

ONBOARD LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DECK CADETS: MOMENTS OF WORK AND SURVIVAL

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Abstract. Seafaring is a profession that is very risky but worth emulating. For an aspiring seafarer, this study could give lessons for them to learn and ideally unlock what is to be a seafarer. Thus, this qualitative study specifically narratology, aimed to determine the onboard lived experiences of 12 deck cadets by elaborating their happy, sad, angry, embarrassing, fearful, stressful, disgusting, and other moments onboard the ship. Results revealed that the deck cadets experiences were so rich depicting their real life at sea.

Key words: onboard lived experiences; deck cadets; moments; work; survival

1. Introduction

Deck cadets are responsible for navigating the ship safely, maintaining the equipment and condition of the ship through cleaning and painting, cargo loading and unloading, holding duty on the bridge, joining in surveys and inspection (4, 9), participate in emergency training and drills (7) and many others as requested by their officers onboard. Deck cadets' life is a time for learning and at the same time gaining practical experience. However, danger lurks anytime so deck cadets must be vigilant and knowledgeable of the task at hand all the time (5).

Aside from the common duties experienced by deck cadets onboard, they also experienced something personal like homesickness. Based from their study, the other experiences of deck cadets include experiencing bad weather conditions, working for long hours, communicating with their families through text, calls, chat and emails, and developing camaraderie with their colleagues (6).

⁴ Dinsmore, B. (2011). Cadet Shipping Experience on the Great Lakes.

⁹ The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin. (2009). The Cadet Training Experience. Issue No. 20. ISSN: 1747-5015.

⁷ Szczesniak, A. A. (2013). Importance of the onboard crew trainings and drills for the improvement of the vessels' safety.

⁵ From the Bridge. (2014). The Newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada.

⁶ Magramo, M. M. and Gellada, L. D. (2013). Lived experiences of deck cadets onboard. *JBLFMU Research Review*, 23.

In this research, aspiring seafarers will have the idea of what will be their life situations onboard the ship. Thus, this study aimed to determine the lived experiences onboard of deck cadets who had their apprenticeship during the school-year 2013-2014. Specifically, it aimed to determine various moments of their lives most especially in their work and survival at same time.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study utilized the narrative type of qualitative research design. Narrative research or narratology is retelling of the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (2).

2.2. Respondents

Twelve (12) deck cadets were chosen in this study through purposive sampling following Creswell (2007) who had their apprenticeship onboard for SY: 2013-2014.

2.3. Instrument

The interview schedule contained eight open-ended questions pertaining to their moments they spent onboard such as happy, sad, angry, embarrassing, fearful, stressful, disgusting, and other moments.

2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Themes were generated for each moment or situation. The findings were referred to the respondents for validity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Happy Moments Onboard

Several people know the story of Poseidon as the God of the Sea of the Greek Mythology. But behind this story are the more interesting ones rooted on the real life.

Ships are more than just steel-hulled vessels. Anchored on its edges are plenty of encounters of seafarers during the voyage especially the deck cadets during their first sea experience. When asked, we have a lot of first times to tell.

Knowing their assigned vessels is a preliminary step to the fulfillment of their dreams. Deck cadets of the 2-1-1 scheme began narrating their happy moments after setting their feet on their

² Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches*. 2nd ed. USA: Sage Publications, Inc.

respective vessels.

Joining their assigned vessels brought happiness to many deck cadets. Cadet 1 said, *I felt a mixture of happiness and excitement when I was boarding the vessel. I was thinking that it was the start of my dreams and was looking forward for the next days. It was like saying "This is it!" for me.* Cadet 3, said *when I joined my assigned vessel, I was so happy because it is the start of my career as a seafarer.* Cadet 6 said, *when I first saw Buenos Aires Express, the assigned vessel to me, I felt very happy but anxious at the same time as I was about to embark the said vessel. I was very happy because this will be the start of my dreams, to become a competent officer or even a captain someday. I have really no idea, or just a small idea on the work onboard. I only knew the basic things, the basic works or just the basics. That's why I really worked hard onboard. Everytime I got a job from anyone, especially from my senior officers, I really did my best. And everytime I got a compliment or appreciation from us about the quality of my work and my attitude with them, I really felt happiness and contentment. I get inspired to work even better.* Cadet 11 said, *I was so happy that I was given the chance to see these for free. When I first stepped on the vessel, I greeted every crew member gladly. I know that I will get along with us for a long time.* Next source of their happiness is going ashore to interact with other people and visit some places. Cadet 1 said, *it feels like heaven for me being on another country, eating, shopping, and just enjoying even for a short period of time. It was like really priceless being on another country and seeing the beautiful places.* Cadet 2 said, *I had a lot of happy and joyful memories during my cadetship. I was very delighted every time I set my foot on different countries and buy some souvenir items for my family and friends. I always take pictures of beautiful sceneries, historical places, world-known landmarks and skyscrapers if I had a chance. We also had the opportunity to visit the Seaman's Club and mingle with fellow Filipinos. According to him, it's not every day that I will wake-up with new environment that's why I value every country to where I set my footprints.* Cadet 3 said, *when I joined my assigned vessel, I was so happy because it is the start of my career as a seafarer. At the age of 20, I've been to several countries. Meeting other people and being friends with us made me happy.* Cadet 6 said, *my happiest moment happened when I was given my first shore leave onboard. Since we have a long voyage, it takes a long time for us to get into land. It was in Mexico together with my Second Officer and an Able Bodied Seaman. That day, I felt so special because in the first place, I still can't believe that I could get into this place and to meet its people, to know their culture, way of living, their attitude, cuisines and everything. It was only my dream on my childhood days. I feel blessed because at this age, I have travelled some places that others are dreaming of.* Cadet 7 said *their time onboard a vessel is not just spent on working. We also got some chances to go ashore during our vacant hours and visit places that we've just seen in movies, magazines, and televisions. We've been in Buenos Aires cathedral where Pope Francis was*

assigned before he became a Pope. We also had a very rare chance to visit the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Corcovado, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These places are really amazing for me. I was very glad that I've been there. Cadet 9 said, my happy moment was everytime I got to different places that I have not gone through, meet new people and friends, and learn things that I will be doing in the near future. Cadet 10 said, going ashore also, as what I said, is the time of happy moments. You will be able to roam in different countries, see beautiful places and enjoy shopping on malls. This will be your rest time to relieve your stress. Cadet 11 said, upon the arrival of the ship to port, I was excited to go for a shore leave after the gangway duty. The reason for a shore leave is likely to buy new things like gadgets, dress, foods, and many others. But in my case, I went out to find for a free wifi or internet mostly in coffee shops, malls and restaurants. If possible, I also bought a calling card to keep in touch with my family and loved ones. There is no other means of making me happy other than knowing that they are happy and in good hands.

They also felt happy when they disembarked their vessel finishing their contract and knowing that they will be home again. Cadet 1 said, *I was happy when I reached 12 months of being onboard. I was really happy since one of my fears/problems was done because if I can't finish my 12 months, I won't be able to take the board exam so staying onboard for 12 months really made me happy. I was really happy when I received my flight details. The joy or happiness I felt was priceless. It's like everything was over. No more worries of work, etc. After more than 12 months of being away from my country and family, I was going home finally. I think it was the best part, the happiest moment of all.* Cadet 2 said, *that I felt grateful when I finished my contract. After all the hardships, perspiration and dedication, finally, I'll be home for my family.* Cadet 3 said, *another thing that made me happy is having a shore leave at different places.* Cadet 7 said, *what really gave the higher degree of happiness is when I was about to leave the vessel and go home, there's no place like home for me, with my loved ones.*

Another source of their happiness is from their fellow crew onboard. Cadet 2 said, *I was also gratified when my master and officers taught me a lot of knowledgeable things. I saw their willingness to help me become an officer. It's a music to my ear everytime I hear their compliments because of my dedication and perseverance towards my chosen path. I was also satisfied when I accomplish my tasks properly. It feels like heaven for me when you've done something right for the good of the vessel and the crew.* Cadet 4 said, *just having a talk with my third officer can be considered my happy moments. I was very close to him and he always gives me food and drinks.* Cadet 5 said, *my happy moments are usually generated by crewmates that became close to me during my year-long apprenticeship. Despite the tiresome work, we were still able to have some time playing table tennis at the ship's gym. Because of this, we were able to bond and share stories about our lives back when we were younger, especially for those who were older and had so much*

to tell. We also enjoyed and shared laughter during parties and late night movies after work. Cadet 8 said all the crew onboard are good to me and treat me like their son or younger brother. And I was lucky and happy for that because we are just like a big happy family onboard. We care for each other, we help each other if one has a problem, we do that because no one can help us but also one of us. I was really happy because I found new friends, brothers and fathers onboard.

Work onboard causes stress and fatigue but to prevent this, some vessels conduct leisure activities and had some celebrations onboard. Cadet 2 said, *to avoid stress and minimize work pressure, we had a Barbeque Party at least once a month and a karaoke or movie time during Saturday nights. We also celebrated Christmas Eve and New Year with a bang. I can still remember the time when the officers and the crew celebrated my 19th birthday. I was the happiest person for me during that night. Cadet 3 said, that celebrating Christmas and my birthday during New Year are another joyful moments onboard. It was my first time to celebrate those events away from my family. My captain gave me a gift during that time. Cadet 4 said, watching animation and movies together with my fellow cadet, having a Saturday night (with a lot of foods and drinks), playing computer games and every finish of cleaning can be considered as my happy moments onboard. Cadet 8 said, one of my happiest moments is when I celebrated my 21st birthday onboard. It was my first time to be far away from my family and celebrated my birthday without them. But my birthday onboard was unexpected and I was really surprised. We have no work that time, there were so many foods and drinks. We celebrated it until midnight. And I will never forget it. Cadet 9 said, that all are happy every barbeque party because it is the time for enjoyment. There are a lot of foods, drinks, games and sing along over the video. This is the way of enjoying onboard after the stressful day and being away from your family. Cadet 10 said, for me, happy moment is when we're going to celebrate the Saturday nights or barbeque party. There are so many foods prepared and drinks. There's no duty during this day because Saturday night is the night of happiness and enjoyment for all the crew members. Cadet 11 said, another happy moment of me was when I celebrated my birthday onboard a vessel while we were underway. It was December 25, 2013. I thought that everybody missed my birthday since it was joined with Christmas day. But I was shocked when our captain brought and surprised me with a big cake with candles and my name on the top. Then everybody sang the birthday song. This was one of the happiest moments that happened in my entire life. Cadet 12 said that, my happy moments are those times that we always have a Saturday night barbeque party especially during the time when we are at anchorage in Brazil. We enjoyed fishing while grilling fish and meat and drinking beers. Due to the fact that we have endured hard work for the week but still this is the time to refresh and relax.*

Earning their first wage also made them happy. Cadet 3 said that, *after a month of hardwork, I received my first wage. Earning money on my own was really satisfying.* Cadet 7 said,

there is also one thing that made me happy and also the rest of the crew—money. Everytime the captain announces for cash advance after we've signed our wage account or papers, you can really see the smile in everyone's faces.

Being away from their family causes homesickness. Therefore, having a simple communication with their love ones creates happiness for them. Cadet 5 said *I can be happy all-day long but I was happier with my girlfriend despite the distance we had. I was able to communicate with her through Globe Rydex and Amos Connect (communication devices onboard ship). A day without a message from her would make me worry and each message from her gives me a rush. My saturated mind and body would be awakened by simple "I love you" or "I miss you"; things and words that we take for granted when we live normal lives onboard. Her love for me always makes me happy but what makes me happy the most is the yearning for the day I will go home and feel the warmth of her love.* Cadet 7 said that *another thing that made us happy was internet. Everytime we had a chance to buy an internet card or catch a free wifi, we really feel close to our family through calling and exchanging messages with them. Other happy moments of mine, when we gone shore leaves, are those during the time we shop, tour, mingle with people on the country where we are, and sometimes go to bars.*

3.2. Sad Moments Onboard

When asked, deck cadets can't be stopped telling their happy moments onboard. They have plenty of it on their memories. But waves on seas aren't calm all the time. Seafarers often, if not all the time, experience the roughness of the seas. Deck cadets learn the job of the sailor before they learn the job of the deck officer (8).

Aside from the physically challenging jobs onboard, deck cadets experience different emotional tests during their cadetship training. Adapting to the new environment onboard isn't that easy, after all.

One of the major problems encountered onboard a ship by the deck cadets is the sadness brought about by homesickness. Cadet 1 said that, *there were a lot of things that linger in my mind. I remembered the happy memories with my family, bonding moments with my friends and my life in the future. I cried when I encounter serious problems that need advice from my loved ones. Homesickness is somehow one of the worst problems of the seafarers. That's why I didn't miss any chance to talk to them through messages and social media every time we are in port.* Cadet 4 said, *in my two months of experience onboard, I have a certain experience that put tears in my eyes. It's been 3 months when I left my family, we arrived in Mina, UAE for discharging coal. Every arrival in ports, we are so busy that everyone was so tired after finishing all the necessary works to start*

⁸ Smith, G. (2012). *The merchant navy careers handbook*. Beaufort Offshore Projects. UK: Beaufort Projects.

the discharging. Discharging takes some days to finish. So, mostly of the crew are buying calling cards and internet cards to contact their family. As a cadet, I have less money so I can only buy limited cards. While I was in a duty in the gangway, a businessman board our vessel selling some calling cards and I bought one to make a call to my family after my duty. When I made a call to my mother, at start we had a great conversation then she opened a topic about my grandmother who passed away last two weeks. Suddenly, tears fell into my eyes. I cried a lot until my call has ended. I have no more calling cards to make a call but my mother texted me to lessen the pain that I felt. Cadet 6 said, there are some times that I missed my family and other special persons in my life. That time I preferred to be alone and to start thinking about the memories we had when I was still here in the Philippines. That serves as my strength and courage in my day to day life onboard knowing how happy and proud they are about me. Cadet 8 said I can still remember the night that I cried because I remembered my family. Maybe I was just homesick that time and not really got into it that I was far away from my family. Especially to my grandfather whom I promised that I will really make my dream come true and give my family a better life during his dying moment. This is the only sad moment onboard that I can still remember because I had a happy cadetship and all my crew members are good to me. Cadet 9 said, my sad moment onboard is when I miss my family, loved ones and my friends. I also felt sadness every time when there is shuffling of crew because my friends onboard who had helped me a lot will be leaving and going home. Cadet 10 said, I felt sadness every time I am alone on the cabin and I suddenly remember the things I always do at land and the celebrations on land like Christmas and New Year. Everybody in the land is celebrating while in my situation, I have to work because my captain told to do so.

Failures to do some tasks and to reach the expectations of some seniors also cause sadness to some deck cadets. Cadet 1 said, *I was saddened when I failed to impress my chief officer. He assigned me to be the team leader of a squad during the Fire Drill but I didn't meet his expectations. He challenged me to become the next leader once again on the next Fire Drill. I felt so discouraged after hearing his comments but I accepted the challenge. I consulted the training manual and sought guidance from my third and second officer on what to do during emergency. After the next drill, my Chief Officer praised me for a job well done and told me to take my job more seriously. Cadet 7 said, I also got sad whenever my senior officers scolded or got mad at me and also whenever they were not pleased or satisfied with my work.*

Some moments of sadness were also caused by some expectations of deck cadets themselves. Cadet 2 narrated, *I was told that before our departure, we were told that there will be a big chance that we would transfer to another vessel after six months. But days before six months onboard, we were informed that there will be no transferring of cadets to another vessel. Upon hearing this, I really felt sad since I was expecting that I could be seeing my family before*

transferring to another vessel. But things don't always go your way. We just need to adjust to different kinds of situations. Another was when we had our first crew change. The persons who were signing off were my close friends or colleagues. They treated me as a family member or like a brother. They were also backing me up or helping me up if I have difficulties. They were even doing the job orders requested to me because they don't want me to get tired that much. So when they disembarked, I felt sad and I almost cried. Cadet 7 said that the next crew change after I embarked was also one of the sad moments I experienced. I felt sad because the people I have worked with whom I was able to get along with were about to sign off and new people will join which means I need to adjust again to the new crew. But despite all of these sadness that I experienced, I didn't let my emotions to distract me, these are just part of our lives, we just need to deal with them and be motivated and learned from them also for us to be better.

For some, their embarkation on their vessel caused sadness to them. Cadet 3 said that my sad moment was when the day has come for me to go onboard and my parents are with me at the airport saying goodbye. It was my first time to be away from them for so long. During my first month onboard, I also felt so sad. Staying onboard for one year for the first time was very difficult. It took almost a month for me to adjust. During the time, I always felt homesickness which is one of my major enemies during my training. Cadet 7 said, I felt sadness when I was about to embark the vessel, I didn't just felt happiness but also sadness. It was sad because for the first time I will be away from my home, from my family and loved ones for more or less 12 months.

Negative news from their families and personal problems on land also caused sadness for some deck cadets. Cadet 3 said, I experience sadness when it was already at the middle of my contract onboard when I received information from my mother that my grandfather already died which made me eager to go home. Lastly, when my contract was about to end, I received another information that my aunt where I was staying in Iloilo City had a cancer. Cadet 6 said that, receiving a message that one of our company mate, batchmate and a friend have died onboard marks as one of my saddest moment. Cadet 11 said that, distance, no communication for days and months made my life boring and sad. It was really true, a battle between homesickness versus dollar. When I was onboard a ship, the saddest moment in my life is quite personal but I can assure to tell it. Two months and 28 days after I embarked, I got news or a message. My heart went deeply in pain when my girlfriend finally chose to break-up with me because of my work and thousand distances that kept me far away. I was wounded that I even tried to commit suicide. I was depressed and emotionally unstable. I did cry, shout to at least to ease the pain. But every time I was alone in my cabin, the memories come back. I was sad that even my crewmates noticed, even my work was affected. What they did was to cheer me up, guide me and teach me to recover. Well, life was very unpredictable but I was somewhat happy that I did not choose to end my life since I have still my

family left who love and support me. Cadet 12 said, my sad moments are those times when I remember my family at home, my friends, and my loved ones. I was sad for the reason that I really miss the things or events we've always done. Those moments sometimes mesmerized me and made me cry. This is due to the reason that I think I was alone and have no hands to hold on or walls to lean on. But in behalf of that situation, I still push myself to think positively that all these sacrifices are for them and because this is my chosen profession that I must continue to live on.

They may have experienced being on the trough of the waves where distance slowly kills them. They have stated different reasons why they have managed to oppose the wrath of the sea. But they have survived after all.

3.3. Angry Moments Onboard

A ship is a compilation of various races. Different characteristics of different people arise onboard. In order for one to survive, he must adapt on the environment where he is.

But life onboard is not as effortless as many think. A little drop of patience may not be enough to avoid conflicts. One must have sufficient knowledge and experience in handling these different types of persons.

Working on ship is not only tough physically but mentally as well. Dealing continuously with conflicting opinions, racing nerves, and altering egos, a mariner fortunately or unfortunately falls prey to a system, wherein molding according to a situation becomes imperative (3).

One of the reasons that deck cadets onboard get angry is because of the blame from the fault of others that are thrown to them. Cadet 1 said that, *my angry moment was when I took the blame of someone's fault. They thought I lost one of the "walkie-talkies" because I was responsible for recharging it when in fact, I saw the "walkie-talkie" fell down to the ocean when the OS checked the port side of the ship if there was still water that flows overboard.* Cadet 2 told that, *there was an instance when the keyboard on the ship's office wasn't functioning because water was spilled on it and I was the first one to see it. I reported it to the duty officer because I was making fire and safety rounds. I got angry because he said that maybe I was the one who spilled the water on the keyboard. He said that I was the suspect since no one was there that made me angry. I was just doing my duty yet I was the one suspected for the things I haven't done. It really pissed me off.*

Another inevitable thing that can be observed onboard is seniority. Some even came to a point that they already abuse seniority. Cadet 1 narrated that, *some of the ratings kept on asking favors from me for their personal needs. They want me to bring their slop chests to their cabin, cook their barbeques during parties, wash their dirty cover-all and bring their baggage if they had a chance to shop in the malls. I just don't report it to my senior officers to avoid conflicts and*

³Dileepan, V. (2011). The Ugly Side of Life on Ship – True Story.

misunderstanding. I know that I am the youngest. Cadet 3 said that, I was angry to one of my officers because he was abusive when it comes to work. I knew that I was just a cadet so all the things that they order me is part of my training. But in my case, he is always giving his entire job to me. There was a case that during their watch (0000H-0400H), he told me to keep the watch by myself because he will sleep due to a tiring maneuvering. It made my blood boil because all of us were also tired and besides, it is not right to leave the watch to ratings. Other thing is that my Chief Officer told me that I should rest even Second Officer or third Officer called me to do a cargo watch, he told me to say to them that he ordered me not to go to watch because it is my rest period. But my officer insisted that I should go to watch because I am a part of the cargo operation. Instead of arguing to him, I just go and think that it was part of my training. The following day, I told the Chief Officer and the Captain about what happened. They were called and scolded. Cadet 6 said that, it was in Feelung, Taiwan when I served as a Messman (temporary). It was also a salary day when their Chief Cook and Chief Engineer had their shore leave. Since I was a Messman, I was assigned to prepare the table of the officers and to serve them. I thought that Chief Engineer and Chief Cook will have their dinner outside so I don't served foods for Chief Engineer. It was around 1200H when I am preparing to sleep when Chief Cook knocked on my cabin. I was surprised that he was very angry. He scolded me, giving some trash talks on me reminding what I have done. I knew that it was my own fault but the stories he was talking were getting exaggerated. He wanted me to follow all his orders. I know that he has right but it was too much. He was drunk. He was unconscious. I want to talk to him but he's trying to make unnecessary actions. Our conversation reached until 2300H. I was very angry to him but I couldn't let it out. My tears fell because of that anger. And that made my angriest moment onboard. Cadet 7 said that, I really got angry onboard against my Chief Officer but I just kept it in me and then later shared it to the crew members whom I was closed with. We went ashore in Vera Cruz, Mexico and that was the first time I went ashore one month after I joined the vessel. We went ashore together with my Third Officer who was the one who invite me to go with him, the Captain, Engine Cadet, Second Engineer and Chief Engineer. We drank in a bar and came back to the vessel drank and very late for our duty (around four hours late). Chief Officer got very angry at me and insisted that I should still have my duty and asked the reason why I came back late. I explained to him that I don't have choice because the rest of the officers are still drinking and I don't know how to come back to the port since we went to a bar far away from the port. But still he insisted that I should have gone back. On the next day, he gave me plenty of job orders that are pretty hard and stressful. Despite of this, I just thought positively and learned with this experience.

The next thing that most get angry with is the attitude of their fellow crew onboard. Cadet 2 said, my angry moment happened when my officer scolded me like hell. He said things that were

painful and personal because I made a simple mistake in following his orders. At that moment, I was really angry. I felt like I wanted to answer back and punch him because of the things he said that were unnecessary. But I just controlled my emotions and apologized. Cadet 4 said that, I felt angry when our Boatswain forced me to drink. I seldom drink, when I am not yet onboard, I don't drink so I'm not used to it. I drank one glass and proceeded to my cabin to have some rest. It's not been an hour when someone knocked my door, when I opened it, it's my Boatswain forcing me again to drink but I still don't listened to him because he was drunk already. I closed the door and went to sleep. Cadet 5 said that, in my first and second six-month contracts, it was inevitable that I would not have utmost 1 crew member that I would have a problem dealing with. You got angry on the way they treat and think of you as an animal onboard a vessel. You just have to ignore them to be able to survive. One infamous Chief Officer was physically abusive during my first contract. "Karma" was fast and there is nothing sweeter than seeing them suffer. Cadet 8 said that, my angry moment was maybe when I was just a week onboard. Because of the Able Bodied Seaman who always tells me that I am always wrong and he said that, "You're just new here and then you act you already knew everything" which was I never did. Because I was just new, I always ask before doing that job. He (AB) also spoke bad things about me to the Chief Officer. But the Chief Officer didn't trust him. He talked to me that I'll just do my duties and not to mind the AB. After it, the AB apologized and I accepted it. Then we became friends and I treated him already just like an eldest brother.

Another cause of anger onboard is the unfair division of work. Cadet 9 said, *my angry moment is with some stevedores or some checkers every time we are on port. We are onboard to help with the cargo operation but some of them are hard-headed. If you want something to be fixed since what they're doing was wrong, they will not follow you and will even get angry. I requested them in a diplomatic way but if they don't follow, I threatened them that I will tell it to the Chief Mate or the Captain so that they will not be paid. Cadet 12 said, my angry moments are those times when my reliever on port-watch duty did not come back on time when he applied for shore leave that made me stand as gangway watch for eight hours straight or even more because I was not a type of person who always go on night trips. For me, once or twice is okay but when it was done to me repeatedly, I felt very angry that's why sometimes, if I didn't intentionally want to go out, I did to avoid that situation.*

Time management and lots of work are also the root cause of anger onboard. Cadet 10 said that *my angry moment was when I have to do so many orders in a hurry. For example, your officer ordered you to do a certain job then suddenly he will going to order you again another job even the first order was not yet finished. Then the Boatswain accidentally saw you and asked you to do something for a limited time. He will be going to scold you even you did everything just to finish*

what he asked you. Cadet 11 said that, *it is normal onboard a ship to get angry, mostly because of so many tasks to do. As a deck cadet, I was obliged to follow whatever task that my senior officer ordered me to do so even if I have to extend extra time in working. Actually, the rest hour period that was given to us, seafarers, was not been followed onboard. This made me sick so I complained why we, as cadets, will have to retain one to two hours in daily routine job without having a duty on the bridge. It was stated on our company policy that we, cadets, are onboard for learning to become a future officer and not a future rating. It has come to a point when I fought back with our Captain complaining about the rest hour period. During our voyage to Geelong, Australia, after discharging cement, we have hold cleaning operation. We worked 24 hours for three days straight. We had our meals inside cargo hold. We took a nap for one to two hours then go back for work. It was really hard that I wanted to cry but have no intention to complain not until when our Captain shouted, scolded and threatened me that my salary will be deducted since I fell asleep for six hours while everyone was still working. That time, I answered that it is better that my salary will be deducted than to put my life at risk.*

These are some of the negative encounters deck cadets have experienced onboard. They may be called as “newbies” during their cadetship training, but the way they dealt with these are worth emulating.

3.4. Embarrassing Moments Onboard

Our curiosity has led us to the peak of our actions. Since deck cadets are considered novice of the works and things onboard, try tried several means to learn at the most possible early time. But sometimes, their curiosity results to an embarrassment.

The attitude of some crew onboard results to embarrassment of deck cadets. Cadet 1 said, *my embarrassing moment was when everybody was enjoying the barbeque party, our Chief Engineer joined us and drank a lot of beers. We sang merrily and laughed so hard but the atmosphere suddenly changed. He requested me to stay beside him, which I followed. I was shocked when he hit my head so badly with his knuckles. He did it again but this time, he requested the Wiper to provide me a helmet on my head. He kept knocking my head in front of the officers and crew without a valid reason. What I did is to ask permission that I had to go to sleep which they permitted. As I walk through the stairs going to my cabin, I cried hard and loud because I couldn't accept what the Chief Engineer did to me. I couldn't stop myself from voicing out my hurt feelings which made the crew rush to where I was. I told them that I didn't deserve what he did to me and it's better for me to go home. Our Captain reported the incident to our company and our crewing manager told me to stay calm and report to the Master if the situation happened again. I was traumatized and my officers were monitoring my actions. It took time for me to recover from that*

embarrassment. Our Chief Engineer apologized to me and he was given a warning. Cadet 6 said that my embarrassing moment was when my crewmates kept on underestimating me.

One's mistakes also cause embarrassment. Cadet 2 said, I felt embarrassed when my officer asked me questions that I really don't know the answers because I have not been taught of that before. I was really embarrassed since I can't answer his questions. He even shared what happened to the other officers and even to the captain. And it made me more embarrassed. So, I started studying harder by reading books and publications, so that the next time I can answer the questions he will give to me. Cadet 3 said, my embarrassing moment was when one of my officers asked me about something and I can't answer his questions because I forgot the answer. What made it more embarrassing is that he already asked me about that question few days ago and yet I already forgot the answer. Cadet 4 said, my embarrassment happened after our dinner, able bodied seaman and ordinary seaman went to my cabin to check me or do whatever comes to their mind. One night, they went to my cabin, as they enter they said my cabin was so messed and smells bad. I was so ashamed of it. Cadet 8 said, my embarrassing moment was when my boatswain told me to wash the lifeboat. After washing the lifeboat, the Boatswain laughed at me because he meant to wash the inside part of the lifeboat and not the outside part. I also laughed at myself and I don't know what to do. Cadet 9 said, my embarrassing moment was when I cut my hair by myself. Since I have no crewmate who knows how to cut my hair, I did it myself. Since it was my first time, it resulted to a funny hairstyle. My crewmates always laugh at me when they see it. Cadet 11 said, that my awkward moment was when it was summer in Southern Hemisphere when our vessel made a way towards Portland, Australia. Onboard a ship, we have this weekly inspection of cabin. Captain and Chief Engineer make sure that the crews clean their cabins as a part of the QHSE policy. It was done every Saturday with no given time. They surprised everyone on their cabin. But in my case, I was totally embarrassed since they caught me inside my cabin wearing underwear. Who's not going to be shocked and embarrassed when the two big bosses found you wearing underwear only. Well, the story is that, it was really hot inside my cabin since the air conditioning system was not working properly. I already told it to the electrician but unluckily, he doesn't have time to fix it. So that time I decided to wear only an underwear while working for something when suddenly my cabin's door opened and both of them were shocked too. Captain and other senior officers had a master key to open all cabins and rooms inside accommodation. Cadet 12 said, my embarrassing moment was when I reported late in my work because of tiredness in last day's work. I got slept instead of reporting 12 noon, I reported at 1:30 PM. But good thing, our Boatswain is understandable therefore nothing to worry.

They may have experienced a lot of embarrassment onboard and will still experience a lot of it, but the most important thing is, we have learned because of their curiosity, after all.

3.5. Fearful Moments Onboard

Being a beginner and having expectations for a certain field often results to fear. Cadet 1 said, *that my fearful moment was the time that I embarked the vessel. A lot of things emblazoned in my mind. I didn't know where to start. The first time I went to the bridge was a challenge. They asked me to plot a ship's position in the chart but I failed to perform it properly. I was afraid that I couldn't meet their expectations. Next is being the officer of the watch was one of my most challenging task. I was responsible to monitor the ship's movement and other navigational equipment under the watchful eye of the Captain. I was afraid that I cannot impress him but according to him, I did a great job. In addition, my experience as helmsman in the river of Rotterdam was also one of my fearful moments. I must maneuver our vessel to the port safely passing through the narrow channel with heavy traffic density.* Cadet 6 said, *my fearful moment was when I was signing-on, I have no idea of what is life onboard, on how to survive on my 12 months contract. And I don't have an idea of what kind of person I will be with. In addition, when it is my first time to steer a ship with a pilot berthing on China was also my fearful moment. China has so many fishing vessels especially on coastal areas. First, I don't know what to do, it seems that all I have learned in steering have gone. I felt so nervous, that I could turn back and give it to the Able Bodied Seaman. After all it was also a success.* Cadet 7 said, *my first fearful moment was when I was about to embark the vessel. I was very anxious that I don't have any idea on what to do onboard. Also, one fearful moment that I had encountered was when we were conducting a life boat drill and we will embark the lifeboat that was already lowered on the water and will go there through Jacob's ladder that was lowered from the deck with the height of around more or less 20m. My legs were shaking when I was about to go down on the ladder.* Cadet 10 said, *my fearful moment was when you committed mistake then the Captain and Chief mate were there observing you. Then you were to be scolded.*

Inevitable dangers onboard cause fear for deck cadets as well. Cadet 1 said, *my other fearful moment was a close quarter situation between our vessel and a tanker which was overtaking us. We had a CPA of 0.02 nmi five minutes in Malacca Strait. Good thing that our Captain maneuvered our vessel away from the other vessel.* Cadet 2 said, *my fearful moment was a time when I first experienced bad weather with big waves and swells, and our ship was rolling up to 15°. At that moment, I was afraid since it was my first time experiencing those things. I was even thinking of what will happen if our ship capsizes etc. I even prepared my lifejacket beside me when I was asleep. But after sometime, I got used to it.* Cadet 3 said, *my fearful experience was during the month of November, when we are bound to Vera Cruz, Mexico. While enroute, we encountered a strong storm. Even our vessel was big, it rolled so much when the waves hit the hull. I was very afraid of it because our vessel is already 10 years old and might sink during that time. Fortunately,*

we survived during the storm and arrived at our destination safe and strong. Cadet 4 said that, I experienced my fearful moment when our ship was at anchor along the Indian Territory waiting to be alongside. In that day, we are having a break time or coffee time at the crew mess. Then the Boatswain went to the ship's office to check emails for him while drinking his coffee, he checked our works in the window when he saw oil flowing from the ventilator of our oil tank. The Boatswain acted immediately, called the engine room and the bridge. We immediately contained the spill and fortunately no oil flowed into the sea. I was thinking that if the oil will leaked into the sea, I will be detained by the Indian Authorities. That is one of my fearful moments onboard that I will never forget. Cadet 7 said that, I experienced fear when we arrived on Buenos Aires Port, during docking (mooring operation), our first spring line snapped because of too much tension, luckily it projected upwards and away from us but if it projected inward, towards us, somebody may be injured or killed with that incident. Cadet 8 said that, I felt terror when we were going to collide with a floating pipe line. I was very nervous that night and I was thinking that maybe we will die. But the pilot came by the helicopter and very angry, when the pilot was at the bridge while opening the door he shouted hard port. Then we did not collided in the floating pipeline. The pilot asked the captain why it happened, the captain explained that he didn't know that there was a floating pipeline. The pilot said that in 5 seconds that he was late we already collided at the pipeline and no one can survive. Thank God that it didn't happen. Cadet 9 said, my fearful moment was when I was doing a bridge watch keeping duties in the waters of China. It was a very dense traffic lane because there were so many fishing boats and to make the matter worse, it was a reduced visibility because of the fog. I felt my heart beating fast every time that these things happen because of the responsibility to keep clear the vessel from colliding with us and you were in charge of the lives of your fellow crew. Thanks God that I have finished my duties without dangerous things that occurred. Cadet 10 said, my fearful moments when the weather wasn't in good condition and the ship was pounding and rolling heavily with listing of about 20 degrees that it seems the ship will going to capsize. Cadet 11 said, my fearful moment when I thought at first ships that rapidly roll, sway and pound during bad weather in movies were not real. But in my case, I have witnessed what I called the "greatest nightmare" of my life. We left Portland, Oregon, USA fully loaded with logs on both cargo holds and weather deck with a free board of approximately 4 meters. Vessel is in great circle sailing traversing from North Pacific passing through Unimak Pass when we encountered a terrible situation. Aleutian Island and waters were known as the birthplace of super typhoon. Lucky for us to face two strong low pressure of both side of the vessel. Wind force is 9-10 with waves ranging from 7-8 meters high. Some fixed stanchion broke and some collapsed but thanks we have firm lashings to support. All materials that we have on deck were washed out and most of all, we were all wide awake since the inclination was more than 30 degrees on both sides

(rolling period). All of us are wearing our lifejackets and kept our documents. In my case, I was stationed on bridge helping the OOW seeking for further advice from WNI (weather forecast). Duty AB was on the help manually steered the vessel. After duty, we stayed on the crew mess and some of us started praying. We couldn't sleep, barely ate, and were afraid of what will happen anytime. Mountainous waves came from all sides of the vessel. Yet, we survived because we believed that God heard our prayers. Cadet 12 said that my fearful moments are those times when I thought that what if our ship will sink, what if we will be invaded by pirates and what if I cannot return home. When those ideas struck into my minds that make me fear. But thanks to God that through a year that I was onboard nothing of those ideas happened.

Pirates, as one of the threats on seas, give fear to most seafarers. Cadet 1 said that, *transiting in high risk areas was the worst for me. You have to be vigilant to avoid pirates. Our lives were at utmost danger if these robbers will come aboard our vessel. It was very scary.* Cadet 2 said, *my other fearful moment was when we first transit in the High Risk Area. There was a time when we were steaming at 8-9 knots and we can see small fishing boats, dhows and skiffs on the horizon. I felt nervous thinking that any of those vessels may be pirates and can attack or run after us any time since our vessel's speed was nothing compared to what they have. Luckily, none of those things approached us at less than two nautical miles. I felt better after we had passed that area.*

The sea will continue sending more and more challenges for those who want to explore on it. And folklores on the dangers at sea will continue invading the minds of the people without knowing that what happens on real life was far more treacherous than it is.

3.6. Stressful Moments Onboard

While still in a maritime college, a deck cadet often wonders as to what his shipboard duties exactly are. The common answer to this intriguing question at college is that a cadet must assist the deck officers in the day-to-day operations of the vessel (1).

As what is stated in their company code, deck cadets are onboard for training as future officers. Given this situation, they have expected a lot of tasks onboard. Some of these even test their patience and hard work.

Different works conducted onboard is often the main reason of stress onboard. Cadet 1 said that *“entering” and “leaving” port is one of my stressful moments. I should plot the ships position at least every three minutes because it's important for the officers and the pilot to monitor ships movement for safety reasons. As much as possible, I had to provide everything that was needed for the operation such as completing a lot of checklists, providing pilot cards, complying legal*

¹ Bhattacharjee, S. (2014). 10 Important Jobs Deck Cadets Have To Perform Onboard Ships.

documents before leaving or entering port and giving the best comfort for all the port authorities. Cadet 2 said that, my stressful moment was when we were on our way from the discharging point to the loading port, the expected date of the arrival was 6 days from the departure and we still need to clean the cargo holds which was loaded with coal before. The time for cleaning the nine cargo holds and deck wasn't enough if we just work 10 hours per day in five days. So, even during the weekend we worked from 1600H-1730H during the weekdays. It was really stressful since we didn't have enough time to rest since cleaning cargo holds was one of the most or should I say, the hardest work for me onboard. Cadet 3 said, being awake for almost 24 hours and having not enough rest was a very stressful moment during the cadetship training. Lots of works during that time was present. Like receiving provisions for the ship and after it you should proceed to cargo watch. It was very stressful because you were so tired yet you still needed to work. Danger is always present when you are stress. You cannot think properly and cannot concentrate to your work. Cadet 4 said, my experience on my vessel which was a bulk carrier loading mostly iron ore and coal but sometimes fertilizer or limestone. In every discharging, at the end, cleaning will be made. The length and procedure of cleaning depends in the length of the voyage and the cargo to be loaded. I had an experience that we will take a less than one day voyage. At this time, we must finish cleaning the five cargo holds by sweeping and washing. I had experienced also an almost one month cleaning. Our voyage is from China to Canada and we will load a clean cargo. Our last cargo is iron ore that made too hard to clean. We must scrape the cargo in every edge of the load then wash it and paint it. This was very stressful and our Master was already pressuring us to finish the cleaning. We started at 6 AM then a lunch break, resumed on 1300H until 1900H then back again at 8 PM and stopped at almost 2200H. Cadet 6 said, when I and my crewmates arrived at port of Manzanillo, Mexico from port of Pusan, South Korea, authorities on Mexico were so strict when it comes to quarantine inspection thus, preparation on different areas on ship must be done with accordance to the company and Master's order. From 0800H in the morning, we started to wash the whole accommodation from the navigational bridge to the upper deck which is composed of eight decks. We cleaned also the ship's starboard and port sides which was about 600 meters all in all. It was the busiest day since I was onboard. After one job, our Boatswain immediately gives another job order the whole day not taking into consideration that we will be arriving at night. We finished all job orders at 1800H. Dinner is only our rest time and we directly go on our duties on maneuvering. I was assigned on bridge. Since it was channeling, it took four hours for us to be berthed. At 2330H, all inspection was done and I still have a duty at 0000H-0400H, a mix of fatigue and sleepiness was my encounter after duty. I was asked by my Captain to clean the bridge and all was done at 1000H the next day. This was the first time I has encountered a 28-hour straight work without sleep and full of stress. Cadet 7 said, my stressful moments

happened when we receive our supplies from Port of New Orleans, nobody is exempted, everybody should help in carrying the supplies to the storage room even though you still have no sleep, it is your rest time or you just finished your duty or work. Also, whenever we play card games during duty hours. Playing cards happen when we came alongside during our rest hour from duty or work earlier and still have no sleep but we are still obliged to wake up and proceed to our designated stations (mooring) to operate and work. Cadet 8 said, every end of the month is considered my stressful moment because of the monthly end report. Every night of the last week of the month, I sleep late at night just to finish it. But I thank God that I finished it every end of the month or before Captain will e-mail in the office. Cadet 9 said, my stressful moment is when we departed Tanjung Pelepas, Malaysia bound for Pasir Panjang Terminal at Singapore. It is a very short distance from each other so we don't have enough rest. To add to the burden, we only stayed on Pasir Panjang for almost six hours and I had a port duty. We departed there and transferred to the other terminal in Tanjung Pagar, Singapore. It was very close as well from the port we have departed. All of the crew are stressed and tired because no one got a rest. We haven't slept for almost 24 hours. Cadet 10 said, stressful moment is when you have to work or have a gangway duty for six hours in the morning, from 0600H-1200H, a rest of six hours and another duty again of six hours in the evening and vice versa. You have no straight rest and sleep because you have a six hours of sleep and six hours of duty and vice versa. Also, it is also stressful when you have to finish cleaning the holds even if it is the time to rest. You must continue until it is finished. You are not going to rest until your work is finished. Cadet 11 said, my most stressful moment that happened on me was when our vessel is on a dry-dock. The first day we entered the floating dock was the most stressful of all. Everyone on shore will come onboard and start to work while they, the crews, have so many tasks to do. After you have finished with one, there's another one waiting. The pressure of shore personnel as well as the officers was there. It's like you've been stricken by a whirlwind with so many things to do and you don't know which one should go first. But three to four days later, it was all in calm. Another one is the paperwork onboard ship most especially when you're running out of time and need to submit it immediately. It is normal for us cadets to do some paperwork as a part of our training. Cadet 12 said, my stressful moments are those times we are cleaning cargo holds, since we have always short voyages from one port to another, therefore we are always making overtimes. We worked late until 11 PM to 12 midnight and woke up at about 5 AM the next morning to continue the work. It's quite hard but thanks to my officer, they gave a rest day after that hard labor.

Some activities outside the ship also cause stress to deck cadets. Cadet 1 said, *my stressful moment was during the Port State Control Inspection. This happens at least once every six months. Most difficult one took place in Gibraltar, where Port Authorities embarked our ship and inspected*

the ship itself, the crew and the legal documents. I was tasked to stay beside our Third Officer and observed what he's doing during the inspection of lifeboats and other life-saving equipment. I felt the pressure when their officers were rectifying our deficiencies because the ship cannot sail if there were no corrections applied. That was very stressful but I learned a lot.

Some stress was also caused by some problems on land. Cadet 11 said, *additional to my stressful moment is when I heard news that super typhoon Yolanda struck our region. I was extremely worried that time that I could not sleep thinking if my family is okay since I couldn't contact any of them. I was awake all the time. But thanks after several days, they texted me that they were fine (we used Globe wireless sim onboard -25 cents per text).*

Their profession may have offered a lot of challenging tasks, not mentioning the paper works they have to comply with. But it's all worth it after surviving those stuffs of stressful errands.

3.7. Disgusting Moments Onboard

Ships are not just mainly centered on transporting goods. Several business transactions happen inside it. Deck cadets tend to overlook the message behind the seafaring profession. And they sometimes end up disgusted.

One of the reasons that deck cadets felt disgusted is the environment found on ships. Cadet 1 said, *I felt disgusted in the way the Port Authorities of some countries deal with the important matters of the ship and the port. They tend to be very stringent in checking our documents and informing us about our deficiencies which, technically, were negligible. Each deficiency has a corresponding penalty which requires the company to pay which was a big headache for the ship's master. To avoid high amount of mulct, Port Authorities will simply visit our Bonded Store and get what they wanted in bulk as reams of cigarettes, cartons of wine and spirits, and even our food from the kitchen. Our goods could erase the ship's deficiencies.*

Some felt disgusted on their own actions. Cadet 1 said, *I was disgusted about my own carelessness. Sometimes, I go to work without observing safety. There was a time that I walked on the main deck and slipped badly because I wore rubber slippers instead of safety shoes. And the worse that had happened to me was the time when we were paint washing the aft deck. I was singing while washing the mooring winch when an AB called my attention. When I looked back, my head was hit wretchedly by the winch break. Blood shed from the wound on my head and I was rushed to the ship's hospital. I was not allowed to work for two days.*

Another reason that deck cadets felt disgusted is because of the attitude of their fellow crew onboard. Cadet 2 said, *I was disgusted when one of the officers taught me about solving sunrise and sunset. I noticed that there was something wrong on what he was teaching me, so I asked questions*

regarding those things. I even told him that there was something wrong but he insisted and told me that I was the one who was wrong and maybe the things I have learned in school were wrong. I was really disgusted but I just kept my mouth shut and I asked the other officers. And they said that what the other officers taught me was really wrong. They also said that I shouldn't mind it anymore because it may cause trouble if I would still insist my case. Cadet 5 said, disgust can be within you, but most of the time, disgust can be because of other people's stupidity and incompetence, stupidity in a sense that you know better than some people but continue to be humble, yet they would always try to insult you. When you know better, you should accept these stupidities and carry on the things you know was right. Remember that people with higher IQ and EQ tend to hide their superiority to others. Incompetence in a sense that because they are unsatisfied with their lives, they tend to resort to foul and sly methods because they only want to put you down. They tend to harbor happiness through the sufferings of others. People like these tend to fight unfairly, thus, they're incompetent. Never contend with idiocy because idiocy will only drag you down to the lowest level of life. Cadet 6 said, disgusting moment was similar with my angry moment, it is when my Chief Cook scolded me knowing that he's drunk. I can't let out my emotions because I was afraid of him. I was three months onboard that time that's why I don't have an idea on how to fight for your right as a cadet. All I have done was just listen to his trash talks. Cadet 12 said, my disgusting moments are those times when my reliever on port watch did not went back on time when I shore leaved that made me stand as gangway watch for eight hours or even longer because I was not the type who always gone shore leaves. For me, once or twice is okay but when done many times, I felt disgusted so sometimes that I intentionally shore leaved to avoid that situation.

Too much pressure because of work also causes disgust. Cadet 4 said, my disgusting moment was when I joined in daywork together with the Able Bodied Seaman and Ordinary Seaman, our head was the Boatswain. We follow what the Boatswain wants us to do. The work was given by the Chief Officer. As a daywork, our working time is 0800H-1200H and 1300H-1700H. There is one day that the Chief Officer gave a hard job order for us. We started immediately doing the job. We worked until 1700H, we can't finish the job but the Boatswain wants to finish it just to impress the Chief Officer. It was very tiring, we worked two hours of overtime without pay. But it was not about money, all we think is that the job order can be finished the next day. I was thinking what my first Boatswain said, "work is not yet finished, we have to finish the contract." In the end of the work, we were all complaining just in our minds.

Disgusting moments sometimes arise from the facilities of the ship itself. Cadet 8 said, my disgusting moment was when the storage of our frozen foods was destroyed and we don't have food for more than a month. But we survived it. Cadet 9 said, my disgusting moment is when the pipeline for food waste in the galley clogged. It was not a very interesting smell and it lessens your appetite

every time you eat. Good thing that the engineers have fixed it. Cadet 10 said, disgusting moment for me is when you have to clean a dirty bilge with so many dirt stuffs like mud and sometimes human feces. And also when you have to compact the garbage and dispose the food wastes.

After those sickening experiences onboard, deck cadets have never turned their backs on their career as what most of them said. They are seafarers and they accept whatever things come behind it.

3.8. Other Moments Onboard

After narrating their different types of experiences onboard, deck cadets have been given a special part to tell their special moments onboard.

Cadet 1 said, *my unforgettable experience was when our vessel was dry docking at Port of Cadiz, Spain for three weeks. I was so blessed because I was onboard during the major repairs of our vessel considering that not all cadets were given the chance to witness this moment. Together with the Captain, Chief Officer, Surveyor, Ship's Superintendent and port Authorities, we entered all of the void and enclosed spaces such as Ballast Tanks, Fuel Tanks, Freshwater Tanks, Chain Lockers, and others after eight to ten hours of work, we pampered ourselves by having a tour in the city, dine in to their restaurants, and chill on the beach with a bottle of drink. These memories are surely worth keeping.* Cadet 4 said *my unforgettable experience in my 11 months onboard is having a good time in Indonesia. I love Indonesia.*

For some deck cadets, they have an unexplainable feeling during their cadetship. Cadet 8 said, *the feeling when you don't know what you feel when you're going home. You can't even sleep thinking about it.*

4. Implications

This study simply implies that a deck cadet must enjoy every moment of work onboard the ship. This is also to ensure his survival while he is with his crew mate for a year. Furthermore, a deck cadet should have to have good values and hard work in order to perform work onboard and survive at the same time.

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