

# Examination of disadvantaged children's communication skills with sports branches

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**Abstract.** In this study, it was aimed to examine the development of communication skills in the sports education project of Turkish and Syrian refugee students aged 9-15, who were considered disadvantaged with the "Young Together" project of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In the study, the disadvantaged children living in the province of Kilis form the universe, while the students included in the project form the sample. In the study, the changes in the emotional and behavioral communication of the participants, which are included in the communication skills, were evaluated by giving training to the students in 5 different sports branches for 16 weeks, 2 days and 4 hours a week. In the study, the description was made in the scanning model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. In the study, the data obtained from 109 people determined by random method among 320 individuals who participated in the project voluntarily were evaluated. A questionnaire consisting of demographic information and communication skills inventory was used in the measurement tool of the study. In the analysis of the data, demographic variables were processed using the JASP statistical program, percentage and frequency, and other analyzes were processed with t-test, one-way analysis of variance and correlation tests at  $p < 0.05$  significance level. As a result of the research, it was understood that the majority of the participants were Turkish and women, disadvantaged individuals between the ages of 11-12 and at the 6th grade level with low income. Communication skills and the behavioral and emotional communication skills included in it are behaviors that can be developed in sports, recreation and other activities. Considering that disadvantaged individuals will be more in socio-cultural change, non-governmental organizations and policy makers should give importance to these and similar projects.

**Keywords.** Children, exercise, psychology, sports.

## Introduction

Wars and political changes, natural events and poor living conditions force people to migrate, and in some parts of the society, this situation causes an increase in disadvantageous individuals in society due to the emergence of socio-economic problems. The Council of Europe (2004) and the French Minister of Social Affairs, Reno Lenoi, defined disadvantageous individuals as physically and mentally handicapped people with social security, housing, employment, long-term health needs, alcohol and other substance addicts, the elderly and criminals, single-parent families and abused children (Çeviker et al., 2018). The process of integration of disadvantageous

individuals with changing life is quite complex and brings difficulties with itself. Especially in cities, this lifestyle turns into a complex set of relationships and creates social communication problems that are very important for the individual and society. For example, the development of children growing up without a family in orphanages is influenced by abandonment and the traumatic experience resulting from the lack of a family environment, which has a decisive effect on children's attitudes in personality and society, affecting the individual's internal structure and overall development, including interpersonal skills (Tomescu et al., 2021). Therefore, it shows that children who have not developed social skills have some problems in their interpersonal, professional

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lives, emotional and behavioral areas and learning processes (Dal & Baikoğlu, 2019). Acting together in the same emotion and behavior in a society carries socialization to higher levels. Communication is the exhibition of a form of behavior and expression (language) (Yücel, 2009). Therefore, emotions and behaviors are interpersonal communication skills that we demonstrate verbally or non-verbally in daily life. It is assumed that the reason behind every behavior exhibited by the individual is either to escape from pain or to turn to pleasure, and in doing so, the individual develops behavior and language by acting under the influence of the pictures, sounds and emotions he creates within himself (Kestane, 2016). The most important components of communication skills in humans are behavioral and emotional communication skills. In general, social communication skills are the necessary use of individuals' social awareness, self-confidence and social adaptation success in their relationships with others (Dal & Baikoğlu, 2019). Social skills are social acceptance skills that are considered as learned behaviors (Yıldırım, 2015). It is a necessity at the individual and societal level. It is stated that social skills allow the individual to constantly control his relationships and manage these relationships every time, to encourage other individuals with whom he is in a relationship, to allow the communication process to continue, and to relieve himself and to do a better job at it (Gül, 2017). As in daily life, empathy and communication skills are important in many of our activities and activities (Topçu, 2019). Making small touches to children through artistic, cultural and sports will contribute to the formulation of social harmony. In particular, apart from the usual flow of life, recreational and sports activities direct the individual towards a different life from their personal lifestyle, while directing the individual towards communication, competition, success and new interests and talents (Çolak et al., 2019). Because man is a social being and in order to continue his life, he must be allowed to cooperate with other people at every level (Yaşar et al., 2018). Disadvantaged children are poverty, violence, ethnic identity, asylum seeker or migration status and protected individuals and sports are seen as an important tool in their development (Albayrak, 2020). In order for them to gain positive behaviors and eliminate negative behaviors, the society's view of education and training should be positive in the process of creating changes in the behavior of the individual (Özkurt, 2018). In this regard, where families are ignorant for many reasons and children need to learn that cognitive, social, emotional, communication and language levels can be improved with movement, it is recommended to implement awareness programs,

courses, even adult education and projects in children, especially for adults (Orhan, 2019). In addition, children and adolescents who actively participate in physical activities have better prosocial behaviors and fewer interpersonal problems (Li & Shao, 2022). For this reason, the Ministry of Youth and Sports supports the implementation of various projects in order to contribute to the personal and social development of individuals, to advance their existing potentials and to adapt to social life, taking into account the needs of society and young people (Yavuz, 2018). In this research, the "We are Young and Together" project, which is supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and carried out by Kilis Youth and Sports Club, examined the development of 09-15 years old students in their communication levels through sports.

## Methods

In this study, it is aimed to examine the development of communication skills in regular sports training of Turkish and Syrian refugee students aged 09-15, who are considered to be disadvantaged with the "Young Together" project of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In the study, 160 Turkish and 160 Syrian students were trained for 16 weeks, 2 days a week and 4 hours a day, in 5 different sports branches (table tennis, badminton, athletics, taekwondo and bocce-dart) by coaches, and changes in the emotional and behavioral communication of the participants in their communication skills. evaluated. Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study from Kilis 7 Aralık University with the decision of 2021/26.

## Population and Sample

**Population:** The population of the research was limited to 320 people consisting of disadvantaged Turkish and Syrian refugees between the ages of 09-15 who took part in the "We Are Young and Together" project accepted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

**Sample:** The project was formed from 109 volunteers (85 Turks and 24 Syrians) who were randomly assigned.

## Data Collection Tools

The answers given by the participants were evaluated with an effect score of "I strongly disagree 1, I disagree 2, I am undecided 3, I agree 4 and I completely agree 5". The highest score that can be obtained from the overall scale, which has 57

questions with 3 items, is 225, and the lowest score is 45, while the highest score that can be obtained from the subscales is 75 points and the lowest score is 15 points. A high score in the evaluation indicates a high level of communication in the general scale and sub-dimensions.

### Analysis of the Data

In the analysis of the data, t-test and one-way variance analyses and correlation analysis were processed at  $p < 0.05$  significance level in order to determine whether there was a difference between demographic variables (nationality, gender, age, class, and income level) in the sub-dimensions of communication skills and behavioral communication and emotional communication skills in determining their demographic characteristics by using JASP (2020) statistical program. In the study, Cronbach alpha was used to authenticate data, normal distributions were analyzed by Shapiro-Wilk and homogeneous distributions were analyzed by Levene test ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the reliability and normality analyses of the research, it was understood that the reliability level of the communication skills scale

(Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.702, Shapiro-Wilk: 0.514 and Levene's: 0.727) was good and the data set showed normal and homogeneous distribution. In the scale sub-dimensions, it was found that the data set showed a normal and homogeneous distribution in which the reliability was at a medium level in the behavioral communication skills (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.497, Shapiro-Wilk: 0.270 and Levene's: 0.880) and emotional communication skills sub-dimension (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.537, Shapiro-Wilk: 0.941 and Levene's: 0.475) ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Results

In this research, it was examined whether communication skills, emotional and behavioral communication skills developed according to demographic variables with the "We Are Young, and Together Sports Education Project" funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for disadvantaged Turkish and Syrian children aged between 9-15. The demographic information of the individuals participating in the project is indicated in.

**Table 1**

Findings on Demographic Information.

Variables	Category	F	%	Mean	Sd. Deviation
Nationality	Turk	85	77.982	1.220	0.416
	Syrian	24	22.018		
Gender	Female	61	55.963	1.440	0.499
	Male	48	44.037		
Age	9-10 years	15	13.761	2.229	0.702
	11-12 years	56	51.376		
	13-14 years	36	33.028		
	15 years	2	1.835		
Grade	5th Grade	14	12.844	2.761	1.224
	6th Grade	41	37.615		
	7th Grade	25	22.936		
	8th Grade	15	13.761		
	9th Grade	14	12.844		
Level of Income	Government-supported	15	13.761	2.211	0.734
	1500-5000 TL	61	55.963		
	5001-9000 TL	28	25.688		
	9001 TL and Above	5	4.587		

**Table 2**  
Comparisons of communication skills scale and sub-dimensions.

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<i>Nationality</i>						
Communication Skills Scale	Turk	3.828	0.439	2.000	107	0.048*
	Syrian	3.628	0.410			
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	Turk	4.135	0.443	2.374	107	0.019*
	Syrian	3.894	0.421			
Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	Turk	3.521	0.544	1.308	107	0.194
	Syrian	3.361	0.464			
<i>Gender</i>						
Communication Skills Scale	Female	3.787	0.389	0.083	107	0.934
	Male	3.780	0.499			
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	Female	4.085	0.402	0.086	107	0.932
	Male	4.078	0.504			
Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	Female	3.489	0.493	0.064	107	0.949
	Male	3.482	0.578			

\*  $p < 0.05$

In the demographic findings of the participants mentioned in Table 1; In terms of nationality, the majority is Turkish (77.982%), in terms of gender, the majority is female (55.963%), the majority is 11-12 years old (51.376%), the majority is 6th in grade levels (37.615%) and Income Level, it is understood that the majority have an income between 1500-5000 TL (55.963%). In other findings of the research, it is shown in the tables below whether there is a statistically significant difference between the binary groups and more than two groups.

In Table 2, it is seen that there is a statistically significant differentiation in general communication skills ( $t=2.000$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and behavioral communication skills ( $t=2.374$ ,  $p<.019$ ) in the sports education project of disadvantaged 9-15 years old children participating in the study ( $p<.05$ ). It was understood that the source of this difference in communication skills was due to Turks according to the average scores of Turkish (Mean: 3.828) and Syrian (Mean: 3.628) students. As a result, it was found that the communication skills of Turkish students developed more than Syrians. In behavioral communication skills, it was understood that the source of the difference was due to Turks according to the average scores of Turkish (Mean: 4.135) and Syrian (Mean: 3.894) participants, and those the behavioral

communication skills of Turkish students developed more than Syrians. It was understood that there was no difference in the level of statistical significance in the sub-dimension of the nationality variable emotional communication skills and the scale and sub-dimensions of the gender variable, and that the participants had similar thoughts, feelings, attitudes and perceptions. The averages for the nationality variable scale expressions of the participants scores are indicated in Table 3.

In Table 3, when the average scores of 4 and above (agree or completely agree) were interpreted in the answers given by the participants to the questions, it was seen that the average scores of the Turks were higher in the communication skills scale and behavioral communication skills sub-dimension expressions compared to Syrian individuals.

In Table 4, one-way variance (ANOVA) analyses were performed to determine whether there was a differentiation between the communication skills scale and age groups, grade levels and income levels related to behavioral communication and emotional communication skills. It was understood that there was no statistical difference in the communication skills scale and sub-dimensions in the variables of age, class and income levels of the participants.

**Table 3**  
Average results of answers to survey questions by nationality variable.

Questions	Nationality	Mean	SD
I listen to advice and suggestions from people I communicate with	Turk	4.224	1.073
	Syrian	3.708	1.517
When I'm talking, I can look at the person in front of me.	Turk	4.412	0.967
	Syrian	4.500	1.180
I take enough time to listen to what people have to say.	Turk	4.471	0.995
	Syrian	4.333	1.049
I usually give the other person the right to talk	Turk	4.612	0.874
	Syrian	4.458	0.658
I get impatient when others are talking, and I interrupt them.	Turk	4.094	1.333
	Syrian	4.208	1.285
I don't hesitate to be the first to speak	Turk	3.000	1.655
	Syrian	3.583	1.501
When I speak, I say clear, simple sentences	Turk	4.624	0.801
	Syrian	4.708	0.624
I look at the face of the person I am communicating with, but I don't listen to their words.	Turk	3.976	1.309
	Syrian	3.042	1.301
I ask questions to better understand the person I'm listening to	Turk	4.200	1.173
	Syrian	4.208	1.318
When I meet with people, I knowingly do things that will comfort them.	Turk	4.259	1.187
	Syrian	4.042	1.429
When I listen, I take care not to interrupt the other person.	Turk	4.588	0.967
	Syrian	4.208	1.382
When I want to make peace with someone I'm resentful of, I'm afraid to take my first step.	Turk	3.553	1.701
	Syrian	3.333	1.551
I can adjust my voice to match what I'm talking about	Turk	4.600	0.889
	Syrian	3.625	1.408
I try to control people and make them the way I want them to be.	Turk	3.388	1.698
	Syrian	3.167	1.786
I ask people sudden questions that they'll have a hard time answering.	Turk	4.024	1.371
	Syrian	3.292	1.654
I don't like to be criticized in general	Turk	2.353	1.688
	Syrian	3.458	1.769
I dream when I listen to the other person	Turk	2.729	1.707
	Syrian	3.250	1.751
I get bored while listening to people	Turk	3.588	1.474
	Syrian	2.917	1.472
I usually trust people.	Turk	3.718	1.315
	Syrian	3.458	1.615
I feel uncomfortable when I communicate with someone of the opposite gender.	Turk	3.659	1.484
	Syrian	3.417	1.717
It's hard for me to apologize.	Turk	4.129	1.486
	Syrian	3.292	1.944
I feel uncomfortable when interrupted while I speak	Turk	1.718	1.377
	Syrian	1.833	1.465
I feel indifferent to the people around me	Turk	3.612	1.574
	Syrian	3.250	1.567
Mostly I'm not sure about my feelings	Turk	2.906	1.638
	Syrian	3.292	1.706
I am happy to be understood by anyone I communicate with.	Turk	4.388	1.092
	Syrian	4.250	1.327
Trusting the person in front of me makes me happy	Turk	4.671	0.822
	Syrian	4.583	1.060
I welcome every person with positive thoughts	Turk	3.906	1.250
	Syrian	3.792	1.285
I learn things from the people I communicate with, and I feel like I'm giving them something too.	Turk	4.341	1.108
	Syrian	3.875	1.424
I have trouble talking about my feelings that bother me	Turk	2.953	1.603
	Syrian	2.458	1.532
I feel like the people I talk to understand me	Turk	4.141	1.114
	Syrian	3.292	1.488

**Table 4**

Communication skills scale and sub-dimensions one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
<i>Age Groups</i>					
Communication Skills Scale	1.338	3	0.446	2.406	0.071
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	1.014	3	0.338	1.721	0.167
Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	2.053	3	0.684	2.542	0.060
<i>Grades</i>					
Communication Skills Scale	0.161	4	0.040	0.202	0.937
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.512	4	0.128	0.630	0.642
Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.130	4	0.032	0.112	0.978
<i>Level of Income</i>					
Communication Skills Scale	0.859	3	0.286	1.508	0.217
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	1.273	3	0.424	2.189	0.094
Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.892	3	0.297	1.061	0.369

\* p&lt;0.05

**Table 5**

Analysis of the correlation between the communication skills scale and its sub-dimensions.

Correlation Analysis		Pearson's r	p
Communication Skills Scale	Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.878 *	0.000
Communication Skills Scale	Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.915 *	0.000
Behavioral Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	Emotional Communication Skills Sub-Dimension	0.610 *	0.000

\* p&lt;0.05

In Table 5, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the communication skills scale and its sub-dimensions ( $p<.05$ ). According to the relationship analysis, it was understood that there was a positive relationship between communication skills and the sub-dimension of behavioral communication skills ( $r: 0.878$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and emotional communication skills sub-dimension ( $r: 0.915$ ;  $p<.05$ ). In addition, it was found that there was a positive relationship between the behavioral communication skills sub-dimension and the emotional communication skills sub-dimension ( $r: 0.610$ ;  $p<.05$ ).

## Discussion

Sports have been used as a means of socialization for the individual and society as it has been useful in many areas from past to present. In this research, communication skills, which are one of the important

elements of socialization, and whether two important phenomena such as behavioral communication and emotional communication develop with sports, are discussed in the "We are young, we are together sports training project". As stated in the research findings, it was determined that the majority of the participants were Turks, women, 11-12 years old and 6th grade students, but disadvantageous individuals with low-income groups. According to a study, it was estimated that the number of disadvantageous young people increased in the last 10 years for the United Kingdom, and that for 2015, 2.7 million young people (aged 14 to 24) lived in poverty, so they were at least twice as likely to be excluded from education and work as their peers (Tidmarsh, Thompson, Quinton, and Cumming, 2022). In different research, investigating the effect of communication skills on team and individual athletes, it was stated that the majority of the participants (63.0%) were men and (46.7%) were at the level of 850-1200 TL (low income) (Ulukan, 2012). In another research, the

communication skills of Science High School and Sports High School students were examined, and it was stated that the majority of the participants in the gender variable consisted of female students (Yıldırım, 2015). In similar research in which the relationships between the level of participation in sports activities and communication skills of primary school students were examined, the results of the research were supported by the participants (51.3% female students and 36.7% primary school 6th grade students (Dalkılıç, 2011). As a result, although it is considered normal for Turkish students to constitute the majority in terms of participation, it is thought that Syrian students or families have reservations or that children participate poorly due to the difficult struggle for survival. On the other hand, although it is pleasing that the majority of women are women, it is also thought that such activities are perceived as opportunities by the family and children due to the fact that women are isolated a little more in social life. Likewise, considering the negative environment and other factors at the age and grade level, it is estimated that this project is perceived as an opportunity.

Considering that the welfare level of the majority in terms of income level is low profile and disadvantaged, it is considered as an important factor that it is free and material and moral gain to be obtained from the project. According to this study conducted in the "We are Young, We are Together" project, it was seen that there was a statistical improvement in the sub-dimension of communication skills and behavioral communication skills in the nationality variable of the participants. In the research conducted in the literature, it is stated that the majority of children who attend sports school have a significant improvement in their social behaviors (introversion, emotionality, friend circle, behavior in the family environment, etc. (Yalçın & Balcı, 2013). In other researches, in the comparison of the value orientations of high school students who do sports in different sports branches and who do not do sports, it was found to support our study result that the activities in which there was a difference between the pretest and post-test measurements in the general communication and behavioral communication skills sub-dimension improved the communication skills in individuals who entered the social environments less (Çolak et al., 2019). However, in different research, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between science high school students and sports high school students in the sub-dimension of communication skills and behavioral communication skills (Yıldırım, 2015). It is stated that people's

perceptions, motivations, attitudes and tendencies affect their communication about the environment they are in in some way (Ersanlı & Balcı, 1998). However, it was understood that there was no statistical difference between gender, age, grade, and income levels related to this research. When similar and different studies in the field literature are examined, it is seen that there are results that do not support our research.

In the examination of the relationships between the level of participation in sports activities and communication skills of primary school students, it was stated that communication skill levels differed significantly only between 6th grade and 8th grade, and that there was no difference in other classes. In the same study, it was stated that the communication skill levels of 12- and 13-year-old students were significantly higher than 14-year-old students, and that their communication skills decreased as the age increased (Dalkılıç, 2011). Again, in different research that examined the social skill levels of primary school students according to their sports status, communication was considered as a part of social skills, and it was stated that there was no statistically significant difference in the social skill levels of the students according to the gender variable in terms of their sports status and class variable (Dal & Baikoğlu, 2019). In a different study in which the effect of communication skills on team and individual athletes was examined, it was stated that there was no significant difference in gender and age variables, and that there was a difference in the monthly income variable, and that the communication skills of athletes with high income increased as a result of their social lives being more active (Ulukan, 2012). In a different study in which the communication skills of science high school and sports high school students were examined, it was obtained that behavioral communication skills developed more from females on the basis of gender, from upper classes at the grade level, and from the age of 15 at the age level (Yıldırım, 2015). However, in our research, it was understood that similar results did not occur. In this research, where disadvantaged 9-15 years old children received sports training in the "We are Young, We are Together" project, it was understood that there was a positive relationship between the scale and sub-dimensions according to the relationship between the communication skills scale and its sub-dimensions. This situation leads to the conclusion that the behavioral and emotional communication level of individuals affects the general communication and each other positively. Therefore, the education, activities and activities to be given to

children should be supported by many options and handled in a positive environment.

According to the results of this research, the fact that there is no statistically significant difference in the nationality variable other than the general communication and behavioral communication sub-dimension can be interpreted as individuals either having similar feelings and thoughts or that the environment they are in should be diversified a little more. Just as physical activity (playable at any skill level, active recreational play and sports) improves the psychological variables of mental health and helps children and adolescents actively integrate into society, physical activity has also been shown to reduce aggressive behavior in children and adolescents (Li & Shao, 2022). Considering this aspect of sports, it is very important to evaluate the results by designing and implementing the programs well to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people (Tidmarsh et al., 2022). Sport can serve many purposes if desired. Sports and similar activity programs applied for child development should be prepared in accordance with the development of children and the sports programs prepared in the education of children should be prepared in accordance with their developmental characteristics and purpose and should also support social development (Aydın et al., 2018). Adapted physical activity and sports training programs (basketball-wheeled basketball or goalball) have the same objectives as regular training programs (Süngü & Çamlıyer, 2022). In a study conducted up to the 8th grade in Austria, the health impact assessment of the daily physical activity unit in schools was made and the positive impact of children and adolescents on individual health, social and society-related networks, living and working conditions and system level was revealed. In the same research, it was stated that for the more visible effect of the activities carried out, equality of opportunity and potentially disadvantaged children and schools should be supported first (Movia et al., 2022). In extracurricular activities, children learn how to behave, behaviors and skills such as managing their emotions, taking responsibility and trusting their peers (Karataş, 2022). Another research found that disadvantaged young people were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities outside of school curricular activities, including differences in gender, socio-economic status, nationality and immigrant status, but generally received more benefits depending on the risk status and type of activity (Heath et al., 2022). It is stated that children who participate in regular sports activities also develop academic success, social skills, physical development, having a good

psychology, cultural behavior development and social and communication skills (Sarı, 2019). Syrians in terms of their nationality, it was understood that the Turks listened to the advice and suggestions, listened to the others, gave them the right to speak, helped them to express themselves freely, tried not to interrupt their words, were able to ask difficult questions to the other person, were happy when they were understood and trusted, so they shopped, and they were happy when the other person understood their intentions.

In this study, it was concluded that there was a difference between Turks and Syrians for general communication and behavioral communication in the nationality dimension and that Turkish children could develop themselves. The fact that there is a very variable demographic structure for our country and especially for Kilis province is seen that there is a greater need for communication skills. As a result, communication skills and the behavioral and emotional communication skills involved in them are behaviors that can be developed in sports, recreation and other activities. Considering that disadvantaged individuals will be more in socio-cultural change; civil society organizations and policy makers should give importance to these and similar projects.

### Author Contributions

Study Design: FG, AY, HMŞ; Data Collection: FG, AY; Statistical Analysis: FG; Manuscript Preparation: FG, AY, HMŞ.

### Ethical Approval

The study was approved by Kilis 7 Aralık University Ethics committee with the decision of 2021/26. The study was carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

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### Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest with the authors related to this research.



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