
GENERATION Z VALUE CONFLICTS AND TEAM COLLABORATION IN THE F&B INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *The presence of Generation Z in the workplace is reshaping value configurations and expectations of work culture, particularly in the food and beverage (F&B) industry, which demands a fast pace and intensive coordination. This study aims to narratively investigate how the value conflicts experienced by Generation Z are interpreted, negotiated, and managed within cross-generational team collaboration in two restaurants in Denpasar, namely Resto Cak Asmo and Warung Malabar. The research employs a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry strategy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving owners, managers, and Generation Z and millennial employees. Data were analysed interactively using the Miles and Huberman model and the Gioia approach, supported by NVivo 14 software. The findings show that value conflicts mainly arise from tensions between flexibility and discipline, personal ambition and organizational loyalty demands, and direct communication styles versus more subtle hierarchical communication. These conflicts affect the work climate, team cohesion, and the continuity of collaboration, but can be managed through inclusive leadership, adjusted work rules, and cross-generational dialogue spaces. This study contributes to the understanding of generational value conflicts and team collaboration management in highly interactive service sectors.*

PENDAHULUAN

Demographic transformation in the world of work is marked by the increasing presence of Generation Z, which brings a new set of values and preferences related to career, the meaning of work, and life balance. This generation grows up in an environment saturated with digital technology, rapid social change, and wide access to information. These conditions shape a value orientation that places greater emphasis on autonomy, speed, flexibility, and self-expression, along with expectations of a work environment that is supportive and responsive to individual needs. Within organizations, this value shift interacts with work cultures long established by previous generations, which tend to stress

hierarchy, adherence to procedures, and long-term loyalty.

The encounter between generations with different value orientations creates a collaborative space that simultaneously becomes a source of tension. At the team level, differences in how discipline, loyalty, and forms of contribution are understood often manifest in differences in work rhythm, communication styles, and responses to pressure. When not managed reflectively, these differences can trigger both open and latent conflict, affect trust among members, and impact productivity and service quality. In the long run, prolonged value conflicts can create resistance to organizational change, inhibit innovation, and influence young employees' decisions to stay or leave the organization.

Previous research shows that organizational cultures that are adaptive and sensitive to generational value differences are one of the key determinants of organizational success amid changes in the workforce structure. A number of studies highlight that cross-generational value conflicts are closely related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the effectiveness of collaboration, and demand renewal in human resource management practices. On the one hand, value conflict can reduce comfort at work and trigger emotional exhaustion; on the other hand, when managed constructively it can become a trigger for innovation, learning, and improvement of work practices.

In Indonesia, the food and beverage (F&B) industry is one of the most dynamic and interaction-intensive sectors. Bali, particularly Denpasar, is one of the epicentres of F&B business growth with high mobility of young workers and intense business competition. Restaurants, cafés, and food stalls become arenas where fast work rhythms, demands for excellent service, and intensive team coordination meet Generation Z's expectations of flexibility, self-development, and life balance. This dynamic makes the F&B sector a relevant context for understanding how intergenerational value conflicts emerge and are negotiated in everyday practice.

This study focuses on two F&B organizations in Denpasar, namely Resto Cak Asmo and Warung Malabar, which present different generational configurations. At Resto Cak Asmo, Generation Z is a minority amid the dominance of millennial and more senior employees. In contrast, at Warung Malabar, Generation Z is the majority, yet still interacts closely with owners and managers who carry more traditional work values. The contrasting generational constellations in these two organizations create a fertile social field for observing how value conflicts occur, are interpreted, and are managed within team collaboration.

Most previous studies on Generation Z in the workplace use quantitative approaches, focusing on work preferences, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. While important, such approaches have not sufficiently explored employees' everyday narratives in facing cross-generational value conflicts, particularly in team contexts that require intensive coordination. This gap is what the present study seeks to bridge by using a qualitative approach and a narrative perspective to understand how value conflicts are told, interpreted, and negotiated by the actors involved.

The research problem centres on how the value conflicts experienced by Generation Z within the work culture of the F&B industry affect cross-generational team collaboration, and how actors interpret and manage these conflicts in their everyday practice. Accordingly, the study aims to investigate and analyse the narratives of value conflicts experienced by Generation Z, to unpack the accompanying interpersonal and structural dynamics, and to

identify the adaptation and value negotiation strategies that develop within teams.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on generational value conflicts, team collaboration, and narrative approaches in organizational studies, especially in service industry contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to provide input for organizations and human resource practitioners in designing strategies for managing cross-generational conflicts, more inclusive communication patterns, and work policies that blend flexibility with team cohesion. The urgency of this research lies in the need for organizations to adapt to new generational configurations without sacrificing operational stability and business sustainability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is built from the integration of value conflict theory, generational theory, team collaboration theory, and narrative approaches in qualitative research. The synthesis of these four theoretical domains provides a lens for understanding Generation Z value conflicts not merely as differences in preference, but as social phenomena formed in interaction, organizational structures, and the ways individuals narrate their work experiences.

The value conflict theory used in this study draws on Schwartz's Value Theory, which maps universal values into dimensions such as self-direction, stimulation, achievement, conformity, and tradition. The values of self-direction, stimulation, and achievement are often prominent among Generation Z, who emphasize autonomy, challenge, and personal accomplishment. Meanwhile, conformity and tradition are more embedded among generations shaped by hierarchical organizational cultures and long-term stability. When these values coexist within a single organization, conflict potentially arises when young employees' personal values collide with long-established organizational norms and expectations.

Contemporary studies indicate that cross-generational value conflicts are tied to changes in power structures, ways of understanding loyalty, and the speed of adaptation to new policies. Conflicts appear not only at the level of attitudes, but also in the ways work is carried out day-to-day, how tasks are completed, and how rules and supervision are responded to. In this sense, value conflict can be seen as a tension between the desire to maintain one's value-based identity and the demand to align with the collective values of the organization.

Generational theory, as developed by Strauss and Howe and Mannheim, provides a perspective that sees Generation Z as a social cohort shaped by specific historical experiences, technological change, and social dynamics. Generation Z has grown up in a digitally connected environment, familiar with uncertainty, and accustomed to quick access to information. This condition encourages orientations toward efficiency, flexibility, and the search for more personal meaning in work. Previous generations, by contrast, were shaped more by experiences of institutional stability, hierarchical organizational structures, and the idea of long-term loyalty to a single organization.

In practice, the literature suggests that Generation Z tends to seek rapid feedback, continuous learning opportunities, and space for self-expression. They are more open to voicing disagreement and questioning procedures they see as irrelevant to field conditions.

More senior generations often interpret such behaviour as a lack of respect for hierarchy or as indiscipline, whereas for Generation Z it is an expression of honesty and responsibility for the quality of work. Here, value conflicts emerge from differing interpretations of behaviour and the intentions behind

Team collaboration theory, particularly Hackman's work and Tuckman's model of team development, offers a framework for explaining how multigenerational teams form patterns of working together. Effective team configurations require clear goals, supportive role structures, and interaction norms that allow members to complement one another. The forming–storming–norming–performing model suggests that conflict is a natural phase in a team's development. In multigenerational teams, the storming phase is often coloured by differences in how members understand time discipline, task allocation, and communication style. If this conflict is managed reflectively, the team can move into norming and performing phases with a richer collective working style.

The narrative approach articulated by Bruner and developed by Riessman positions stories as a primary medium for understanding human experience. Narratives do not merely reflect events; they show how individuals interpret, sequence, and give meaning to those events. In the context of value conflict, employees' stories about work situations, interactions with colleagues from different generations, and decisions they make provide windows into how values are negotiated and how professional identities are shaped.

Prior research on value conflict and generations in the workplace portrays the complexity of these dynamics. Studies in various contexts show that intergenerational value differences are associated with leadership styles, flexibility of work policies, and perceptions of organizational justice. Research in service and hospitality sectors highlights the importance of organizational sensitivity to the needs of younger generations without ignoring the experience and wisdom of more senior employees. In several cases, organizations that successfully harness generational diversity treat value conflicts as sources of new ideas and innovation.

The synthesis of these theories underpins the conceptualisation that Generation Z value conflicts in team collaboration are not merely issues of interpersonal disharmony, but are rooted in clashes between structured value orientations. On one side, Generation Z brings values of autonomy, self-expression, and flexibility; on the other, organizations and older generations retain values of stability, compliance, and loyalty. The resulting conflicts influence relational dynamics in teams, task distribution, and how teams respond to operational pressures. Through a narrative approach, this study seeks to capture how these conflicts are told, interpreted, and transformed into adaptation strategies in everyday collaborative practice.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry strategy. This approach aligns with the research aim of understanding how value conflicts are experienced and interpreted by actors through their stories of everyday working life. Narrative inquiry views human experience as a series of events with plot, characters, and context, so analysis is directed at uncovering the meanings embedded in the way individuals organise and tell their experiences

The research was conducted at two restaurants operating in Denpasar, namely Resto Cak Asmo and Warung Malabar. Resto Cak Asmo is an established restaurant whose owner has a strong emotional attachment to the business and regards it as a family legacy. The work culture there has been shaped by long experience in managing a multigenerational workforce, emphasizing discipline, adherence to procedures, and consistency in service quality. In this environment, Generation Z employees are fewer than millennials and long-serving staff. Warung Malabar, by contrast, is a younger business that attracts a larger number of Generation Z workers, making the work atmosphere closer to the communication style and work rhythm of younger generations. Even so, the owner and manager still uphold values that stress orderliness, responsibility, and professionalism. The contrast in generational configuration between the two restaurants provides an opportunity to observe different dynamics of value conflict and team collaboration

The data are qualitative in nature, consisting of narratives, descriptive accounts, and subjective interpretations of informants regarding value conflicts and team collaboration. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation at the two restaurants. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow informants to narrate their experiences freely, while ensuring that key topics such as value conflicts, work culture, and team collaboration were covered. Observations were conducted to capture interaction dynamics, communication patterns, and work situations that do not always appear in interviews. Secondary data were drawn from relevant internal documents and scholarly literature used in constructing the theoretical framework.

Informants were selected purposively to cover variation in positions and generations. The composition includes restaurant owners, operational managers, and Generation Z and millennial employees working in operational roles. This composition enables the study to capture perspectives from decision makers, those who manage teams daily, and employees directly involved in service delivery who feel the immediate effects of value conflicts at the operational level. The primary consideration in informant selection was their involvement in team dynamics and direct experience with value tensions in the workplace.

Three main techniques were used for data collection: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations took place in work areas, including service and kitchen spaces, to record interaction patterns and work rhythms. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the subjective experiences of informants, with questions that developed flexibly following the flow of their stories. Documentation supported contextual understanding through photographs, notes, and other materials relevant to data interpretation.

Data credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation of sources and techniques. Source triangulation involved comparing narratives from owners, managers, and employees, while technique triangulation combined interview and observation data. Member checking was carried out by sharing preliminary findings with informants to confirm that the researcher's interpretations did not diverge from their experiences. Transferability was addressed by providing sufficiently detailed contextual descriptions so that readers can judge the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability and confirmability were strengthened by documenting the research process systematically and maintaining an audit trail of analytic decisions.

Data analysis followed an interactive model inspired by Miles and Huberman, involving

data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing as a cyclical process. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and organised using NVivo 14 software. The Gioia methodology was used to develop a structured set of categories, beginning with first-order concepts that remain close to informants' language, grouping them into second-order themes, and finally abstracting them into aggregate dimensions representing patterns of value conflict and collaboration strategies.

By combining the interactive analysis model with the Gioia approach, the study seeks to maintain closeness to informants' voices while producing clear theoretical structures. Analysis proceeded iteratively, with early findings repeatedly checked against new data and refined through re-reading transcripts and field notes. The resulting themes of value conflict and team dynamics were subsequently interpreted in dialogue with the theoretical framework.

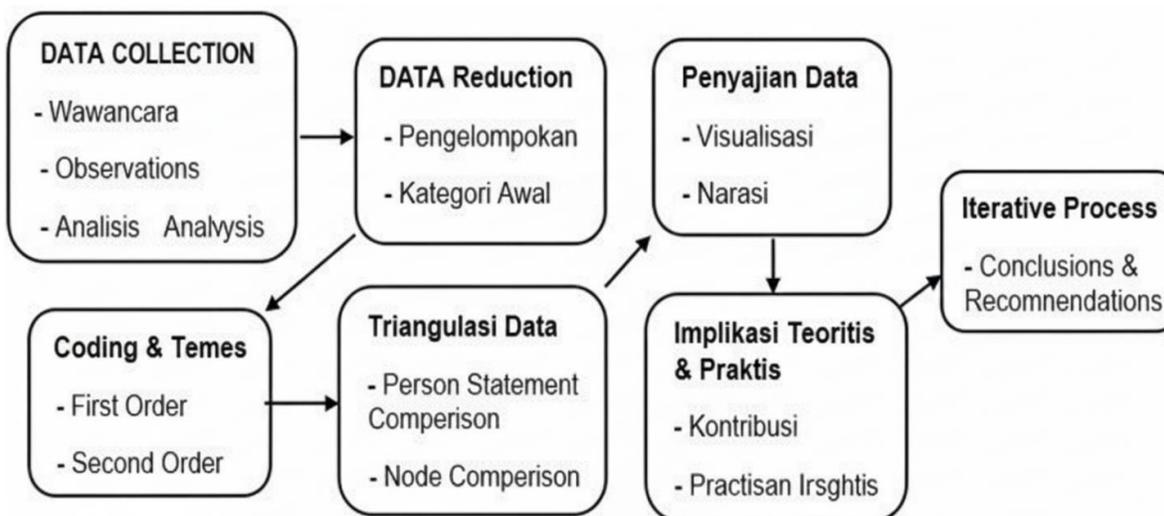


Figure 1. Qualitative Data Analysis Flowchart Using the Miles and Huberman Model and the Gioia Approach
(Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Organizational Context and Informants

Resto Cak Asmo and Warung Malabar operate in Denpasar with different business characteristics, histories, and workforce compositions. Resto Cak Asmo is an established restaurant whose owner is strongly emotionally attached to the business and sees it as a family legacy. The work culture has been formed through long experience managing a multigenerational workforce, with emphasis on discipline, adherence to procedures, and maintaining consistent service quality. In this setting, Generation Z is a minority compared with millennial and long-serving employees.

Warung Malabar presents a different dynamic. As a younger business, it attracts a larger number of Generation Z workers, so the work atmosphere is closer to younger generations' communication styles and work rhythm. Nevertheless, the owner and manager continue to uphold values that stress order, responsibility, and professionalism. Here, value conflicts

emerge not because Generation Z is isolated as a minority, but because they are the main actors in day-to-day operations while standards and expectations are set by more senior generations.

Informants' narratives reveal that both organizations are arenas where different understandings of "good work" meet. Restaurant owners highlight the importance of consistency, attention to detail, and willingness to "step in" when the situation gets busy. Generation Z employees, on the other hand, express the need for breathing space, clarity in task distribution, and straightforward communication. These differences form the basis of various value conflicts that arise in team collaboration.

Informan	Peran
Informan 1	Owner Cak Asmo Peter (Informan Pendukung)
Informan 2	Owner Warung Malabar Adyani (Informan Pendukung)
Informan 3	Manager Cak Asmo Filia (Informan Pendukung)
Informan 4	Manager Warung Malabar Iren (Informan Pendukung)
Informan 5	Karyawan Gen Z Cak Asmo Hepika (Informan Utama)
Informan 6	Karyawan Gen Z Warung Malabar Dinda (Informan Utama)
Informan 7	Karyawan Gen Milenial Cak Asmo Rina (Informan Utama)
Informan 8	Karyawan Gen Milenial Warung Malabar Dimas (Informan Utama)

Figure 2. Interview Informants Flexibility vs Discipline in Work Rhythm

The first prominent theme of value conflict concerns tensions between the flexibility sought by Generation Z and the work discipline demanded by more senior generations. Generation Z tends to understand flexibility as the ability to balance work tasks with personal needs, non-rigid working hours, and freedom to adjust how tasks are carried out as long as targets are met. Owners and managers shaped by long experience in the F&B industry, however, emphasize that operational stability requires punctuality, adherence to schedules, and commitment to being fully present during working hours.

In the narratives, this tension appears when Generation Z employees request shift changes or schedule adjustments for personal reasons, while management sees such requests as potential disruptions to smooth operations. Young employees feel that their requests are not always interpreted as responsible efforts to maintain life balance, but rather as signs of weak commitment. These differing interpretations illustrate how values of flexibility and discipline encounter and clash with each other.

The findings are consistent with value frameworks that place self-direction and stimulation as more prominent values among Generation Z, while conformity and tradition are more deeply embedded in generations accustomed to stable work systems. In teams, these tensions manifest not only in scheduling but also in task allocation, pace of work, and tolerance for improvisation. When there is no space for dialogue, conflicts easily surface as

sarcastic comments, feelings of being unappreciated, and growing emotional distance within the team. In some cases, however, when managers open a space for negotiating schedules and transparently explain operational considerations, Generation Z employees show willingness to compromise and adjust.

Personal Ambition Orientation vs Organizational Loyalty

The second theme concerns tension between Generation Z's personal ambition and the long-term loyalty expected by older generations. Generation Z tends to view work as a space for self-development and capacity building rather than merely an obligation to remain in one organization. In their narratives, young employees often associate work experience with opportunities for learning, networking, and eventually moving on to opportunities they perceive as better aligned with their values and personal goals.

Owners and managers, particularly those with strong attachment to the business, interpret loyalty as employees' willingness to stay, grow with the organization, and show commitment despite busy periods and work pressure. From this perspective, Generation Z's inclination to consider external opportunities is interpreted as a sign of weak loyalty. This tension becomes more salient when young employees leave after gaining certain experience, or openly state that their current job is a "stepping stone".

This dynamic shows how different values of career and loyalty shape relationships within teams. Narratives reveal that when loyalty is narrowly defined by length of service, the contributions of young employees in terms of ideas, energy, and innovation are less visible. Conversely, when owners and managers begin to see loyalty as meaningful contribution during the time employees are part of the team, space for dialogue opens wider. In such situations, Generation Z employees feel more comfortable expressing their ambitions while also showing commitment to giving their best while they remain in the organization.

Communication Style: Direct vs Hierarchical and Subtle

Another theme of value conflict relates to communication styles. Generation Z tends to use direct, straightforward, and often brief communication. For them, this style is seen as more efficient and honest, especially in fast-paced work environments like the F&B industry. However, for owners, managers, and more senior employees, overly direct communication can be perceived as impolite, disrespectful of hierarchy, or too "harsh" for a work culture that values etiquette.

In practice, this tension emerges when young employees provide feedback or express objections to certain work practices directly, such as regarding task distribution or ways of handling customers. Some managers interpret this as a defensive or even insolent attitude, while Generation Z employees feel they are simply being honest and solution-focused. A similar situation occurs when supervisors give instructions in ways that older generations see as "firm", but young employees experience as overly harsh or insensitive.

The narrative approach reveals that these differences rest on distinct ways of understanding respect and professionalism. For older generations, respect is shown through polite language, acknowledgement of supervisory positions, and caution in voicing disagreement. For Generation Z, respect can take the form of honesty, transparency, and the courage to speak up for the sake of improving collective work. When these perspectives are left to judge each other without mediation, conflicts tend to recur. When managers begin to facilitate mutually agreed communication rules—such as how to give feedback and voice

criticism—these tensions can transform into more productive dialogue.

Impact of Value Conflicts on Team Collaboration

Value conflicts arising around flexibility, loyalty, and communication styles have consequences for team collaboration. Narratives from both restaurants show that when value conflicts are not acknowledged or discussed openly, symptoms appear such as declining trust, increasing misunderstanding, and the formation of “small groups” based on generation. Young employees often feel misunderstood and easily labelled as “spoiled” or “unable to withstand pressure”, while older generations feel that their efforts to maintain work standards are not appreciated.

The findings also show that value conflicts are not always negative. In some situations, value differences encourage teams to reassess work practices that have long been taken for granted. Generation Z employees bring new ideas about efficiency, technology use, and ways of interacting with customers that are closer to current trends. Older generations, with their long experience, help maintain quality, consistency, and the ability to handle high pressure. When both sets of strengths are brought together in a clear work structure and guided by inclusive leadership, teams can harness the advantages of each generation.

From a team theory perspective, these dynamics illustrate that conflict can be part of a healthy developmental phase as long as mechanisms exist to manage it constructively. Owners and managers play crucial roles as mediators of values and guardians of mutually agreed “rules of the game”. At both restaurants, when owners and managers actively explain the reasons behind certain policies, listen to Generation Z’s aspirations, and are willing to make adjustments—such as in scheduling or task distribution—team collaboration tends to become more stable.

Leadership Roles and Value Negotiation Strategies

Informants’ narratives emphasise that leadership holds a key position in shaping how value conflicts are interpreted and handled. Owners who have personal closeness with employees and are willing to be directly involved in operations demonstrate that firmness can go hand in hand with openness. Managers who act as interpreters between owner expectations and young employees’ needs help ease tensions by explaining the context of policies while also communicating the team’s aspirations to the owner.

Value negotiation strategies emerging in practice include adjusting discipline standards to allow some room for flexibility, designing work schedules that consider individual needs without undermining operational continuity, and creating informal discussion spaces where employees can voice feedback. At the same time, Generation Z employees learn to understand organizational limits on flexibility, manage how they express personal ambitions so as not to be perceived as disloyal, and adapt their communication style to remain direct without ignoring the sensitivities of the work culture.

Through a narrative approach, these strategies appear not merely as formal policies, but as outcomes of ongoing dialogue, negotiation, and collective learning. Value conflicts, therefore, are not only sources of problems but also sources of reflection that push teams to continually reassess work practices and relationships. The findings affirm that organizations able to view value conflicts as opportunities to renew work practices have a greater chance of surviving and developing amid changing generational configurations in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the value conflicts experienced by Generation Z in the F&B industry in Denpasar are multi-layered phenomena involving differences in how flexibility and work discipline, personal ambition and organizational loyalty, and direct versus hierarchical communication styles are understood. These conflicts do not stand alone but are supported by different value structures between generations and by work cultures shaped by organizational history and experience.

In cross-generational team collaboration, value conflicts affect the work atmosphere, trust, and team cohesion. When conflict is ignored or interpreted merely as “individual attitude”, symptoms such as increasing emotional distance, the emergence of generational stereotypes, and intentions to leave the organization become more pronounced. When conflict is recognised as part of a process of value adaptation, organizations have the opportunity to use it as a trigger for dialogue and renewal.

Work culture, communication, and leadership play decisive roles in shaping the trajectory of value conflicts. Work cultures that accommodate Generation Z's need for flexibility without sacrificing operational stability, communication patterns that enable open exchange of views while respecting differences, and leadership that functions as a mediator of values are essential prerequisites for effective team collaboration. Owners and managers who are willing to listen, explain, and negotiate rules with young employees create spaces for building mutual trust and commitment.

Theoretically, this research enriches studies on generational value conflicts, team collaboration, and narrative approaches by showing how such conflicts are experienced and narrated in a highly interactive service context. The narrative approach reveals nuances of experience, ambivalence, and adaptation strategies that often escape more quantitative approaches. The findings underscore that understanding value conflicts requires attention to everyday stories constructed by employees and leaders as they manage collaborative work.

Practically, the study offers several implications. Organizations in the F&B sector need to develop work policies that are more responsive to generational configurations, including scheduling, communication patterns, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Training for managers and team leaders on generational sensitivity and value conflict mediation skills is important for building inclusive teams. In addition, organizations need to create regular dialogue spaces that allow employees to share experiences and aspirations without fear of being stigmatised as disloyal.

The study is limited by the number and context of research sites, which focus on two restaurants in Denpasar. Future research could extend the context to other service sectors, use mixed methods to combine narrative depth with broader coverage, or focus on other generational dynamics in the workplace. Nevertheless, the findings provide a rich picture of how Generation Z value conflicts and team collaboration are interrelated and can be managed constructively.

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