

Pathways to the Implementation of Social Educational Functions in Macao's Music Associations

---A Qualitative Analysis Based on In-Depth Interviews

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Abstract

Macao music associations play a key role in social education, not only teaching musical skills, but also promoting cultural heritage, personality building, social responsibility and international exchanges. This study focuses on four representative societies, discusses how they realize the social education function, and their impact on the music culture ecology of Macao. The research summarizes four realization paths: the construction of diversified music education system, the integration of cultural inheritance and music education, the cultivation of team cooperation and social responsibility, the expansion of international vision, and the combination of music education and economic and cultural development. These paths will help the students develop in an all-round way and support Macao's cultural development and music education system.

Research Article

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Introduction

Research background

Macau, as an important city where Eastern and Western cultures converge, boasts rich musical cultural resources. Various music groups play a significant role in cultural dissemination, educational promotion, and social development (Turino, 2008). Macaus music groups cover a wide range of categories, including symphony, wind instruments, traditional music, and religious music. They not only provide extensive opportunities for residents to learn music but also undertake social educational functions in cultural heritage preservation, community integration, and youth development. However, the pathways to realizing these social educational functions have yet to be systematically studied and summarized. Academic literature on this topic is scattered and lacks in-depth discussions that combine theory with practice. Therefore, conducting a systematic study of the social educational functions of Macaus music groups can deepen our understanding of their educational value and provide theoretical support for the sustainable development of Macaus music culture.

From a global perspective, music groups play an increasingly important role in community music education, cultural identity building, and social cohesion enhancement (Small, 1999). Many countries have integrated community music groups into their lifelong education systems and promote their development through policy support and cross-cultural exchanges (Veblen & Waldron, 2012). However, music groups in Macao still primarily rely on non-governmental organizations and partial government funding. How to maximize their social educational functions with limited resources is a critical issue that needs in-depth consideration. Moreover, as Macaos society modernizes, music groups face multiple challenges while maintaining traditional musical cultural characteristics, such as attracting younger generations, increasing social participation, and expanding international cooperation. Therefore, this study explores the practical experiences and implementation paths of social educational functions through interviews and qualitative analysis of four representative music groups in Macao: — Macao Changhong Music Society, Macao Wind Orchestra Association, Macao Taoist Association, and Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra, providing academic support and practical guidance for the further development of music groups in Macao.

Research significance

Theoretical significance

First, this study enriches the theoretical framework of the social educational functions of music clubs. Current research on music education mostly focuses on school music education, individual skill development, and musical cognitive growth, with relatively less attention paid to the role of music clubs in social education. Through qualitative interviews and case analysis, this study summarizes and generalizes the primary functions and implementation paths of Macaos music clubs in social education, providing new empirical support for the theory of social education through music clubs. Additionally, this study integrates educational and sociological theories such as cultural capital theory, social learning theory, and experiential learning theory to explore how music clubs influence individual development and community building through education (Koza, 2010), cultural inheritance, and social participation, further broadening the perspective of music education research.

Secondly, this study fills the academic gap in research on social education of music societies in Macao. Currently, studies on music societies in Macao are scattered both domestically and internationally, focusing mainly on historical development and activity records of individual societies,

with fewer systematic studies examining their functions and implementation paths in the field of social education. Through case studies, this research constructs a model for the realization of social educational functions of music societies in Macao, providing foundational materials and theoretical frameworks for subsequent academic research, as well as offering references for the development of music societies in other regions.

Practical significance

This study systematically analyzes the social educational functions of music societies in Macao, providing practical guidance for the future development of local music groups. By examining the practical experiences of four representative music societies, this research identifies the strengths and weaknesses of Macaos music societies in talent cultivation, cultural heritage preservation, shaping social responsibility, and international exchange, and proposes targeted optimization strategies. These findings can serve as references for major music societies in Macao to optimize their educational models, enhance their social impact, and further promote the prosperity and development of Macaos music culture.

In addition, this study provides policy recommendations for the government, schools, and social organizations in supporting the social education function of music clubs. The findings will help the Macao SAR government and relevant institutions formulate more precise cultural and educational policies (Elliott, 1995), such as enhancing school-community cooperation, improving the allocation of music education resources, and promoting the integration of music clubs with the cultural tourism industry, thus providing stronger support for the sustainable development of Macaos music culture. At the same time, this study can also serve as a reference for music clubs in other regions, helping them to more effectively fulfill their social education functions and promote the dissemination and development of music culture.

In short, this study not only deepens the understanding of the social education function of Macao music associations, but also provides theoretical basis and practical guidance for the optimization of Macaos music education policy, which has important academic value and practical significance.

Research methods

Application of qualitative research in music education research

Qualitative research is a method that emphasizes textual analysis, individual experience, and the understanding of social contexts, widely applied in social sciences, humanities studies, and education (Tisdell et al., 2025). In music education research, qualitative methods are primarily used to explore interactions between educators, learners, and musical culture, understanding the emotional experiences, cognitive development, and social impacts of individuals during the process of music learning. Compared to quantitative research, which focuses on measurable data and statistical analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016), qualitative research places greater emphasis on in-depth interviews, observations, and textual analysis to reveal the complexity and multidimensional nature of the music education process.

The value of qualitative research in music education research

Exploring Learners Musical Experiences and Growth Paths: Qualitative research methods can delve into the experiences, attitudes, and developmental trajectories of music learners in various environments. For example, by interviewing members of music clubs, we can understand how they cultivate skills, enhance artistic literacy, and build cultural identity through musical practice. This approach helps reveal that music education is not just a process of skill training but also a practice for shaping emotional,

social, and cultural values.

Understanding the Social and Cultural Context of Music Education: Music education not only involves individual learning but is also profoundly influenced by social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research can analyze the unique characteristics of music education in different social and cultural environments, such as how music groups develop in multicultural settings in Macao, and how to find a balance between localization and internationalization. Through qualitative analysis, we can gain deeper insights into how music education promotes cultural identity, community cohesion, and cross-cultural exchange.

Analyzing the Teaching Philosophy and Practices of Music Educators: Qualitative research can analyze their teaching philosophy, methods, and challenges through interviews with teachers, music instructors, and policymakers. For example, how do music club mentors in Macao pass on skills across different genres (such as folk music, wind instruments, symphony, and religious music) and integrate social education goals into their teaching? Through in-depth case studies, it is possible to uncover how teachers balance traditional music education with modern teaching methods.

Revealing the Impact of Music Education on Social Development: Qualitative research not only focuses on the growth of individual learners but also explores the impact of music education on society. For example, how music groups enhance public musical literacy and artistic appreciation through performances, community activities, and cultural promotion, even boosting Macaos cultural tourism industry. Through text analysis, focus group interviews, and field observations, researchers can uncover the role and function of music groups in the socio-cultural ecosystem.

Qualitative research is the main method in music education

In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews are one of the most commonly used methods in qualitative research, where researchers use open-ended questions to gather respondents personal experiences and perspectives on music education (Patton, 2014). In this study, through interviews with members, managers, and teachers of Macaos four major music organizations (Macao Changhong Concert Society, Macao Wind Music Association, Macao Taoist Association, and Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra), we can analyze how they understand the social functions of music education and how they achieve educational goals in actual teaching and promotion.

Participatory Observation

By personally participating in club activities such as music rehearsals, performances, and educational workshops, researchers can observe the learning process of students, the teaching model of clubs, and the interactions among club members. This method provides firsthand data, avoiding the potential subjectivity that might arise from relying solely on interviews (Stake, 1995), and helps researchers gain a more intuitive understanding of how music clubs conduct social education in real-world settings.

Document Analysis

Researchers can collect and analyze official documents, syllabi, concert programs, policy documents, and student reflection logs of Macao music clubs to understand their educational goals, curriculum design, and development strategies. Textual analysis can complement the results of interviews and observations to provide a more comprehensive background information.

Focus Group

The focus group research method can promote the interaction between club members, mentors or

students through group discussion to explore their views on music education. This method is particularly suitable for studying how music clubs influence the development of students through collective cooperation and cultural exchange.

Application of qualitative research in this paper

In-depth Interview method

In this study, in-depth interview method is used as the data collection means, which is widely used to obtain the opinions, experiences and insights of the research subjects. In this study, in-depth interview method will be used to deeply explore the social education and training functions of Macao music associations, as well as to obtain relevant professional knowledge and practical experience.

In the early stages of the research, an interview guide will be developed, covering questions and topics related to the research theme. These questions will focus on key areas such as the educational goals of music clubs, training content, teaching methods, and participant feedback. Through in-depth interviews, this study aims to reveal participants' perceptions, expectations, and evaluations of the functions of social education and training, as well as their views on the role of music clubs in cultural and artistic education.

Subsequently, a series of key interview subjects will be selected, including the heads of music clubs, music education experts, musicians and students or members who participate in club training. The diversified interview subjects will help enrich the research data from different perspectives and levels, and enhance the depth and breadth of the research.

During the interview process, this study will prioritize building good communication and trust to facilitate genuine and in-depth expression from participants. Interviews can take the form of individual sessions or group discussions, arranged flexibly according to actual circumstances. Interview content will be recorded through audio or notes for subsequent detailed data analysis and organization.

For the collected interview data, this study will employ content analysis for processing (Tracy, 2024). Through meticulous reading and coding word by word, themes and concepts related to the research questions will be extracted. These themes and concepts will be compared and cross-verified with other data sources to form a comprehensive understanding of the social education and training functions of music societies in Macao.

Ultimately, the in-depth interview method will provide this study with profound insights and practical experience regarding the social education and training functions of Macao's music clubs. By analyzing the perspectives and experiences of participants, this study can more accurately grasp the current status, challenges, and development trends of music club education and training. This will offer important academic evidence and practical guidance for enhancing education and improving training in Macao's music clubs.

Through the application of in-depth interview method, this study will scientifically and rigorously explore the social education and training function of Macao music associations, provide a solid empirical data basis for the research, and enhance the academic value of the paper. This study will focus on the following aspects:

- (1) How can music clubs promote students' social adaptability and personality development through educational activities?
- (2) What is the role of music clubs in cultural heritage and international exchange in Macao?
- (3) What are the unique contributions of different types of music groups (folk music, wind music, symphony, religious music) to social education?

- (4) How can music clubs continue to develop and optimize their social education function under the condition of limited resources?

Selection of interview subjects

In the research, we will select 2-5 interviewees from each music club, including the club leaders, managers, and other relevant personnel. The selection of these interviewees aims to gain deep insights and rich experiences regarding the educational functions of Macaos music clubs. They play significant roles in their respective clubs and possess high authority and professional knowledge in organizational management, operations, and education training.

Interview the name of the music club	Name of interviewee	Interviewer position
Macau Changhong Concert	Mr. Dai	honorary chairman
	Mr. Du	the president of an association or society
	Mr. Liao	director-general
	Mr. Tan	The Chief Supervisor
	Mr. Li	Art Consultant
	Mr. Chen	Art Consultant
	Mr. Xu	adviser
	An individual	Band teacher
	An individual	Band student
Macao Wind Music Association	Mr. Liang	chairman
	Mr. Liang	director-general
	Mr. Guo	The Chief Supervisor
	An individual	Conductor of a wind band
	An individual	Instrumental instructor
Macau Youth Symphony Orchestra	Huang Yiman	the president of an association or society
	Mr. Xu	director-general
	Mr. Wang	vice president
	Mr. Liang	vice president
	Mr. Zhang	member of a council
	Mr. Liang	The Chief Supervisor
	An individual	The Conductor
	An individual	Band teacher
Macau Taoist Association (Macau Dao Orchestra)	Mr. Wu	President and chairman
	Mr. Wang	Director and conductor
	An individual	The Chief Supervisor
	An individual	Band teacher

Table 1 List of provisional interviewees

Considerations for interview subjects

In the process of screening interviewees, this study will take into account the following key factors:

Club Leaders (also known as Chairpersons, Presidents, or Board Directors): As the core figures of music clubs, club leaders play a crucial role in establishing and advancing educational goals, policies, and strategies. Through in-depth interviews with club leaders, researchers can gain a deep

understanding of the macro planning, organizational structure, and core concepts and expected outcomes of training activities.

Club Manager: The management team includes key roles such as the orchestra conductor, director of the orchestra, and heads of sub-orchestras. They are responsible for the daily operations and management tasks of the club, including the rational allocation of resources, meticulous planning of activities, and the management of faculty. They have a deep understanding of the actual implementation processes and outcomes of club education and training. Through interviews with managers, researchers can gain insight into the specific execution details, challenges faced, and achievements made in club education and training.

Other Key Personnel: In addition to the leaders and managers of the club, this study will also interview other individuals closely related to the clubs education and training, including music instructors, project leaders, and trainees. These individuals can provide more detailed case studies and experiences of educational practices, as well as insights and suggestions on the clubs education and training programs.

For the above interviewees, this study will develop a series of open questions to focus on the educational function and practice of Macao music associations.

History and present situation of Macao music associations

Macao, as an important city where Eastern and Western cultures converge, has undergone profound historical changes in its music education system. Since the mid-16th century when Macao was opened to the outside world, music culture has developed continuously at different stages of Macaus society, forming a unique and diverse model of music education. The rise and development of music societies in Macao have gradually taken shape against this historical backdrop. The following content outlines the historical evolution of music education in Macao and analyzes its current status and future trends.

From the 16th to the 18th century: early music education and cultural integration

The music education in Macao can be traced back to the mid-16th century, when Macao was a small fishing port in the South China Sea. The local culture was primarily centered around the lives of fishermen, with musical activities revolving around Taoist rituals, Mazu beliefs, and fishing songs (Lim & Lee, 2019). Taoist music accompanied religious ceremonies and was not only used in public settings but also widely spread during folk celebrations, weddings, and birthdays, becoming an essential part of early Macaos musical culture.

With the arrival of the Portuguese, Western Catholic music culture began to enter Macao. The establishment of St. Pauls College introduced Western-style music education to Macao, making it one of the earliest regions in China to be exposed to Western music education. The college not only offered music courses but also had a choir and organ performances, integrating music as an essential part of religious ceremonies. This fusion of Eastern and Western musical cultures laid the foundation for Macaos subsequent musical development.

Mid-18th century to the end of 19th century: the rise of secular music and military music

From the 18th century to the 19th century, Macaos music culture entered a secular development stage. With Macao becoming an international trade port, the social structure and cultural environment of the city also changed, and music education gradually expanded from the religious system to a wider social field.

The military band became a representative of the early Western-style bands in Macao. The military bands established by the Portuguese army played during festivals, religious processions, and important social events, promoting the spread of Western music. Additionally, with the arrival of Protestant missionaries, Protestant music culture also developed in Macao. Hymns became an essential part of Protestant worship services, forming a diversified religious music system alongside Catholic music.

At the same time, folk music activities in Macao have also flourished. For example, "Xian Shui Songs," a musical form passed down orally among fishermen, have played a significant role in labor and daily life. In addition, the divine plays in front of the A-Ma Temple, the ritual music at Buddhist temples, and family concerts of the Portuguese community all contribute to Macaos rich urban music scene.

At the end of the 19th century, with the rise of social venues in Macao, the city's music culture became more diverse (Lim & Lee, 2019). The Theatre of Pedro V (now the Taipa Theatre) became the most important venue for musical performances in Macao at that time, hosting plays, operas, and concerts, providing high-quality musical enjoyment for the citizens of Macao. During this period, Macaos music culture gradually took shape, featuring a coexistence of religious music, secular music, and folk music, laying the foundation for the future music education system.

Since the 20th century: the rise of diversified music education

Since the 20th century, music education in Macao has gradually moved towards a parallel development of religious education, school music education, and social music education. During the Portuguese rule, church schools continued to play an important role in music education in Macao, while Western-style music education models were gradually promoted within the secular education system of Macao.

Entering the latter half of the 20th century, Macaos socio-economic development accelerated rapidly, and music culture entered a new era of prosperity. The Macao SAR government and social organizations gradually promoted the development of music courses in schools and encouraged the establishment of folk music groups (Gunn, 1996). To date, there are approximately 130 primary and secondary schools in Macao, many of which offer music courses and actively organize student performances. However, due to factors such as the shortage of music teachers, curriculum systems, and societal perceptions, school music education in Macao still faces issues of uneven development, with overall standards needing improvement.

Compared to school music education, Macaos social music education demonstrates greater vitality and flexibility. For example, institutions such as the "Music School of the Performing Arts College" under the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the privately-run "Macao Music and Arts Center," and the "St. Benedicts Music Academy" hosted by churches have become significant forces in Macaos music education. Additionally, music schools scattered throughout Macao provide extensive extracurricular music training opportunities for young people. Although there are issues with varying quality of teaching, they generally play a positive role in nurturing Macaos music talent.

The development of music societies in Macao has evolved from religious music and secular music to the modern social music education system (Machado et al., 2020), playing a significant role in cultural

inheritance and social education in contemporary society. Although there are still challenges in school music education in Macao, social music education, especially through music societies, has achieved notable success in nurturing musical talent, promoting cultural heritage, and enhancing social cohesion. In the future, with further collaboration between the government, schools, and social music organizations, Macao music education will develop towards greater professionalism, systematicness, and internationalization, providing stronger support for the prosperity of Macao music culture.

The realization path of social education function of Macao music associations

The Macao music societies, as important vehicles for social music education, not only bear the responsibility of nurturing musical talent but also play a crucial role in cultural heritage, personality development (Nettl, 2015), social responsibility cultivation, and international exchange. Based on qualitative research of the four major music societies in Macao (Macao Changhong Concert, Macao Wind Orchestra Association, Macao Taoist Association, and Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra), this chapter summarizes the main pathways through which these music societies fulfill their social educational functions and explores their specific practices and impacts in promoting social music education.

Construction of diversified music education system

The social education function of Macao music associations is first reflected in the diversified music education system they build. The associations provide tiered teaching according to different age groups, interests and musical literacy, so as to ensure that students learn and grow in a suitable environment.

Layered teaching mode

The music clubs in Macao widely adopt a tailored teaching model, setting up training courses at different levels based on the age, musical foundation, and development direction of students. For example, the Macao Wind Music Association and the Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra use A, B, and C groups to divide students into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, gradually cultivating their musical skills. This approach not only improves teaching quality but also boosts students motivation to learn.

Diverse music courses

The music education provided by the Macao Music Association covers theoretical knowledge, performance skills, music composition, and ensemble training. In addition to teaching the techniques of playing traditional Chinese instruments, the Changhong Concert in Macao integrates the cultural background of music into its curriculum, helping students gain a deeper understanding of the aesthetic value of ethnic music. The music education offered by the Taoist Association of Macao emphasizes the integration of religious music with traditional culture, enhancing cultural identity while students learn music.

Extracurricular training and practice opportunities

The club is not limited to classroom teaching; it also provides numerous practical opportunities for students through organizing music festivals, competitions, music workshops, and performances (Schipper, 2009). For example, the Macao Wind Music Association holds an annual wind music festival, offering a platform for young people in Macao and surrounding areas to showcase their talents. These extracurricular activities enhance students stage presence and teamwork skills, making music education

more practically valuable.

Integration of cultural inheritance and music education

In the process of realizing the social education function, Macao music associations actively promote the inheritance of music culture (Green, 2017), so that music learning is not only limited to skill training, but also becomes an important way of cultural communication.

Protection and innovation of traditional music

The Macao Changhong Music Society is dedicated to promoting traditional Chinese ethnic music, nurturing a group of ethnic music talents, and organizing special concerts to allow students to deeply experience the artistic charm of traditional music. Meanwhile, the Macao Taoist Association promotes the teaching of Taoist music, enabling the younger generation to understand and inherit Taoist ritual music, thus advancing the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

Cross-generational inheritance mode

The Macao music community emphasizes the concept of team building that integrates "old, middle-aged, and young" members. For example, in the Changhong Concerts and the teaching system of the Macao Taoist Association, senior members play a role in mentoring younger participants during training. They not only help young learners master techniques but also strengthen the cohesion within the community. This intergenerational inheritance model ensures the sustainable development of Macao's local music culture.

Application of modern teaching methods

While inheriting traditional music, Macao's music associations also actively use modern teaching methods, such as digital music courses, online training and multimedia teaching tools. The Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra adopts advanced international teaching concepts in its training and collaborates with international musicians to expose students to a global musical perspective.

Teamwork and social responsibility

The Macao music club not only teaches musical skills, but also cultivates students' team spirit and social responsibility through group rehearsals, performances and other activities.

Group performance and team collaboration

The daily operations of the club rely on teamwork. For instance, during rehearsals, members need to learn how to listen, cooperate (Smilde, 2009), and coordinate with each other. This training helps cultivate their team spirit. The Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra emphasizes the role positioning of members in ensemble performances, enabling them to understand the relationship between individuals and the group through collaboration, fostering a sense of responsibility and collective consciousness.

Public welfare activities of music clubs

Macao's major music societies regularly organize community performances, charity concerts, and public welfare teaching activities. For example, the Macao Wind Music Association and the Macao Changhong Concert have frequently organized charity performances to provide musical support for disadvantaged groups. These activities not only broaden students' social horizons but also enhance their sense of social responsibility, elevating music education beyond skill training to become an important means of cultivating civic literacy.

Expansion of international perspective

The Macao Music Association actively participates in international music exchange activities, and enhances the musical literacy of students through cross-cultural cooperation, as well as enhances Macao's influence in the field of international music culture.

International cooperation and cultural exchange

The Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Macao Wind Instrument Association have long collaborated with overseas music groups, inviting internationally renowned conductors and performers to guide them in Macao, and organizing students for international exchange performances (Fung, 2008). For example, the Macao Wind Instrument Association has frequently organized students to participate in music exchange activities in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, broadening their musical horizons in different cultural contexts.

Overseas performances and international competitions

Macao music associations actively participate in international music competitions. For example, the Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra has participated in European music festivals and international competitions, which has enhanced the international competitiveness of Macao's music talents. Through overseas performances, students not only improve their stage experience, but also enhance their cultural confidence.

The combination of music education and economic and cultural development

The performances and activities of Macao music associations are not only part of music education, but also have a positive impact on the local cultural industry and tourism economy.

Promotion of cultural tourism by music activities

Music clubs in Macao hold a number of large-scale music events every year, such as the Macao International Music Festival and the Wind Art Festival, which attract a large number of local and international audiences. These activities not only enhance the cultural image of Macao, but also promote the development of tourism, making music clubs an important driving force for cultural economy.

Self-sustaining mechanism of music clubs

Some music clubs maintain their operations through ticket sales, corporate sponsorship and government funding. For example, the Macao Changhong Concert attracts tourists and music lovers by holding special performances of ethnic music, and uses box office revenue to support the development of the club. This model contributes to the sustainable development of music education in Macao.

Summary and outlook

The role of Macao's music societies in social education is becoming increasingly prominent. They not only cultivate musical talent but also play a significant role in cultural heritage preservation, shaping social responsibility, and international exchange. Based on a qualitative analysis of the four major representative music societies in Macao (Macao Changhong Music Society, Macao Wind Orchestra Association, Macao Taoist Association, and Macao Youth Symphony Orchestra), this study systematically explores the pathways for realizing their social educational functions. It summarizes how Macao's music societies enhance the depth and breadth of social music education through diversified educational systems, cultural inheritance, teamwork, international exchanges, and the integration of culture and economy.

In the future, Macaos music associations need to further optimize their social education functions to address challenges such as resource limitations, talent loss, and cultural globalization. First, they should strengthen cooperation between schools and clubs, promoting a dual-track training model of "school + club" to make music education more systematic and widespread. Second, they should advance digital transformation by utilizing online courses and virtual music classes to expand audience reach and enhance teaching flexibility. Additionally, they should deepen international cooperation, increasing exchanges with overseas music institutions and festivals to provide students with more international platforms and boost Macaos global competitiveness in music. At the same time, they should increase government and societal support, promoting policy support, corporate collaboration, and social mobilization to ensure the sustainable development of music associations. Finally, they should promote the integration of cultural industries, exploring the combination of music with tourism, film, and commerce to create distinctive Macao music brands and develop educational products to enhance the influence of local music culture. Through these measures, Macaos music associations will further expand their social education functions, promote the prosperity and development of Macaos music culture, and establish a more recognizable cultural image on the international stage.

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