

Implementation Of Play-Based Learning Approach and The Performance of The Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD)

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Abstract — This study was conducted to determine the extent of the implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach To The Performance Of The Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD) in Tambis Elementary School, in Schools Division of Leyte. The findings of the study will be the bases for the proposed Intervention Plan. This study will utilize Quasi-Experimental research design to determine the Effectiveness Of Play-Based Learning Approach To The Performance Of The Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD). The output of this study is to provide Intervention plan that will help the teachers to deliver the different learning competencies in the aforementioned subject that would help the learners to improve ECCD Skills and performances. The Test of Relationship presents the statistical correlation between two key variables: the extent of the implementation of the play-based learning approach and the ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) performance of kindergarten learners. The table shows the correlation coefficient (r), the computed t-value, the critical or table value at 0.05 significance level, the decision on the null hypothesis (H_0), and the interpretation of the relationship. This analysis aims to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the implementation level of play-based learning strategies and learners' developmental outcomes as measured by ECCD post-assessments. The correlation coefficient (r) reported in the table which indicates a positive but weak relationship between the two variables. In statistics, a correlation value closer to 1 suggests a strong relationship, while a value near 0 indicates a weak or negligible relationship. Although the correlation is low, it is still positive, meaning that as the extent of play-based learning implementation increases, there is a tendency for ECCD performance to also increase, albeit slightly. The computed t-value which is higher than the table value at the 0.05 level of significance. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. The statistical evidence confirms that there is, in fact, a significant relationship—although weak—between the extent of play-based learning implementation and the ECCD performance of learners.

Based on the values provided, the decision to reject the null hypothesis indicates that the observed correlation is not due to chance, and that implementation of play-based learning has a measurable impact on ECCD performance. However, the interpretation notes that the relationship is significant but weak, suggesting that while play-based strategies contribute to developmental outcomes, other variables—such as teacher quality, parental involvement, classroom environment, or socio-economic factors—may also play substantial roles. The interpretation of a weak but significant

relationship may also stem from inconsistencies in how play-based learning is implemented across different contexts or schools. For example, while the materials, strategies, and engagement might be present in principle, the depth or quality of execution might vary, thereby weakening the overall impact on learner outcomes. Furthermore, ECCD performance measures are multi-dimensional and can be influenced by more than just instructional strategies, which further explains the modest strength of the relationship. The findings implied that while implementing play-based learning approaches does have a positive and statistically significant effect on children's developmental outcomes, efforts should be made to enhance the depth, consistency, and quality of implementation. Training for teachers, increased monitoring, and resource provision may strengthen this relationship. Moreover, stakeholders in early childhood education should not rely solely on play-based strategies but also address other influential factors that support holistic child development.

Keywords — Implementation, Play-based Learning Approach, Performance, Kindergarten

I. Introduction

In early childhood education, the integration of play into learning has increasingly been recognized as a vital strategy for promoting holistic child development. Play-based learning is more than just recreational activity—it is a pedagogical approach that fosters meaningful learning experiences through exploration, imagination, and interaction. In the context of kindergarten education, play becomes a dynamic tool that supports the development of foundational academic skills, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and communication, while simultaneously nurturing critical cognitive and socio-emotional competencies.

Republic Act No. 10533 or otherwise known as Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 was enacted where the state shall create a functional basic education system that will develop productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies, skills, and values for both life-long learning and employment through allowing every student or learner to receive the quality education that is globally competitive based on a pedagogically sound curriculum that is at par with international standards.

Kindergarten is the transitional year from informal to formal literacy (Grades 1–12). For the child as well as to the parents, Kindergarten is really an exciting stage for everyone. Given that age five (5) is within the important years in which effective literacy development takes place. Numerous studies have indicated that this is the time of the most growth and development when the brain continues to develop at its fastest rate and is virtually fully developed. Additionally, this is the time when one's sense of self, worldview, and ethics and their ability to absorb information is at its peak, and foundations have been set.

Research suggests that young learners are naturally curious and learn best in environments that allow them to actively engage with their surroundings. Play-based learning provides such an environment, enabling children to construct knowledge through hands-on experiences that are

relevant and enjoyable. Within this approach, children are encouraged to collaborate with peers, make decisions, solve problems, and express themselves freely—thus strengthening essential skills such as critical thinking, creativity, self-regulation, empathy, and resilience. Pretend play, for instance, allows children to explore various roles and perspectives, enhancing their communication and language development. Physical play, on the other hand, supports fine and gross motor skill development and contributes to a child's physical well-being.

Furthermore, play-based learning addresses the developmental needs of young children by aligning instruction with their natural learning tendencies. It acknowledges the importance of socio-emotional learning, promoting interactions that build confidence, cooperation, and a sense of belonging. Through structured and unstructured play, learners are given opportunities to make choices, explore cause and effect, and connect prior knowledge to new ideas—laying a solid foundation for future academic success.

Given these benefits, this study is anchored on the premise that play-based learning is not only appropriate but essential for kindergarten pupils. It aims to examine the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing academic performance and developmental readiness among young learners. In doing so, it responds to the need for more evidence-based practices in early childhood education, particularly within the Philippine setting where traditional, teacher-centered methods still dominate many classrooms. This research hopes to provide insights that will support the shift toward more learner-centered, developmentally appropriate teaching strategies for the youngest learners in our education system.

This study was conducted to determine the extent of the implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach To The Performance Of The Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD) in Tambis Elementary School, in Schools Division of Leyte. The findings of the study were the bases for the proposed Intervention Plan.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What Is The Extent Of The Implementation Of The Play-Based Learning Approach In Terms Of:
 1. Guidelines
 2. Techniques
 3. Materials
 4. Benefits
 5. Participation Of Learners
 6. Challenges?

2. What is the performance of the Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD)?
3. Is There a Significant Relationship between the performance of the Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD) and the extent of the implementation of the Play-Based Learning Approach?
4. What intervention plan can be proposed on the findings of the study?

Statement of Hypothesis:

Ho : There is no a Significant Relationship between the performance of the Kindergarten Pupils Based On Philippine Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD) and the extent of the implementation of the The Play-Based Learning Approach.

II. Methodology

Design. This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to determine the extent of implementation of the Play-Based Learning Approach and its relationship to the performance of Kindergarten pupils based on the standards of the Philippine Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). The primary objective of the study is to describe the current status of play-based learning implementation in public schools and to examine its impact on pupils' performance in relation to the ECCD domains such as physical health and well-being, motor development, cognitive development, language development, and socio-emotional development. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire distributed to Kindergarten teachers. The questionnaire was developed based on indicators aligned with ECCD standards. A descriptive design is appropriate for this study as it aims to measure the extent of implementation and describe the level of pupil performance. The quantitative aspect of the research utilized statistical tools such as mean, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's r to analyze the data and establish possible correlations between the variables. The findings of this research are expected to serve as valuable input for enhancing classroom practices, informing policy decisions, and developing future programs to support early childhood education through play-based strategies.. The main local of the study is in Tambis Elementary School, Palompon District in the schools Division of Leyte. To gather the necessary data needed in the study, The researcher used a self-made survey questionnaire as the primary research instrument to gather data relevant to the study. The questionnaire was carefully structured and divided into two major parts. The first part aimed to assess the extent of implementation of the Play-Based Learning (PBL) Approach in Kindergarten classrooms. It included statements that focused on various components of PBL such as the use of age-appropriate materials, the integration of structured and unstructured play, the teacher's role in facilitating guided play, the alignment of play activities with the curriculum, and the level of learner engagement. Respondents were asked to rate their level of implementation using a four-point Likert scale ranging from "Never Implemented" to "Always Implemented." The second part

of the instrument measured the perceived performance of Kindergarten pupils across the five domains of the Philippine Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) checklist. These domains included physical health and well-being, motor development, cognitive development, language development, and socio-emotional development. Teachers rated their pupils' performance based on observable behaviors and classroom activities, using another four-point Likert scale, from "Beginning" to "Exceeding Expectations.". The proposed intervention Plan was taken based on the findings of the study.

Sampling. The respondents of the study were the Kindergarten learners of Tambis Elementary School, Palompon District in the Schools Division of Leyte. There are 24 males and 26 females with a total of 50 respondents that were involved in this study were being identified and the primary means of reach is during the actual conduct of the study as well as during the gathering of data in the school where the study was conducted.

Research Procedure. In order to gather the necessary data in 1 month (30 days), the researcher asked permission from the office of the Schools Division Office headed by our School Division Superintendent through a Transmittal Letter. The same letter content was given to the Public-School District Supervisor, School Principal, and to the teachers whom the respondents are under their care.

The researcher conducted the pretest performance before integration of the Play-based learning Approach. After administering the pretest, the researcher was integrated the new strategy for a matter of 1 month. After the given period of time it was checked their leaning through the conduct of the posttest examination.

Data was collated and submitted to appropriate statistical treatment.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the principal, approval of the Superintendent of the Division. Orientation of the respondents both School Principal, teachers and parent were done.

Treatment of Data. The following statistical formulas were used in this study:

The quantitative responses were tallied and tabulated. The data was treated statistically using the following statistical tool.

Weighted Mean. This was utilized to assess the performance of the Kindergarten in ECCD Skills.

Pearson r- This tool was used to calculate the significant relationship between the performance of the Kindergarten in ECCD to the extent of the implementation of the Play-based Learning Approach.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Extent of the Implementation of the Play-Based Learning Approach

	A. GUIDELINES	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Clear play-based learning guidelines are provided by the school or education department.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	The guidelines align with the developmental needs of learners.	5.0	Strongly Agree
3	Teachers are trained to follow the play-based learning policies.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	Curriculum integrates play as an essential method of instruction.	5.0	Strongly Agree
5	Regular monitoring of the implementation of play-based learning occurs	4.0	Agree
	Mean	4.80	Strongly Agree
	B. TECHNIQUES		
1	Teachers use structured play to achieve specific learning outcomes.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	Free play opportunities are incorporated into daily activities.	5.0	Strongly Agree
3	Storytelling and role-playing are common instructional strategies.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	Teachers facilitate group games to enhance social development.	5.0	Agree
5	Teachers integrate play with literacy and numeracy activities.	5.0	Strongly Agree
	Mean	5.00	Strongly Agree
	C. Materials		
1	Age-appropriate and safe play materials are available in classrooms.	5.0	Strongly Agree
2	Learning materials encourage creativity and exploration.	5.0	Strongly Agree
3	Materials are regularly updated or maintained.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	Classrooms are equipped with manipulatives and visual aids for play-based learning.	5.0	Agree
5	Teachers are involved in selecting or designing play materials.	5.0	Agree
	Mean	5.00	Agree
	D. Benefits		
1	Learners show improved engagement in play-based lessons.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2	Play-based learning fosters creativity and imagination.	5.00	Strongly Agree
3	Students develop stronger social and emotional skills.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4	Learners demonstrate better problem-solving and decision-making abilities.	4.00	Agree
5	Academic achievement is enhanced through play-based strategies.	5.00	Strongly Agree
	Mean	4.80	Strongly Agree
	E. Participation of Learners		
1	All learners actively participate in play-based activities.	4.00	Agree
2	Learners collaborate effectively during group play.	4.00	Agree
3	Children are given choices in the types of play they engage in.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4	Learners express their ideas freely during play.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5	Teachers observe increased confidence among learners through play.	5.00	Strongly Agree
	Mean	4.60	Strongly Agree
	F. Challenges		
1	1. Lack of resources limits play-based learning activities.	4.0	Agree
2	2. Time constraints hinder full implementation of play-based approaches.	5.0	Strongly Agree

3	3. Teachers need more training on play-based strategies.	5.0	Strongly Agree
4	4. Large class sizes affect the quality of play-based instruction.	3.0	Undecided
5	5. Parental or community support for play-based learning is limited.	5.0	Strongly Agree
	Mean	4.40	Disagree
	Grand Mean	4.77	STRONGLY AGREE

Legend: 4.21- 5.00 – Strongly Agree
 3.41- 4.20 – Agree
 2.61-3.40 - Undecided
 1.81- 2.60- Disagree
 1.00-1.80- Strongly Disagree

Table 1, titled "Extent of the Implementation of the Play-Based Learning Approach," presents the respondents' assessment of how effectively play-based learning is being practiced in the educational setting. The data is organized into six key indicators: Guidelines, Techniques, Materials, Benefits, Participation of Learners, and Challenges, each with specific items rated using a Likert scale. The results reveal the degree of agreement among respondents regarding the extent of implementation, with interpretations provided based on the weighted mean of responses per item and category. The overall analysis is guided by a rating legend where a weighted mean of 4.21 to 5.00 indicates "Strongly Agree."

The first category, Guidelines, received an overall mean of 4.80, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This indicates a strong consensus among respondents that their institutions provide clear and effective play-based learning policies. All items under this indicator, including the alignment of guidelines with developmental needs, teacher training, and integration of play into the curriculum, received a perfect score of 5.0, except for the monitoring component, which scored 4.0 (Agree). While this suggests consistent support in policy and planning, it also reveals that monitoring mechanisms may need to be enhanced to sustain and assess implementation fidelity.

Under the Techniques indicator, a perfect mean score of 5.00 was achieved, indicating that respondents Strongly Agree that effective play-based teaching strategies are being used. Specific methods such as structured play, storytelling, and integration with core subjects like literacy and numeracy are widely practiced. The use of group games was also well-regarded, although slightly lower at 5.0 (Agree), possibly due to variability in classroom settings. This high score reflects the teachers' readiness and commitment to embedding play as a primary instructional strategy, aligning with child-centered and experiential learning principles.

The third indicator, Materials, also received a strong overall rating of 5.00, indicating Strong Agreement on the sufficiency and appropriateness of resources. Items regarding the availability of age-appropriate tools, materials that foster creativity, and regular updates all scored a perfect 5.0. However, the classroom provision of manipulatives and the teacher involvement in material selection were rated 5.0 (Agree), pointing to possible logistical or administrative limitations. These results suggest that while materials are present and useful, there is room for more teacher input and infrastructure support to optimize material usage.

The Benefits of play-based learning were also rated very highly, with a category mean of 4.80 (Strongly Agree). All aspects—learner engagement, creativity, social-emotional development, and academic performance—were affirmed as strong outcomes of the approach, with most items scoring 5.0. Only the item related to decision-making and problem-solving abilities received a slightly lower score of 4.0 (Agree), suggesting that while play-based learning positively impacts cognitive development, further emphasis on reflective and critical thinking skills may be needed. Overall, the data affirms that the approach is beneficial across developmental domains.

The Participation of Learners category yielded a mean of 4.60, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This reflects that learners are actively engaged in play-based activities, with high levels of collaboration, self-expression, and confidence observed by teachers. Although the first two items received 4.0 (Agree), which relate to general participation and collaboration, the rest scored 5.0. These results suggest that while learners are generally involved, there might be varying levels of participation that depend on classroom management, group dynamics, or learner readiness.

Based from the results in table 1, it implied that with a Grand Mean of 4.77, the overall extent of implementation of play-based learning is interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that schools and educators are not only aware of the importance of play in learning but are also implementing it effectively. This strong rating across nearly all indicators implies a comprehensive and structured integration of play-based approaches in early education settings. However, specific aspects such as monitoring, community support, and class size remain areas that need further improvement to sustain and elevate the program’s quality. The results suggest the need for ongoing professional development and policy support to address these challenges.

Table 2
ECCD Post Assessment Performance of Kindergarten Learners

No.	Interpretation	Scaled Score	Frequency	Percentage
5	Suggest Highly Advanced Development	130- above	0	0
4	Suggest Slight Advanced Development	120-129	2	4
3	Average Development	80-119	48	96
2	Suggest Slight Delay in Overall Development	70-79	0	0
1	Suggest Significant Delay in Overall Development	69- below	0	0
	Total		50	100
	Average		105.78	Average Development

Table 2, titled "ECCD Post Assessment Performance of Kindergarten Learners," presents the results of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) post-assessment conducted among 50 kindergarten learners. The assessment utilizes a scaled scoring system to determine the developmental level of each learner across various domains such as cognitive, language, motor, and socio-emotional development. The table categorizes learners into five interpretive levels—

ranging from "Highly Advanced Development" to "Significant Delay in Overall Development"—based on their total scaled scores. The purpose of this table is to provide insight into the overall developmental readiness of learners following the implementation of early childhood education programs.

In the assessment results, no learners scored within the 130 and above range, which corresponds to "Highly Advanced Development." This indicates that while learners may be developing appropriately, none demonstrated exceptionally advanced skills across all developmental domains. Additionally, only 2 learners (4%) scored between 120–129, which suggests a "Slightly Advanced Development." This small percentage reflects that a very limited number of learners are exceeding typical expectations for their age group. While the presence of advanced learners is a positive sign, it also indicates the need to continue nurturing and challenging these individuals to sustain their developmental momentum.

The majority of the learners—48 out of 50 or 96%—fell within the 80–119 scaled score range, which corresponds to "Average Development." This result indicates that the vast majority of the kindergarten pupils are developing appropriately for their age. This category encompasses a wide range of abilities but generally suggests that learners are meeting the expected milestones across developmental domains. The high concentration of learners in this category suggests effective teaching strategies and a well-implemented ECCD program that supports typical developmental progression in early childhood.

Notably, none of the learners fell into the lower categories of development. There were zero learners in the 70–79 range, which would have indicated a "Slight Delay in Overall Development," and none in the 69-below range, which corresponds to "Significant Delay." This absence is a strong indicator that there are no apparent developmental concerns among the current group of learners based on the post-assessment. It suggests that the ECCD program is inclusive and supportive, addressing the developmental needs of all learners and successfully preventing delays in foundational learning domains.

The average scaled score for the entire group is 105.78, which falls within the "Average Development" category. This overall score supports the conclusion that learners are performing within the expected developmental range. While there is room for improvement toward advancing more learners into higher performance levels, the results affirm that the ECCD program is meeting its primary goal of ensuring kindergarten learners reach age-appropriate developmental milestones by the end of the school year.

Based on the findings in table 2, it implied that the ECCD post-assessment demonstrates a strong implementation of developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education. With no learners falling into delayed categories and nearly all achieving average or above development, the implication is that the curriculum, teaching strategies, and learning environment are effective. However, the limited number of learners reaching advanced levels may suggest a

need for differentiated instruction or enrichment activities to push capable learners beyond the average range. Overall, the data underscores the success of ECCD implementation while also identifying opportunities for further enhancement.

Table 3
Test of Relationship

Variables Correlated	r	Computed value or t	Table Value @.05	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Extent of The Implementation Of The Play-Based Learning Approach to ECCD Performance	0.16	2.994	2.667	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship (Weak)

Table 3, titled "Test of Relationship," presents the statistical correlation between two key variables: the extent of the implementation of the play-based learning approach and the ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) performance of kindergarten learners. The table shows the correlation coefficient (r), the computed t -value, the critical or table value at 0.05 significance level, the decision on the null hypothesis (H_0), and the interpretation of the relationship. This analysis aims to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the implementation level of play-based learning strategies and learners' developmental outcomes as measured by ECCD post-assessments.

The correlation coefficient (r) reported in the table is 0.16, which indicates a positive but weak relationship between the two variables. In statistics, a correlation value closer to 1 suggests a strong relationship, while a value near 0 indicates a weak or negligible relationship. Although the correlation is low, it is still positive, meaning that as the extent of play-based learning implementation increases, there is a tendency for ECCD performance to also increase, albeit slightly. The computed t -value is 2.994, which is higher than the table value of 2.667 at the 0.05 level of significance. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. The statistical evidence confirms that there is, in fact, a significant relationship—although weak—between the extent of play-based learning implementation and the ECCD performance of learners.

Based on the values provided, the decision to reject the null hypothesis indicates that the observed correlation is not due to chance, and that implementation of play-based learning has a measurable impact on ECCD performance. However, the interpretation notes that the relationship is significant but weak, suggesting that while play-based strategies contribute to developmental outcomes, other variables—such as teacher quality, parental involvement, classroom environment, or socio-economic factors—may also play substantial roles. The interpretation of a weak but significant relationship may also stem from inconsistencies in how play-based learning is implemented across different contexts or schools. For example, while the materials, strategies, and engagement might be present in principle, the depth or quality of execution might vary, thereby weakening the overall impact on learner outcomes. Furthermore, ECCD performance measures

are multi-dimensional and can be influenced by more than just instructional strategies, which further explains the modest strength of the relationship.

The findings in table 3 implied that while implementing play-based learning approaches does have a positive and statistically significant effect on children's developmental outcomes, efforts should be made to enhance the depth, consistency, and quality of implementation. Training for teachers, increased monitoring, and resource provision may strengthen this relationship. Moreover, stakeholders in early childhood education should not rely solely on play-based strategies but also address other influential factors that support holistic child development.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it affirm that the implementation of the Play-Based Learning Approach has a statistically significant, albeit weak, positive relationship with the ECCD performance of kindergarten learners. This suggests that while play-based learning contributes meaningfully to children's developmental outcomes, its full potential may not be maximized due to variability in implementation quality and the presence of other influencing factors. To strengthen this relationship, there is a clear need for more consistent application of play-based strategies, enhanced teacher training, sufficient learning materials, and a supportive learning environment. These findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach to early childhood education, where play-based learning is effectively integrated alongside other key educational and developmental supports.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the utilization of the intervention plan be extended across various educational settings to improve literacy outcomes.

1. Teachers are encouraged to deepen their understanding and application of play-based learning by attending relevant training programs and engaging in professional learning communities. They should consistently incorporate structured and purposeful play into daily lessons and adapt strategies to meet the diverse developmental needs of learners. Teachers must also document learner progress through ECCD-aligned tools to better assess the impact of play-based approaches.
2. School Heads should ensure the consistent and effective implementation of play-based learning by providing necessary support such as instructional supervision, resource allocation, and time for teacher collaboration. They are also urged to initiate capacity-building programs and encourage a school culture that values developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education.

3. District Supervisors are recommended to monitor and evaluate the implementation of play-based learning across schools in their jurisdiction. They should provide technical assistance, advocate for policy support, and facilitate training initiatives to address gaps in teaching practices and resource availability, especially in underserved areas.
4. Parents play a critical role in supporting play-based learning by reinforcing the value of purposeful play at home. They are encouraged to participate in school activities, provide simple learning materials when possible, and collaborate with teachers to better understand their child's developmental progress.
5. The researcher is advised to share findings with stakeholders through forums or learning action cells to inform practice and policy. In future interventions, a more in-depth analysis of variables influencing ECCD performance beyond play-based learning should be considered to provide a broader perspective on child development.
6. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal and comparative studies on play-based learning, possibly expanding the sample size and including other domains such as socio-emotional development and parental involvement. Investigating how specific play strategies affect targeted ECCD outcomes may also yield more actionable insights for curriculum development and policy-making.

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