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CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This descriptive case study examines how local universities manage organizational change in response to internal and external pressures. It investigates the rationale for change, strategies for overcoming resistance, approaches to implementation, and the communication methods used. The research also explores the role of organizational culture, learning organizations, and sustainability in effective change management. The study draws on qualitative analysis of change management practices within local universities, complemented by benchmarking against organizations that have successfully managed change. Critical success factors were identified and integrated into the development of tools and frameworks to improve change processes. The research highlights that universities often face challenges such as resistance to change, inadequate communication, and lack of systematic strategies. Two major contributions are proposed to address these gaps. First, a benchmarking tool for change management is developed, offering a quantifiable method for institutions to evaluate current practices and improve performance. Second, a corporate learning framework is proposed to sustain long-term change by facilitating effective knowledge capture, sharing, and transfer, thereby embedding a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. The benchmarking tool and corporate learning framework provide actionable mechanisms for universities and other organizations to enhance their change management capacity. By adopting these approaches, institutions can strengthen adaptability, mitigate resistance, and align change initiatives with strategic objectives. This study contributes to the field of change management by integrating benchmarking and corporate learning into a practical framework for sustaining transformation in academic institutions. It emphasizes the importance of embedding a learning culture and offers a holistic approach to managing change in volatile environments.

Keywords: Change management, Benchmarking, Corporate learning, Organizational culture, Learning organizations, Universities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

SEGi University College, founded in 1977 as Systematic College in Kuala Lumpur, has grown into one of Malaysia's leading private higher education institutions with over 27,000 students across its campuses in Kota Damansara, UEP Subang Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Sarawak. Partnering with renowned universities such as Sheffield University, University of Abertay Dundee, University of Sunderland in the UK, University of Southern Queensland in Australia, and Upper Iowa University in the USA, SEGi offers a wide range of internationally recognized programs. Its journey of expansion has been marked by steady growth, consolidation, and rebranding, transforming from offering short courses in its early years to becoming a full-fledged university college in 2008.

The establishment of SEGi's flagship campus in Kota Damansara in 2006 marked a turning point, with modern facilities including residence halls, sports and recreational complexes, and state-of-the-art laboratories providing students with a holistic learning environment. Today, SEGi continues to expand through innovative niche programs in medical sciences, pharmacy, optometry, and dentistry, alongside flexible adult learning and postgraduate options. With its strong international collaborations and growing student transfer programs, SEGi is positioning itself as a global education hub while upholding a brand identity built on quality, vibrancy, passion, and care.

1.2 Case Study Challenges

An organization's external environment exerts a critical influence on its operations, policy formulation, and overall strategic direction:

1.3 External Environment

a. Economic

Economic conditions play a critical role in shaping how organizations market their products and services, including those in the education industry. Institutions offering both homegrown and collaborative international programs are particularly sensitive to economic fluctuations, with students and parents prioritizing cost-saving options during downturns. Consequently, local universities may be preferred for their affordability, despite a potentially limited academic program range. Additionally, financial resource allocation for institutional growth is a key concern, as universities need continuous investment in infrastructure, technology, and academic offerings to stay competitive. However, economic crises often constrain these investments, forcing institutions to carefully evaluate their funding for growth and development (Sintani, 2022; Allied Academies, 2023).

Economic conditions significantly influence the composition of the target market that local universities can attract. Institutions often face recruitment challenges for students from rural areas or countries experiencing economic hardship, where affordability plays a decisive role in higher education choices. The Great Recession demonstrated how reductions in family income and assets can adversely affect college enrollment, particularly in economically distressed regions, while also affecting institutional funding and tuition rates (Long, 2013). Socioeconomic factors such as government expenditure and unemployment rates serve as strong predictors of student enrollment patterns, directly impacting universities' marketing strategies and competitiveness (Batool, 2021). Ultimately, economic conditions shape both the external

marketing environment and the internal sustainability of local universities within the broader educational landscape.

b. Competition

Competition exerts a significant influence on how businesses operate and how target markets are approached. For local universities, competitive dynamics determine whether to explore untapped market segments or to engage directly with rivals in the same student population. The success or failure of competitors also plays a vital role in shaping marketing strategies. For instance, if a long-standing competitor withdraws from a particular market due to financial instability, other institutions must adjust their strategies to capitalize on the opportunity.

A real example can be observed in Malaysia, where the downfall of Allianze University College of Medical Sciences (AUCMS) due to financial difficulties in 2014 led to the transfer of approximately 2,000 students to other institutions. Local universities, as competitors in the same industry, strategically enrolled these students into equivalent programs across various campuses, mitigating disruption and benefiting from the increased enrollment (University World News, 2014; The Edge Malaysia, 2014; Malay Mail, 2014). This not only mitigated the disruption faced by the students but also provided a significant boost to the financial performance of the receiving universities. Notably, this student inflow occurred organically, without reliance on recruitment agencies, underscoring how competitive circumstances can directly shape enrollment outcomes and revenue growth.

c. Government

Customers represent a critical external element influencing universities through their responses to marketing strategies and institutional information. The relationship between local universities and their clients is shaped by efforts to persuade enrollment decisions for relatives, children, or subordinates. Market research is pivotal in this process, enabling institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing messages and adjust promotional strategies to enhance student recruitment and enrollment outcomes. Relationship marketing practices, which focus on building long-term engagement, loyalty, and satisfaction, are particularly essential in higher education for sustaining competitive advantage (Assunção, 2024; Renart & Cabré, 2005; Madhavaram, 2014).

d. Public Opinion

Any form of scandal or negative publicity can significantly damage a local university's reputation, directly impacting enrollment rates and stakeholder confidence. Negative perceptions may discourage prospective students and parents, while positive publicity strengthens reputation and attracts greater interest. To manage this, universities often rely on public relations teams to strategically highlight achievements and address sensitive issues, while monitoring public opinion to detect and resolve potential problems before escalation (Kelchen, 2024; Best Colleges, 2024). In practice, many local universities also treat student feedback and online reviews on official platforms as valuable tools for institutional improvement. Complaints about management, facilities, or academic matters are taken seriously, and corrective measures are implemented promptly to restore trust. By responding quickly and transparently, universities not only resolve immediate concerns but also demonstrate accountability, which helps preserve their credibility and financial sustainability in a competitive higher education market.

1.3.1 Internal Environment

a. Organizational Culture

The organizational culture of a local university is largely shaped by its internal communication, which includes interpersonal relationships, training resources, newsletters, philosophical statements, and institutional policies. A positive work culture arises when employees interact with respect and courtesy, fostering satisfaction and cooperation. Recognition of staff achievements further enhances morale and motivation. Moreover, clear and sufficient instructions enable subordinates to perform tasks more effectively, improving overall efficiency. Encouraging employees to identify with the university's mission and goals cultivates loyalty, contributing to long-term retention and institutional stability. Effective internal communication plays a foundational role in creating and sustaining such a culture by promoting transparency, alignment with organizational values, and employee engagement (Perrin, 2024; Lee & Dong, 2023; Yue et al., 2021).

b. Technological Capacity

Local university campuses utilize the Educational Management Solutions (EMS) network, which offers a comprehensive Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system tailored for the education industry. EMS integrates seamlessly with industry-standard financial software such as Oracle, SAP, and AccPac, thereby supporting effective financial management. Notably, EMS was among the first to introduce a self-implemented, cloud-based campus management system, providing institutions with greater flexibility, efficiency, and scalability in administrative operations.

c. Innovation

Innovation is essential for local universities to remain competitive and sustain growth in an increasingly dynamic education sector. Staying ahead of competitors requires continuous improvement not only in marketing strategies but also in promotional initiatives, staff development, and employee welfare. Embracing new technologies is particularly critical, as it enables institutions to align with rapid advancements and evolving stakeholder expectations. Conversely, a lack of innovation can pose significant risks to institutional relevance and growth. Universities that fail to innovate risk becoming stagnant, unappealing, and ultimately less competitive in attracting students and retaining staff.

d. Strength of Employees

The strength of employees is also an essential internal business factor for local university. Checking will be done on quarterly basis whether the employees are motivated, hard-working and talented. They will produce better results compared to an unmotivated and less talented workforce. The processes and relationships between and within departments can also improve effectiveness and efficiency. For example, in a high performing workplace, the workers not only have talent, but they also work better together. The employees and departments collaborate on ideas and resolutions. Both external environment and internal environment affects the tactical and operational decisions made by local university. By certain factors as below:

- Strategic management in which the managerial are responsible to achieve competitive advantage through optimizing internal resources while capturing external opportunities and avoiding external threats.
- Local university's view the potential attributes as generalized categories. A value chain is used to

accomplish this. A value chain identifies the supporting activities (employee skills, technology, infrastructure, etc.) and the primary activities (acquiring inputs, operations, distribution, sales, etc.) that can potentially create profit.

- The external environment is even more diverse and complex than the internal environment, and there are many effective models to discuss, measure, and analyze it (i.e., Porter's Five Force, SWOT Analysis, PESTEL framework, etc.).
- With both the internal value chain and external environment in mind, upper management can reasonably derive a set of strategic principles which internally leverage strengths and externally capture opportunities to create profits.

1.4 External Opportunities and Threats

- **Markets (customers):** Demographic and socio-cultural considerations, such as who the customers are (students) and what they believe (their concern and interest), are critical to capturing market share. Understanding the needs and preferences of the markets is essential to providing something that will have a demand.
- **Competition:** Knowing who else is competing and how they are strategically poised is also key to success. Consider the size, market share, branding strategy, quality, and strategy of all competitors to ensure local university can feasibly enter the market.
- **Technology:** Technological trajectories are also highly relevant to success. The more efficient technology is used to capture the student data and remain locked.
- **Supplier markets:** Suppliers have great power as they control the necessary inputs to an organization's operational process. Students
- **Labor markets:** Acquiring key talent and satisfying employees (relative to the competition) is critical to success. This requires an understanding of unions and labor laws in regions of operation.
- **The economy:** Economic recessions and booms can change spending habits drastically, though not always as one might expect. While most industries suffer during recession, some industries thrive. It is important to know which economic factors are opportunities and which are threats.
- **The regulatory environment:** Environmental regulations, import/export tariffs, corporate taxes, and other regulatory concerns can poise high costs on an organization. Integrating this into a strategy ensures feasibility.

Although numerous other external factors may be considered in the strategic planning process, the outlined elements provide a useful framework for anticipating potential threats and avoiding missed opportunities.

1.5 Objectives of Case Study

The general objectives are to identify key factors shaping organizational change, assess their interrelations, and propose recommendations to support effective marketing strategies and business models that enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The specific objectives focus on the key aspects as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

1.	To identify the critical factors that shape the management of organizational change across industries.
2.	To evaluate how these factors interact and influence organizational performance, with emphasis on marketing strategies, business models, and customer-related outcomes.
3.	To examine the implications of organizational change for marketing strategies, business models, and competitive positioning.
4.	To develop practical recommendations that businesses can adopt to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.
5.	To develop insights that can support policymakers in formulating effective policies and frameworks to facilitate organizational adaptability and sustainability.

This case study aims to examine critical factors that influence the successful management of organizational change as shown in Table 2. below:

Table 2

1.	What are the key factors that influence the management of organizational change across different business contexts?
2.	What factors interact and shape organizational performance?
3.	To what extent does their interdependence contribute to successful or unsuccessful change initiatives?
4.	What does organizational change affect marketing strategies and business models?
5.	What strategies can businesses adopt to leverage organizational change for enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty?
6.	What can a policymaker design supportive frameworks that enable organizations to adapt effectively to change and ensure long-term sustainability?

1.6 Significance of the case study

1.6.1Theoretical

This case study extends change management theory by examining how organizational change factors interact within frameworks such as Lewin's Change Model, Kotter's process, and the dynamic capabilities perspective. By linking change to marketing strategies and business models, it bridges organizational behavior with market orientation and consumer behavior theories, showing how transformation enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. It also contributes to institutional theory by illustrating how policy frameworks and external pressures shape organizational adaptability and resilience. The study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates these perspectives, offering a basis for future empirical research.

1.6.2Practical

This case study provides managers with evidence-based insights to manage organizational change effectively by designing adaptive strategies that enhance competitiveness. By linking change management with marketing, it offers practical recommendations for developing innovative marketing approaches and customer-

focused business models. Businesses can leverage these insights to better align organizational changes with customer needs, thereby improving service quality, customer trust, and long-term loyalty. Policymakers may use the study's findings to establish supportive regulatory frameworks, incentives, and guidelines that foster organizational adaptability and sustainable growth. Additionally, the study informs training and development initiatives that build employee readiness, resilience, and acceptance of change. Organizations can benchmark their practices against the study's findings to identify gaps and implement best practices in managing change (Krajcsák, 2025; Jinga, 2024; Change Management Literature Review, 2023; Singh et al., 2023).

1.6.3Policy Implications

This case study highlights the critical role of regulations that foster innovation, flexibility, and adaptability in organizations undergoing change, effectively reducing barriers to transformation. Governments often implement tax incentives, grants, or subsidies to encourage businesses to invest in digitalization, workforce upskilling, and customer-centric business models (OnIndus, 2025). The findings provide valuable guidance for policymakers to enhance training programs and continuous learning initiatives that equip employees to adapt to ongoing organizational changes (The HR Suite, 2025). Additionally, policies that protect consumer rights and promote transparent communication during change processes can strengthen customer confidence and loyalty (Changing Point, 2025). Insights from this study can assist industry associations and policymakers in establishing benchmarks and guidelines for effective change management. Encouraging organizations to align change initiatives with sustainable practices not only enhances competitiveness but also ensures long-term economic and social benefits (OnIndus, 2025; The HR Suite, 2025).

1.6.4Societal Impact

This case study contributes to advancing organizational practices that emphasize customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby enhancing product quality, service delivery, and overall consumer experience (Changing Point, 2025). Effective change management is critical in reducing uncertainty during organizational transitions, fostering employee trust, improving morale, and supporting long-term career development opportunities (Pollack Peacebuilding, 2025). Organizations that successfully manage change strengthen their competitiveness and resilience, which in turn supports national and regional economic stability and growth (BCG, 2025). Furthermore, transparent and customer-focused change initiatives enhance public trust in businesses, professional institutions, and government agencies (Jääskä, 2024). By adopting sustainable and adaptive business models, organizations generate social value by supporting local communities, promoting inclusivity, and contributing to corporate social responsibility initiatives (Krajcsák, 2025). Linking organizational change with innovation and meeting customer needs fosters a culture of continuous improvement, delivering widespread societal benefits (Emerald, 2025).

1.7 Scope of the case study

This case study focuses on understanding organizational change by identifying and evaluating key factors that influence its management and outcomes. It extends beyond internal processes to include perspectives from change management, marketing, and consumer behavior, bridging often separate domains. By doing so, it highlights both organizational and market-oriented dimensions of change, offering a more holistic view of how transformation

strategies impact institutional performance and stakeholder engagement. The study emphasizes leadership, communication, stakeholder engagement, and employee motivation as critical success factors in change management (Errida, 2021). It also integrates market orientation and customer outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty, advancing the understanding of change in complex environments shaped by technological, regulatory, and customer-driven forces (Jääskä, 2024; Change Management Literature Review, 2023).

2.0 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature on organizational change as a strategic response to technological advancement, regulatory evolution, and shifting customer expectations. Effective change management enables firms to realign internal structures and processes while creating external value through innovative marketing and business models. Foundational frameworks such as Lewin's and Kotter's models emphasize organizational readiness and the implementation of change. However, recent studies highlight the importance of integrating change initiatives with market orientation, innovation, and customer outcomes, including satisfaction and loyalty. This study explores how these dimensions interact to inform effective organizational change strategies that enhance marketing performance and strengthen customer value.

2.2 Internal Changes

The platform "PACE" (Professional and Continuing Education) provides working adults with opportunities to continue their studies from home through flexible learning modes, including online programs. This initiative was recognized by the Malaysian Retail Chain Association (MRCA), which supports its members by leveraging the expertise and resources of Malaysia's leading retail professionals (Sunway University, 2003–2025; MRCA website). Separately, the group has disposed of a wholly owned subsidiary holding land for the establishment of an international school. Currently, the local university's International School is under construction in Setia Alam as part of its expansion plans.

The Board launched a Long-Term Incentive Plan to further motivate and reward staff:

1. This scheme consists of an employees' share option scheme and a share grant plan.
2. Maximum number of local university's shares that may offered to eligible person depends on their performance, contribution, employment grade, seniority and length of service.
3. Eligible person who holds 20% or more of the issued and paid-up share capital of local university (excluding treasury shares if any), must not exceed 10% of the new local university's Shares.
4. Not more than 60% of the new local university's shares should be allocated to the executive Directors and Senior Management of local university and its Subsidiary Companies.

Group introduced a Leadership Program as a part of the focus on succession planning and talent management – provide key talents with the opportunity to grow and perform at their highest potential through guidance given by the professional coach and senior management team members.

Group has transformed the IT Technology from EMS System to Content Management System (CMS) - provides a complete set of features for building websites, intranets, community sites and e-commerce solutions on the Microsoft ASP.NET platform on premise or in the cloud. It supports mobile websites, SEO, document management, online marketing tools, multilingual websites, multisite management and it ships with 70 modules, 400 configurable Web parts and source code available.

2.3 Reason for Internal Changes

- a. The Group aims to diversify its educational offerings, enabling students to save time, transportation, and study costs by providing online learning options.
- b. Recognizing that learning is a continuous process, the Group has decided to establish an International School to offer education for children, with plans to integrate graduates into local universities in the future.
- c. Long-term incentive plans are designed to motivate and reward staff for their dedication and commitment to their work.
- d. The leadership program is intended to identify and nurture top talent for future management roles within the Group.
- e. IT upgrades introduce more efficient methods to manage workloads through fast-paced, advanced IT systems.

2.4 Reason for External Changes

- a. Competition within the education industry includes numerous private education providers such as KDU, Sunway College, IMU, UNITEN, UNIRAZAK, MMU, Taylors, and others, which impact the market landscape.
- b. Technological advancements involve safeguarding students' data and privacy, as well as implementing technical tools essential to the education sector.
- c. The availability of skilled workers—including undergraduate students, university graduates, and labor market entrants, can fluctuate significantly. A decline in demand for specific skills may eventually reduce the supply of qualified workers, adversely affecting local universities in the long run.
- d. Laws and regulations are continually evolving due to political and social changes, requiring organizations to adapt. Compliance may incur additional costs, such as developing new technologies, paying extra taxes, or legal fees.

2.5 Effectiveness of Change Management

i. Managing the Resistance

- a. Involve employees in the change planning process by seeking their suggestions and incorporating their ideas during town hall meetings for corporate office staff.
- b. Clearly communicate the need for change by sharing strategic decisions both personally and in writing.
- c. Build flexibility into the change by phasing it in whenever possible, allowing employees to complete current tasks while gradually adopting new behaviors.

- d. Maintain openness and honesty throughout the process.
- e. Consistently emphasize the positive aspects of the change, providing specific examples where possible.
- f. Provide training programs that focus on developing fundamental skills such as conducting meetings, communication, team building, self-esteem, and coaching, rather than just process training.

ii. Approach for Managing Change

- a. Managers give all the relevant information about the consequences of the proposed changes to the employees to reduce potential fears.
- b. Information given by manager are solid, correct, valid and supportive of the change so that people will be willing to accept the change and be less fearful.
- c. Managers introduce the changes in a simple, slow and smooth manner to increase likelihood of the workers feeling less threatened by the change. This is because employee require some time and commitment to adapt and accept the change.

iii. Communication Methods

- a. Face – to – face communication with the employees in group and team meetings.
- b. Internal email executed to everyone on the changes and new introduction made to the organization.
- c. Employees were asked for their feedbacks through emails, team question & answer sessions and feedback box through online and drop your feedback through fill up the forms placed near to HR Department and drop your answers in the box.

iv. Sustaining Change

- a. Data Analysis, which leads to initiation of process improvement teams
- b. Process Analysis, which leads to mostly process improvement and some process (re) design activity
- c. System Assessments, which result in both process improvement and process (re) design activities; and
- d. Employee Feedback, which is an effective vehicle for driving both (re) design and reengineering activities. The type and desired level of change required will determine which of these tools or processes an organization should use.

2.6 Possible Issues or Problems During Change Implementation

a. Communication

- i. Failing to communicate with all employees invites rumors and fear into the workplace.
- ii. Employees want to know what's going on, whether it is positive or negative news.
- iii. The feeling of uncertainty when management doesn't communicate disrupts work and makes employees feel as if they aren't a part of the decision.

- iv. Keep employees updated regularly about the plans and progress toward the change implementation.
- v. Involve all employees as much as possible through meetings or brainstorming sessions to help during the planning phase.

b. Planning

- i. Without step-by-step planning, change is likely to fall apart or cause more problems than benefits.
- ii. Understanding of exactly what changes will take place and how those changes will occur.
- iii. For example, local university were transitioning to a new content management system, so ensuring if the new system is compatible with the old system, how process of transition the old information to the new system and if there will be limited access during the transition.
- iv. Assigning roles to individuals who are responsible for the change so all duties are covered. The time line for the change is also a key component. Planning for downtime or difficulties in completing regular work tasks while the change occurs.

c. Lack of Consensus

- i. If you fail to get everyone on board with the corporate changes, you are likely to face barriers during the process.
- ii. The decision to implement changes should come from the top level of the local university. All management level staff needs to be on board and able to deal with the changes or you may face dissension within the staff. You may not have everyone on board right from the beginning. Showing managers how the changes will affect the company and the steps for implementing the changes helps get them on board if they initially have reservations.

3.0 CONCLUSION

Change projects fail more often from lack of effective change management than any other single reason. Teams that ignore change management cite this as one of the “most important lessons learned” during their project. Teams that use change management techniques have:

- Reduced turnover and the loss of valued employee
- Accelerated the implementation of the change
- Reduced productivity loss and employee resistance

What many teams lack, however, is a solid understanding of what change management is and how to implement change management tactics. The article provides an overview of change management and will guide you to other resources that can help your team manage change effectively.

The managers' perspective on change is results oriented. They are very aware of the business issues facing the organization and are accountable for the financial performance of the company. When a change is needed, they require action quickly.

Executives or senior business leaders of local university weigh the return on investment of this change as compared to other strategic initiatives in the company. Their primary concerns are:

- When can the change be completed?
- How much improvement will be realized?
- How will this change impact our financial performance?
- What is the required investment?
- How will this change impact our organizations/ our students?

There are two perspectives of change management that can be referred to as:

- Organizational change management
- Individual change management

So what is change management? Change management is the effective management of a business change such that executive leaders, managers and employees work in concert to successfully implement the needed process, technology or organizational changes.

The goal of change management is to implement these business changes quickly to:

- minimize the impact on productivity
- avoid unnecessary turnover or loss of valued employees
- eliminate any adverse impact on your customers
- achieve the desired business outcomes as soon as possible

How do I begin?

The knowledge and skills for managing change that requires come from the two perspectives on change: the managers and the employees.

Organizational change management is the management of change from the perspective of a manager or project team. It is the perspective of “business leadership” from the “top” looking down into the organization. The focus is around broad change management practices and skills that will help the organization understand, accept and support the needed business change. The primary focus is around change management strategies, communication plans and training programs. The involved parties include project team members, human resources and key business leaders that sponsor the change.

Organizational change management provides the knowledge and skills to implement a methodology and tools for managing change throughout an organization.

Individual change management is the management of change from the perspective of the employees. They are the ones who ultimately must implement the change. The focus here is around the tools and techniques to help an employee transition through the change process. The primary concerns are the coaching required to help individuals understand their role and the decisions they make in the change process. In this arena, tools need to be provided so that employees can use to navigate their way through the change.

There are some critical elements in managing change. In order to create an effective organizational management, as one of the team members, I was need to build knowledge and abilities in following areas:

- Change management team structures
- Change management roles
- Critical barriers to implementing change
- Change management planning and strategies
- Managing employee resistance
- Organizational change management methodologies
- Creating communication plans
- Creating training and educational programs
- Incentive and recognition programs for employees

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