

THE INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsement is a widely used marketing strategy that significantly influences consumer behaviour, brand perception, and purchase intention. Several studies highlight key attributes that determine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, including trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, credibility, popularity, and congruence with the brand. Among these, trustworthiness often emerges as the most critical factor, shaping consumer attitudes and encouraging positive word-of-mouth. Expertise and attractiveness also play important roles, particularly in creating emotional connections with consumers and enhancing the perceived quality of the endorsed product.

This research paper focuses on understanding the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer behaviour, examining factors such as trust, purchase decisions, and preferred endorsement channels.

To gather insights, we collected data through surveys from 50 respondents, covering aspects like the frequency of noticing endorsements, trust in different types of celebrities, and the impact of endorsements on purchase decisions.

Key Words: Celebrity endorsement; consumer behaviour; primary data; descriptive analysis and inferential analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsement plays a crucial role in the FMCG industry, with studies showing its positive impact on consumer behaviour. The practice dates back to the 19th century, evolving into a multi-million-dollar industry, where brands leverage the appeal of celebrities to enhance product visibility and desirability. Companies invest heavily in celebrity endorsements, believing that familiar faces attract attention, cut through media clutter, and improve brand recall.

Celebrity endorsement not only influences consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and brands but also impacts purchase intentions. The effectiveness of this strategy stems from the credibility of the endorser, often assessed through perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Endorsers transfer symbolic and aspirational associations to the brands they represent, enhancing persuasive impact and boosting consumer-based brand equity.

However, overexposure and multiple endorsements can dilute credibility, leading consumers to question the authenticity of endorsements. In response, some celebrities have launched their own brands, acting as both entrepreneur and spokesperson, blending personal branding with product promotion.

Additionally, social media has transformed the landscape, enabling deeper engagement and turning consumers into brand ambassadors. As companies navigate these dynamics, selecting the right celebrity or creating a relatable spokesperson becomes critical to building trust and influencing consumer purchase behaviour.

Furthermore, in the era of social media and digital marketing, the reach and impact of celebrity endorsements have grown exponentially. Celebrities can instantly connect with millions of followers, making endorsements more personal and engaging. This direct access allows brands to create targeted campaigns and build a narrative around the product that aligns with the celebrity's persona and values.

Additionally, celebrity endorsements can significantly enhance brand recall and recognition. Consumers are more likely to remember a product that is associated with a familiar face, creating a lasting impression that can influence purchasing decisions. However, the success of such endorsements relies heavily on the authenticity of the partnership and the alignment between the celebrity's image and the brand's values.

Overall, celebrity endorsements have become an integral part of modern marketing strategies, offering brands a unique opportunity to tap into the fan base of popular figures and create a sense of trust, aspiration, and desirability among consumers.

Objectives

The Specific Objectives of the Study Are:

- To identify the relationship between celebrity attributes (such as credibility, attractiveness, and expertise) and consumer purchase intention.

- To examine the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer trust, brand perception, and long-term loyalty.
- To analyse the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements compared to non-celebrity endorsements in influencing consumer behaviour.
- To recommend key strategies that brands can implement to maximize the impact of celebrity endorsements while mitigating potential risks.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celebrity endorsements have been widely studied in marketing and consumer behaviour research, with various studies exploring their impact on consumer decision-making, brand perception, and purchase intention.

Celebrity Attributes and Consumer Trust: Several studies highlight the role of celebrity attributes, such as trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise, in shaping consumer attitudes toward endorsed brands. Ohanian (1990) developed the Source Credibility Model, which states that a celebrity's credibility significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Erdogan (1999) further emphasized that consumers are more likely to trust endorsements from celebrities perceived as authentic and knowledgeable. **The Impact of Celebrity Familiarity and Likeability:** Research by Kamins (1990) suggests that celebrity familiarity and likeability enhance brand recall and positively impact consumer attitudes. This aligns with the Match-Up Hypothesis, which states that an endorser's image should align with the brand's personality for the endorsement to be effective. Studies by Amos et al. (2008) and Spry et al. (2011) confirm that familiarity with a celebrity increases consumer engagement and purchase likelihood. **The Influence of Celebrity Endorsements on Purchase Intention:** A study by Silvera and Austad (2004) found that consumers form emotional connections with celebrities, leading to increased purchase intention. Similarly, Roy (2012) observed that celebrity endorsements significantly impact young consumers, particularly teenagers, who are more influenced by aspirational figures.

Effectiveness of Celebrity vs. Non-Celebrity Endorsements: While celebrity endorsements generate higher brand awareness, studies such as those by Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) suggest that they do not always guarantee higher sales. Non-celebrity endorsements, particularly through influencer marketing, can sometimes yield stronger consumer trust due to perceived relatability and authenticity (Schimmelpfennig & Hollensen, 2016). **Risks Associated with Celebrity Endorsements:** Despite their advantages, celebrity endorsements come with risks. Studies by Till and Shimp (1998) highlight that negative publicity surrounding a celebrity can harm brand reputation. Similarly, Bergkvist and Zhou (2016) stress the importance of crisis management strategies for brands using celebrity endorsements.

The Role of Celebrity Expertise in Brand Trust: Spry, Pappu, and Bettina (2011) analysed how a celebrity's expertise in a particular field (e.g., athletes endorsing sports brands) improves brand credibility and consumer trust. **Parasocial Relationships and Endorsements:** Chung and Cho (2017) found that consumers often form parasocial relationships (one-sided emotional bonds) with celebrities, which influences their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. **Celebrity Endorsements and Social Media Engagement:** Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that social media influencers are perceived as more relatable than traditional celebrities, making them more effective in engaging younger consumers. **Multiple Celebrity Endorsements and Brand Recall:** McDonald (2002) examined how brands using multiple celebrity endorsers can increase credibility and message reinforcement but may also confuse consumers if the endorsers represent conflicting values.

The Impact of Culture on Celebrity Endorsements: Choi and Rifon (2012) highlighted that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements varies across cultures, with collectivist cultures (e.g., China, India) responding more positively to endorsements than individualistic cultures (e.g., USA, UK). **The Halo Effect in Celebrity Endorsements:** Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) examined the halo effect, where consumers transfer positive perceptions of a celebrity to the brand, increasing purchase intention. **The Role of Gender in Endorsements:** Boyd and Shank (2004) found that male and female consumers respond differently to endorsements, with women valuing credibility and emotional appeal, while men focus more on expertise and performance. **The Economic Impact of Celebrity Endorsements:** Elberse and Verleun (2012) found that brands using celebrity endorsements saw an average 4% increase in sales, proving their financial impact.

Celebrity Endorsements in Luxury vs. Mass Market Brands: Hung, Chan, and Tse (2011) examined how luxury brands benefit more from celebrity endorsements than mass-market brands due to exclusivity and aspirational appeal.

The Role of Negative Publicity in Endorsements: Zhou and Whitla (2013) found that negative celebrity publicity can harm brand reputation, especially when the celebrity is closely associated with the product. **Consumer Skepticism Toward Celebrity Endorsements:** Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) found that consumers with high skepticism toward advertising tend to question the authenticity of celebrity endorsements, reducing their effectiveness. Endorsements and

Impulse Buying Behaviour: Wang et al. (2017) discovered that celebrity endorsements influence impulse purchases, especially in fashion and cosmetics, where consumers are driven by emotional appeal.

The Impact of AI-Driven Virtual Influencers: Miao, Wei, and Lu (2022) explored the emerging trend of AI-driven virtual influencers, finding that they are effective for Gen Z consumers but lack the emotional connection of real celebrities. The Role of Endorsements in Ethical Consumerism: White, Habib, and Hardisty (2019) found that consumers respond positively to celebrities endorsing ethical brands (e.g., sustainable products), as it enhances brand credibility. Celebrities and Political Brand Endorsements: Knoll and Matthes (2017) analysed how celebrity endorsements in political campaigns can influence voter behaviour, demonstrating that their influence extends beyond commercial products.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Data

The research is conducted using questionnaires by observing and collecting data. The theory is built on the basis of field visits and the results of the analysed data.

Secondary Data

Secondary data sources such as magazines, journals, and books are used to construct theories.

Sample

The sample size consists of 50 respondents' opinions from users in Bengaluru, Udupi and Sangli district.

Instruments

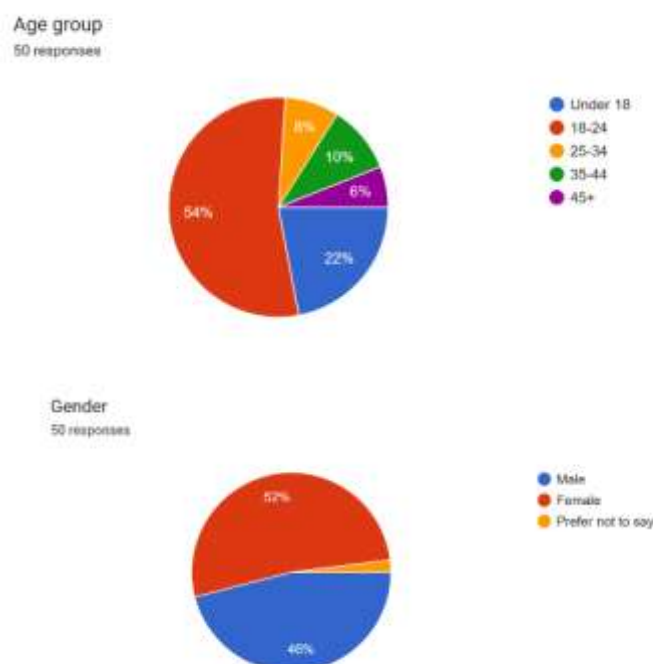
To analyse the data, percentage analysis is used to arrive at a conclusion for the present study.

Research Gap

Despite extensive studies on celebrity endorsements and their impact on consumer behaviour, several gaps remain in the existing literature:

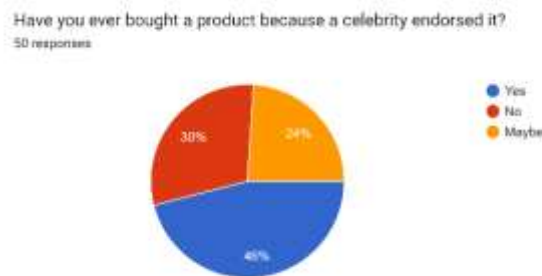
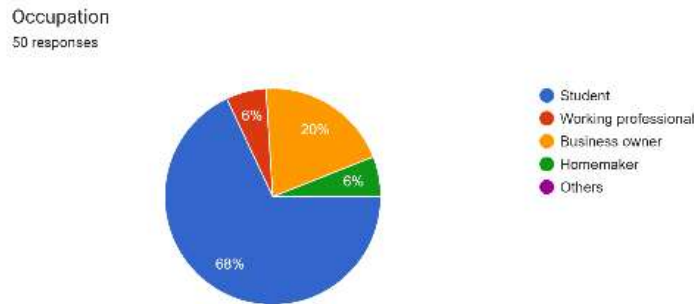
- Effectiveness Across Different Consumer Segments^[1] Existing research primarily focuses on young consumers, particularly teenagers and millennials. However, there is a lack of studies analysing how different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic classes respond to celebrity endorsements.
- Role of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Influencers^[2] The emergence of AI-driven virtual influencers as brand endorsers is an emerging trend. However, there is limited research on how consumers perceive and respond to endorsements by non-human entities compared to traditional celebrities.
- Regional and Cultural Differences in Endorsement Effectiveness^[3] Most studies focus on Western markets, while limited research is available on how cultural differences impact consumer responses to celebrity endorsements in developing economies.

Data analysis and interpretations



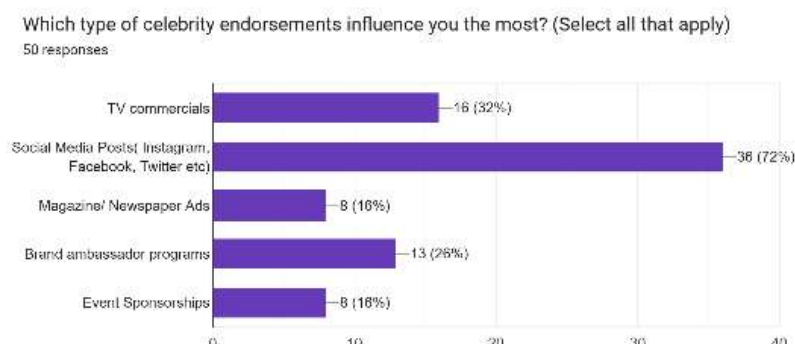
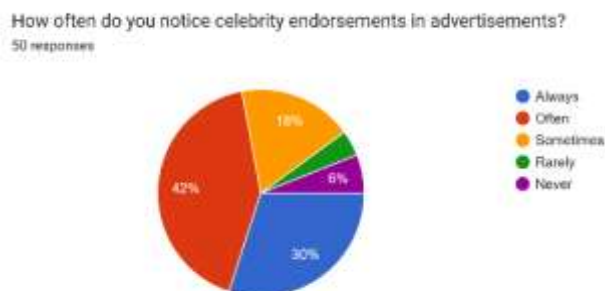
Interpretation Fig 1 :The majority (54%) of respondents are aged 18-24, indicating that young adults form the primary demographic influenced by celebrity endorsements. A smaller percentage belongs to older age groups, suggesting that marketing efforts targeting endorsements should focus on younger consumers.

Interpretation Fig 2 :There is a nearly even split between male (46%) and female (52%) respondents, with a very small percentage preferring not to disclose. This suggests that celebrity endorsements appeal to both genders almost equally.



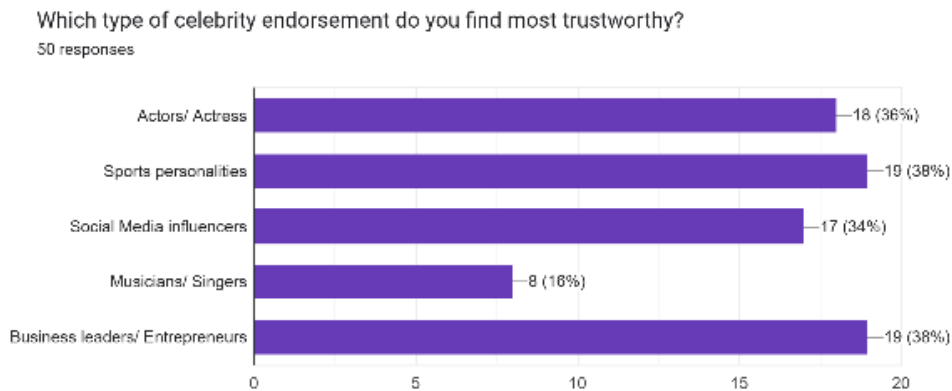
Interpretation Fig 3: Most respondents (68%) are students, followed by working professionals (20%), indicating that younger audiences, particularly those still in education, are more likely to be engaged in celebrity-endorsed products. This suggests that brands targeting students and young professionals can benefit from celebrity marketing strategies.

Interpretation Fig 4: Nearly half (46%) of respondents admit to purchasing a product due to a celebrity endorsement, proving the effectiveness of celebrity influence on consumer behavior. However, 30% remain skeptical, indicating that endorsement alone may not always be persuasive.

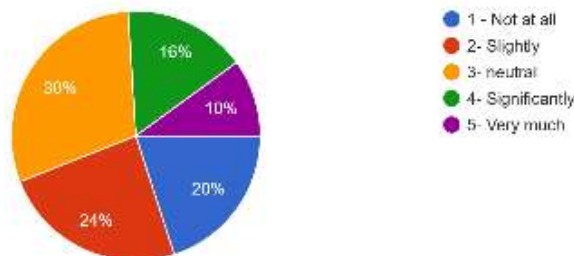


Interpretation Fig 5: A significant portion (42%) often notices celebrity endorsements, while 30% always notice them, showing that celebrity-driven advertisements are highly visible. However, a small fraction (6%) rarely or never notice them, implying some level of ad fatigue or disinterest.

Interpretation Fig 6: Social media posts (72%) have the highest influence, followed by TV commercials (32%) and brand ambassador programs (26%), showing the power of digital marketing. Traditional forms like magazine ads (16%) and event sponsorships (16%) are less impactful.

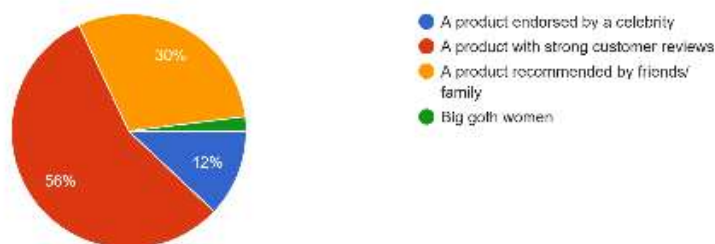


On a scale of 1-5, how much does a celebrity endorsement impact your decision to try a new product?
50 responses



Interpretation Fig 7: Sports personalities (38%) and business leaders (38%) are the most trusted, followed closely by actors (36%), while musicians and social media influencers rank lower. This suggests that expertise and credibility play a key role in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements.

What do you prefer:
50 responses



Interpretation Fig 8: Responses are divided, with 30% feeling significantly influenced and another 30% staying neutral, showing that endorsements hold considerable sway but are not the sole deciding factor. Only 16% say they are not influenced at all, confirming the power of celebrity marketing.

Interpretation Fig 9: A majority (56%) prefer products with strong customer reviews, while only 12% favor celebrity-endorsed products, indicating that credibility from real users outweighs celebrity influence. Recommendations from friends/family (30%) are also highly valued, showing the importance of personal trust in purchasing decisions.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Demographics and Audience Composition:

- The majority of respondents are aged 18-24 (54%), indicating that young adults form the largest consumer base influenced by celebrity endorsements.
- Students (68%) represent the dominant occupation group, implying that younger audiences in academic settings are more engaged with celebrity-driven content.
- The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight majority of females (52%) over males (46%), suggesting that celebrity influence appeals to both genders with a slight edge toward women.

2. Purchase Behaviour and Celebrity Influence:

- Nearly 46% of respondents admitted to buying a product because of a celebrity endorsement, demonstrating a notable impact on consumer behaviour.
- However, 30% of respondents were unsure ("Maybe"), indicating that while celebrity endorsements create awareness, they don't always guarantee immediate action.

3. Visibility of Celebrity Endorsements:

- Celebrity endorsements are highly noticeable, with 42% of respondents claiming they "often" see such endorsements and 30% stating they "always" notice them.
- Only 6% reported "rarely" noticing endorsements, confirming that celebrities are consistently present in marketing channels.

4. Trustworthiness of Celebrity Endorsements:

- Sports personalities (38%) and business leaders/entrepreneurs (38%) are perceived as the most trustworthy celebrity endorsers.
- Social media influencers (34%) also hold considerable trust, reflecting the growing power of digital creators.
- Musicians/singers (16%) ranked the lowest, potentially due to a perception of commercialization in their endorsements.

5. Preferred Channels of Influence:

- Social media (72%) is the most influential channel for celebrity endorsements, reflecting the shift towards digital marketing and direct engagement with fans.
- Traditional media like TV commercials (32%) and magazine/newspaper ads (16%) have lesser influence, showing a decline in traditional advertising effectiveness.

6. Impact on Purchase Decisions:

- On a scale of 1 to 5, most respondents rated the impact of celebrity endorsements as 3 (Neutral, 30%), suggesting that while endorsements create awareness, they aren't always the deciding factor.
- Only 10% rated the impact as 5 (Very Much), indicating that strong influence is limited to a niche group.

7. Consumer Preferences:

- When making purchase decisions, 56% of respondents prefer products with strong customer reviews over celebrity endorsements.
- Only 12% actively prefer products endorsed by celebrities, confirming that trust is built more through authentic user experiences and peer recommendations.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Leverage Social Media Campaigns:

- Since 72% of respondents are most influenced by social media posts, brands should prioritize partnerships with celebrities and influencers on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.
- Create interactive content such as Q&A sessions, behind-the-scenes videos, and product demonstrations to foster engagement and authenticity.

2. Diversify Celebrity Choices:

- Given that sports personalities (38%) and business leaders/entrepreneurs (38%) are seen as the most trustworthy, brands should collaborate with figures known for their credibility in these fields.

- For broader appeal, consider micro-influencers with niche audiences, as they often have stronger personal connections with followers.
3. Combine Endorsements with Authentic Reviews:
- Since 56% of consumers prefer strong customer reviews over celebrity endorsements, use a hybrid strategy that combines celebrity endorsements with authentic customer testimonials.
 - Encourage celebrities to share their genuine experiences with the product, blending personal storytelling with promotional content.
4. Prioritize Authenticity Over Glamour:
- As 30% of respondents are neutral about the impact of endorsements, focus on creating campaigns that highlight authenticity rather than glamour.
 - Utilize “day-in-the-life” content or casual settings to show celebrities using the product naturally, making the endorsement feel more relatable.
5. Optimize Visibility Across Multiple Channels:
- While social media is dominant, don’t neglect traditional media.
 - Integrate campaigns across TV commercials, magazines, and event sponsorships to reinforce brand messaging and build credibility across diverse consumer touchpoints.
6. Tap into Peer Recommendations:
- Leverage word-of-mouth marketing by encouraging user-generated content and referral programs, as peer recommendations hold greater influence.
 - Implement campaigns like “Share Your Experience” challenges where customers can share stories of using the product, with celebrities amplifying standout entries.
7. Measure and Adapt:
- Regularly analyse engagement metrics to see which celebrity partnerships resonate most with the target audience.
 - Use these insights to fine-tune future campaigns, ensuring alignment with consumer preferences and evolving trends.

6. CONCLUSION

Celebrity endorsements have become a key component of modern marketing, helping brands gain visibility, enhance credibility, and influence consumer behaviour. This study highlights that while endorsements create brand awareness and add aspirational value, their direct impact on purchasing decisions varies depending on factors such as trustworthiness, relevance, and the authenticity of the celebrity-brand association. Consumers are more likely to trust endorsements from figures perceived as knowledgeable and credible, such as sports personalities and business leaders, whereas musicians and entertainment figures tend to be viewed with more skepticism.

The findings also reveal the growing influence of digital platforms, with 72% of respondents stating that social media is the most impactful channel for celebrity endorsements. This shift highlights the importance of online engagement, where brands can leverage direct consumer interactions, influencer collaborations, and visually appealing content to make endorsements more persuasive. Traditional advertising mediums like television and print media are losing ground, reinforcing the need for brands to adopt digital-first strategies that resonate with today’s tech-savvy consumers.

However, despite the visibility and persuasive power of celebrity endorsements, they do not always guarantee consumer trust or immediate purchase action. More than half of respondents (56%) indicated a preference for products with strong customer reviews over those endorsed by celebrities, suggesting that real user experiences carry greater weight in influencing purchasing decisions. While nearly half of the respondents acknowledged buying a product due to a celebrity endorsement, a significant portion remained neutral, implying that endorsements alone may not be sufficient to drive conversions.

To maximize the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, brands should focus on creating authentic and relatable campaigns. Selecting endorsers who genuinely align with the brand’s values and messaging can help foster credibility and trust. Additionally, blending celebrity endorsements with real customer testimonials and interactive content can create a more engaging experience for consumers. Rather than relying solely on star power, brands should also tap into peer recommendations, influencer marketing, and community-driven promotions to build stronger emotional connections with their audience.

In conclusion, celebrity endorsements remain a powerful marketing tool, but their success depends on strategic execution. By leveraging digital engagement, prioritizing authenticity, and integrating endorsements with credible consumer insights, brands can create meaningful connections with their target audience. A well-balanced marketing approach that combines celebrity appeal with genuine consumer trust will not only enhance brand perception but also lead to long-term customer loyalty and sustained business growth.

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