	.105	2.017	.044
a. Dependent Variable: Intention						

Based on Table 8 and Table 9, trust factor can explain 1.1% ($R^2=0.011$) of the millennial Facebook users' intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. The beta coefficient value ($\beta=0.125$, $p=0.044$, $p<0.05$) produced by the trust factor indicates that the hypothesis which is trust factor can affect the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by the Malaysian Millennials Facebook user is accepted because the p-value is less than 0.05.

4.4 Intention to Purchase

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics on Intention to Purchase

	Measurement Items Intentions to Purchase	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Would you like to try a tourism products or services recommended on Facebook?	4.03	0.739
2	Would you buy the tourism products or services recommended on Facebook?	3.41	1.067
3	Would you actively seek out the tourism products or services on Facebook to purchase it?	3.29	1.292

Table 10 shows that the highest mean among the items in the intentions to purchase is 4.03 indicating that most of the respondents agreed with the statement which is "would you like to try a tourism products or services recommended on Facebook". However, the statement for "Would you actively seek out the tourism products or services on Facebook to purchase it" showing the lowest mean among the items in the intentions to purchase which is 3.29 indicating that there are still moderate number of respondents which agreed to the statement.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Facebook is a popular social media platform that can be used as business purposes such as selling tourism packages. Travel agencies can use Facebook to promote their products easily as the number of people logging in the social media is huge and it reaches the potential customers faster.

From this research, it can contribute to the tourism industry players to identify their potential customers which come from millennials generation most likely. The posts from the tourism industry players can influence the intention of the Facebook users to plan for their trips. Thus, analysing Facebook posts can assist managers to understand customers' behaviours and decision-making processes and perhaps improve their marketing effectiveness (Arturo, Mar Andrew, Evangelina & Wilhelm, 2020). The purpose of this research, therefore, was to investigate whether trust factor can affect the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by Malaysian Millennials, to determine whether the attitude factor can affect the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by Malaysian Millennials, and to study whether the information quality affects the intention to purchase through Facebook by Malaysian Millennials.

The results show that among the three factors stated, trust factor does not have significant effect on the intention to purchase the tourism products and services through Facebook Malaysian Millennials. This is because some of Millennials have had bad experiences while purchasing the products or services with the travel agency due to communication problems. Communication is important to make people trust on you and they will purchase your products and services. Next, the results show that attitude has significant effect on the intention to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. This is because, it is fast to complete transactions through Facebook and communicate directly to their desired travel agencies. Other than that, when you communicate directly with the person who is handling the travel agency you can deal with a person who handles the travel agency to get a better rate for the travel products and services through Facebook. Moreover, a well-designed website of the travel agency page can influence the intention to purchase the tourism products and services through Facebook.

Other than that, the information quality also affects the intention to purchase the tourism products through Facebook. Some of the customers' demands for a quality information before they purchase the products. Moreover, information is easily accessible through Facebook where they can read past experiences of Millennial Facebook users who have purchased the products previously. This is because Facebook can display users' comments and can share with others. As a result, people can easily mix and match their preferences with the products offered. Overall, attitude and information quality affect the intentions to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by Malaysian Millennials while trust factor was found to show no significant effect of the intentions to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by Malaysian Millennials.

There are numerous opportunities for future research within this area. First, future research could investigate the perception and expectation buying tourism products and services through Facebook. Future research may be used for businesses to improve their products or services to attract more customers especially for the Facebook users so that the businesses will develop more interesting products to promote to the customers. Second, future research could investigate the intentions to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook by Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers are those who grow up to be the best-educated generation, and the most technologically savvy people. The businesses must be prepared to face the next generations to attract them to purchase tourism products and services through Facebook. This future research will help the businesses to maintain their business in future.

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