



SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPERVISION PRACTICES

Imasuen Kennedy¹ and Dr. (Mrs.) Bello Stella²

¹Institute of Education, University of Benin, Benin City

Email: kennedy.imasuen@uniben.edu

²Ogbe Secondary School Benin City.

Cite this article:

Imasuen K., Bello S. (2021), Secondary School Teachers' and Principals' Knowledge and Perception of School-Based Supervision Practices. British Journal of Education, Learning and Development Psychology 4(2) DOI: 10.52589/BJELDP-E9YM8JRK.

Manuscript History

Received: 5 Nov 2021

Accepted: 29 Nov 2021

Published: 13 Dec 2021

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ABSTRACT: *This study sought to find out teachers' and principals' knowledge and perception of school-based supervision practices in public secondary schools in Benin metropolis. To achieve this purpose, four research questions were raised. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of the teachers and principals in the Benin metropolis. A sample size of three hundred and sixty-three (363) principals and teachers was used. A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the Chi-square and independent sample t-test were used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers and principals were knowledgeable in the art of school-based supervision practices, and there were a lot of problems facing the effective practice of school-based supervision. The findings further revealed that years of experience was a determining factor in the art of carrying out school-based supervision. Therefore, appointing principals with at least ten years of experience and provision of modern facilities for school supervision were recommended.*

KEYWORDS: Supervision Perception, Knowledge, Principal, Teacher.



INTRODUCTION

School-based supervision is restricted strictly to a school environment and all the factors acting within. School-based supervision mainly focuses on the improvement of the whole school and equality of education given to the student. It is a professional, continuous and cooperative exercise that covers all aspects of the life of a school. Supervision is also viewed as a cooperative venture in which supervisors and teachers engage in dialogue for the purpose of improving instruction which logically should contribute to improved learning and success of students (Sergiovanni & Starrath, 2002). Supervision in the school system mainly focuses on the whole school improvement and quality of education given to the student. MoE (2002) saw supervision as the process which provides professional support for the school principals and teachers to strengthen the teaching and learning process. Supervision is the process in which supervisors visit schools to work with the teachers and school administration. Thus, adequate support and effective supervisory activities are very crucial for schools to enhance the teaching-learning process.

In the modern educational system, expansion of education relies on increasing the number of educational institutions, teachers and students as well as providing all sorts of facilities which are essential for the progress of education. In the modern educational system, the term supervision has gotten a very significant position from the point of view of the role played by it. Due to the enhancement of its importance in the present educational system, its prime purpose has been changed now. Researchers and educationists before now see supervision as primarily for the purpose of improving instruction, but now it is also for teachers' and pupils' development.

Adams and Dickery (2010) opined that "supervision is a planned programme for improvement." According to them, supervision exists for one reason—to improve teaching and learning. So, it is mainly concerned with the development of teachers and pupils.

Similarly, Glickman et al. (2004) posited that supervision connotes a common vision of what teaching and learning can and should be, developed collaboratively by formally designated supervisors, teachers and other members of the school community.

According to Nolan and Hoover (2004), teachers' supervision is viewed as an organizational function concerned with promoting teachers' growth which in turn leads to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning. Its basic purpose is to enhance the educational experiences and learning of all students. On the other hand, supervision is considered as any service for teachers that eventually results in improving instruction, learning and the curriculum. It consists of positive, dynamic, and democratic actions designed to improve instruction through the continued growth of all concerned individuals: the supervisor, the teachers, the administrators (principal) and the parents.

Instructional supervision is a process that focuses on instructions and it provides teachers with information about their teaching so as to develop instructional skills to improve performance (Beach & Heinhardt, 2000). Instructional supervision aims to promote growth, interaction, fault-free problem solving and commitment, to build capacity in teachers. Cogan (1993) envisioned practices that would position the teachers on active learning. Moreover, he asserts that teachers are not only able to be professionally responsible but also more than able to be analytic of their own performance, open to help from others and also to self-directing. Acheson, Gall and Pajak, cited in Zepeda (2003), believed that the intent of



supervision is promoting face-to-face interaction and relationship building between the teachers and supervisors and also promoting capacity building in individuals and the organization. Furthermore, as mentioned by Sergiovanni, Starratt and Blumberg, cited in Zepida (2003), supervision promotes the improvement of students' learning through improvement of teachers' instructions, and it promotes changes that result in a better developmental life for teachers and students and their learning. Instructional supervision is a service that will be given to teachers and it is the strategy which helps to implement and improve the teaching-learning process, and it is also an activity that is always performed for the advantage of students' learning achievement.

The intent of instructional supervision revolves around helping teachers for their practical competences and increasing students' learning through the improvement of the teachers' instruction.

Igwe, cited in Enaigbe (2009), indicated that to supervise means to direct, oversee, guide and to make sure that expected standards are met. Benjamin (2003) saw supervision as all effort of designated school officials towards providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. These involve the stimulation of professional development of teachers; the selection of educational objectives, materials of instruction and method of teaching; and the evaluation of instruction.

Supervision is concerned with the total improvement of teaching and learning situations. In line with this, Sumaiya (2010) stated that supervision has the following principles: there should be short-term, medium-term and long-term planning for supervision; supervision is a sub-system of school organization; all teachers have a right and the need for supervision; supervision should be conducted regularly to meet the individual needs of the teachers and other personnel; supervision should help to clarify educational objectives and goals for the principals and teachers; supervisors should assist in the organization and implementation of curriculum programs for the learners; supervision from within and outside the school complements each other and are both necessary.

In general, since supervision is a process which is about the improvement of instruction, it needs to be strengthened at school level so as to provide equal opportunities to support all teachers, and it should be conducted frequently to maximize teachers' competency.

The most important indicator for the quality of education is the quality of the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom. However, this cannot be materialized without having regular supervision of teachers' activities (MoE, 2006). The supervisor needs to have some qualities to handle his/her responsibility well. Claude (1992) indicated that supervising people, and teachers in particular, is both a skill and an art. It is skilled because the basic theories about motivation, communication, conflict resolution, performance, counseling and so on can be learned. On the other hand, it is viewed as an act, the supervisor adapts this knowledge and puts it into practice in his or her own unique ways. In general, school-based supervisors ought to be skilled and knowledgeable about the task elements of their school work.

A successful supervisor has a positive attitude. When the supervisor's attitude towards work and their school is positive, the teachers are more likely to be satisfied with and be interested in their work. Furthermore, the heads of the school and staff members alike prefer working with people who have a positive attitude (Samuel, 2006).



According to Stadan (2000), a good school-based supervisor should be approachable, a good listener, very patient and should be a strong leader. Moreover, supervisors also should have the ability to motivate people as well as create a feeling of trust in others. The qualities mentioned above are used as a mechanism for achieving a harmonious relationship between supervisors and those for whom they are responsible, and for providing an adequate communication system between supervisors and teachers and between school departments and functions.

These days, the concept of supervision has been changed. It is not concerned merely with the improvement of teachers as it was conceived in the previous days when the supervisory activities were directive and prescriptive; now, supervision requires a super plus vision and a superior perspective bolstered by special preparation and position. The primary function of supervision of any form is leadership, encouragement and recognition of leadership in any other person, either in the professional staff or among the community participants.

Therefore, a supervisor is a leader who has possession of the following two qualities: a clear perspective of the school's goals and awareness of its resources and qualities; and the ability to help others, contribute to their vision, and to perceive an act in accordance with it. So it is clear now that the modern concept of supervision centers around the basic concept of instructional improvement through leadership and cooperation of all agencies concerned. Neagley and Evans (2014) opined that modern supervision in school is a positive democratic action aimed at the improvement of classroom instruction through the continued growth of all concerned. Supporting this, Barr and Burton, cited in Gordon (2020), stated that the aim of supervision is the improvement of teaching, but this can be facilitated through the development of the teacher, and the growth of the teaching-learning process as a whole. It has been clearly visualized that supervision seeks to be democratic in nature, which demands constant efforts on the part of the inspecting officers. They have to stimulate, coordinate, and guide for continued growth of the teacher in a school, both individually and collectively for better understanding and more effective performances of all teaching activities, as a result of which teachers may be better able to stimulate and guide the continued growth of every pupil towards the most intelligent participation in modern democratic society.

This new concept is based on the belief that inspection and supervision are a cooperative enterprise in which both teachers and inspecting officers have to participate actively. MoE (2010) believed that supervision of instruction has the potential to improve classroom practices and contribute to students' success through the professional growth and improvement of teachers.

The overall objective of effective school-based supervision is to enable the individual teacher to become an implementer of effective teaching. As such, they are concerned primarily with teaching and learning.

Supervision has evolved from being an inspection-oriented process to being one employing the use of scientific management. In the past, based on assumptions, supervision had a limited scope encompassing monitoring and it allowed the use of non-professionals as supervisors.

According to Ogunsaju (2000), supervision dates back to 1842, when the first primary school was established by the missionaries at Badagry, Nigeria. Supervision was not so developed and standardized as it is today. The missionaries were supervising their own schools—the catechists were teachers and other laymen or non-professionals in the church served as supervisors or inspectors. During the first quarter of the twentieth century,



inspectorate services got an unpredicted boost with the appointment of a director of education and three zonal inspectors of schools in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of school inspection, and this led to the expansion and restructuring of the inspectorate services. This development was no doubt influenced by the prevailing scientific management approach to supervision. The establishment of the Federal Inspectorate Service in 1973, independent of the Federal Ministry of Education, made a significant impact on the quality of instruction in schools. However, there are several factors which tend to militate against effective supervision of teachers in schools. These include

Perception of teachers towards supervision: School-based supervision aims at improving the quality of children's education by improving the teachers' effectiveness. Fraser, cited in Lillian (2007), noted that the improvement of the teaching-learning process is dependent upon teachers' attitude towards supervision. Unless teachers perceive supervision as a process of promoting professional growth and student learning, the supervisory exercises will not have the desired effect. The need for discussing the lesson observed by the teachers and the supervisor is also seen as vital. Classroom observation appears to work best if set in a cycle of preparation, observation and field back, hence the need for the supervisor and the supervisee to work in hand in hand before and even during the observation process. In doing all these, teachers must feel that the supervisors are there to serve them and to help them become more effective (Lillian, 2007). Various activities push teachers to perceive supervision negatively. For example, UNESCO (2007) pointed out that bitter complaint about supervisors' work further include irregular and bad planning of visit, not enough time spent in the classroom and irrelevant advice. This does not mean that teachers do not recognize the positive effect of supervisory work; it rather means that, in their opinion, the problem with supervisors is merely an attitudinal one. Teachers also strongly dislike the fault-finding approach and expect supervisors to treat them as professionals and take into account the specific realities of the school when providing advice.

Lack of adequate training and support: Supervisors need continuous and sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities effectively, i.e., training programmes for supervisors aimed at providing necessary skills for supervisors and making them better equipped at doing their job. Alhammed Shidy, cited in Rashid (2001), stated that lack of training for supervisors weaken the relationship between teachers and supervisors, and lack of support for supervisors from higher offices affect the supervisory practices in schools. In line with this, Nerga (2007) pointed out that lack of continuous training for supervisors to update their educational knowledge and skills is a major obstacle to the practice of supervision.

Excessive workload: The school-level supervisors (principals, vice-principals, departmental heads and senior teachers) are responsible for carrying out the inbuilt supervision in addition to their own classes and routine administrative tasks. Secondary school principals are burdened with so much administrative work that they hardly find time to visit classrooms and observe how the teachers are teaching. Thus, Alhammad (2001) in his studies showed that supervisors' high workloads and lack of cooperation from principals negatively affect the practice of supervision.

Inadequate educational resources: Effective supervision cannot be complete without adequate instructional materials. Materials like supervision guides and manuals have a great



impact on supervision work. Most of these materials are very helpful to the supervisors themselves and to the schools; they most times turn the inspection visit into a more objective exercise and by informing schools and teachers of the issues on which supervisors focus, they lead to a more transparent process. On the other hand, the absence of adequate budget for supervision and support has a great effect on the quality of supervision. Low budgeting results in the incapacity to run the supervisory activities effectively.

In order to achieve effective education through improved teaching-learning processes, school-based supervision should be democratic and cooperative and should be taken very seriously in schools. Supervision is very important in an educational system because without it, an educational system will be heading to failure.

In light of this, it is important to assess the procedures or current practices of school-based supervision in secondary schools as well as the challenges encountered.

Statement of the Problem

It is believed that the overall educational system should be supported by educational supervision in order to improve the teaching-learning process in general and learners' achievement in particular (UNESCO, 2007). School-based supervisors play a crucial role in the strategy of attaining quality education. School-based supervisory practices are significant for individual teachers' professional development, school improvement and satisfaction of public demands. But it is observed that it is not usually practiced anymore or it is done shabbily in public secondary schools in Benin metropolis. This nonchalant attitude towards school-based supervision, could it be attributed to the perception of the teachers and principals? Could also be that it is bedeviled by a lot of challenges? This is the crux of this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the perception of secondary school teachers and principals of school-based supervision?
2. What are the perceived challenges of school-based supervision practices?
3. Do demographic variables of gender, educational qualification, and years of experience influence the perception of teachers towards school-based supervision?
4. Are there differences in the perception of school-based supervision practices between principals and teachers?

Hypotheses

Questions 1 and 2 were to be answered while questions 3 and 4 were turned into hypotheses.

1. Demographic variables of gender, educational qualification, and years of experience will not significantly influence the perception of teachers towards school-based supervision.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of secondary school teachers and principals towards school-based supervision.



Methods

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Benin metropolis. Public secondary schools in Benin metropolis have a total of two thousand, two hundred and forty-nine (2,249) teachers and one hundred and ninety (190) principals. Thirty-eight (38) principals and two hundred and twenty-eight (228) teachers giving a total of three hundred and sixty-three (363), constituted the sample size. The multistage sample technique was adopted for the study.

A structured questionnaire titled, "Practices and Challenges of School-based Supervision" was used for data collection. It consisted of three sections: A, B and C. Section A was used to elicit information which include gender, years of experience and educational qualification from the respondents. Section B consisted of 12 items which were used to elicit information about the principals' and teachers' perception of school-based practices. Section C consisted of 14 items used to elicit information of principals' and teachers' perception of practices and challenges of school-based practices. Both sections B and C used a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was validated by three experts of school administration and supervision. Thirty copies of the instrument were administered to teachers and principals outside the sample school in Benin Metropolis. The Cronbach alpha reliability statistics were used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. It gave an alpha value of 0.83. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square and the independent sample t-test. The hypotheses were all tested at 0.05 level of significance. A mean criterion value of 3.00 which was the arithmetic mean of the 5-point Likert scale was used for acceptance for the research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean rating teachers' and principals' understanding of school-based supervision practices

Items of school-based supervision	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Conducting classroom observation to ensure the application of lesson	4.24	0.88	Agree
Evaluating the lesson plan of teachers	4.40	0.73	Agree
Encouraging teachers and making sure that they use the appropriate teaching materials	4.28	0.86	Agree
Assisting teachers to conduct action research to solve problems that they encountered	3.92	1.00	Agree
Conducting regular meetings with teachers to evaluate their activities	4.15	0.94	Agree
Encouraging teachers to evaluate the existing teaching texts for further improvement.	4.17	0.91	Agree
Arranging on the job orientation programs for newly employed teachers	4.19	1.07	Agree



Organizing training programs at school level for the sake of teachers' professional development	4.07	1.02	Agree
Organizing workshops, conferences, seminars to tackle instructional problems identified by various department members	4.03	1.06	Agree
Creating a conducive environment to facilitate supervisory activities in the school	4.03	1.02	Agree
Coordinating regular programs with the school community to evaluate the teaching-learning process and outcomes	3.63	1.02	Agree
Ensuring proper implementation of the school curriculum.	4.20	0.85	Agree
Cluster	4.11	0.10	

The results in Table 1 show the mean ratings of secondary school teachers' and principals' understanding of school-based supervision practices ranged from 3.63 to 4.40. It further revealed that the principals and teachers agreed to all the items raised with respect to their knowledge of school-based supervision. The cluster mean and standard deviation of 4.11 and 0.10 respectively imply that secondary school teachers and principals are knowledgeable about school-based supervision practices.

Table 2: Mean rating perceived challenges of school-based supervision practices

Items of challenges of school-based supervision	Mean	Standard deviation	Remarks
Lack of cooperation on the part of the teachers	2.56	1.43	Disagree
Supervisors are fault finders rather than rendering assistance to teachers	3.34	1.34	Agree
Supervisors lack required knowledge on supervisory activities	2.87	1.30	Disagree
Supervisors are incompetent to help or render assistance to teachers	2.85	1.34	Disagree
Lack of experience in the teaching profession and school-based supervision	2.92	1.31	Disagree
Non-availability of training facilities for supervisors	4.03	0.96	Agree
Lack of relevant supervision manuals in schools	3.97	0.87	Agree
Lack of support from higher offices and relevant educational authorities	4.01	1.08	Agree
Inadequate number of supervisors to assist school teachers and perform school supervisory activities properly	4.00	1.05	Agree
Supervisors are overloaded with classroom activities and administrative tasks	3.45	1.20	Agree
Lack of adequate instructional materials to enhance proper guidance and assistance to teachers	4.08	0.90	Agree



Lack of adequate budget for supporting supervisory activities	3.92	1.10	Agree
Nonchalance or laziness on the part of supervisors to their duties	3.37	1.19	Agree

The results in Table 2 show the mean ratings of the perceived challenges of school-based supervision practices, as identified by secondary school teachers and principals, ranged from 2.56 to 4.08. The perceived challenges as identified by the respondents include supervisors are fault finders rather than rendering assistance to teachers, non-availability of training facilities for supervisors, lack of relevant supervision manuals in schools, lack of support from higher offices and lack of relevant educational authorities. Others are inadequate number of supervisors to assist school teachers and perform school supervisory activities properly, supervisors are overloaded with classroom activities and administrative tasks, lack of adequate instructional materials to enhance proper guidance and assistance to teachers, lack of inadequate budget for supporting supervisory activities, and nonchalance or laziness on the part of supervisors to their duties. However, lack of cooperation on the part of the teachers, supervisors lack required knowledge on supervisory activities, supervisors are incompetent to help or render assistance to teachers, and lack of experience in the teaching profession and school-based supervision were not identified as perceived challenges of school-based supervision practices.

Table 3: Influence of demographic variables on teachers' and principals' perception of school-based supervision

Demographic variables		Responses (n =363)					χ^2	p-value
Sex	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Undecided		
Male	151	27(18.1)	73(48.6)	38(25.0)	03(5.6)	04(2.8)	3.422	0.510
Female	212	30(14.0)	104(49.0)	42(20.0)	25(12.0)	11(5.0)		
Experience								
< 10 years	294	34(11.5)	146(49.6)	72(24.4)	31(10.7)	11(3.8)	12.822	0.012*
≥ 10 years	69	22(32.3)	36(51.6)	04(6.5)	02(3.2)	04(6.5)		
Educational qualification								
NCE	138	13	65(47.0)	40(28.8)	15(10.6)	06(6.5)	5.544	0.236
Bachelor and higher degree	225	44(19.6)	114(50.5)	40(17.8)	19(8.4)	08(3.7)		

● **Significant**

Twenty-seven (18.1%) and seventy-three (48.6%) of the male respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they were knowledgeable about school-based supervision as against 14.0% and 49.0% of their female counterparts. Only 49.6% of the respondents with less than 10 years experience agreed that they had knowledge of school-based supervision as against 51.6% who had 10 years and above experience. With respect to educational qualification, 50.5%, who had bachelor degree and other higher degrees, had knowledge of school-based supervision as against 47.0% who had NCE.



The association between sex and teachers' and principals' perception and that between educational qualification and teachers' and principals' perception of school-based supervision were not significant ($p > 0.05$). However, the association between teachers' and principals' experience and how they perceived school-based supervision was significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Independent sample t-test of the differences in the perception of secondary school teachers and principals of school-based supervision

Supervision	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p-value	Remark
Principal	14	46.50	8.680	148	-1.28	0.261	Not significant
Teacher	136	49.02	7.892				

The results in Table 3 showed a t-value of -1.28 and a p-value of 0.261. Testing at alpha of 0.05, the p value is greater than alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that "there is no significant difference in the perception of secondary school teachers and principals of school-based supervision" was retained.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that secondary school teachers and principals have very good knowledge of school-based supervision practice. This is in line with Acheson, Gall and Pajak, cited in Zepeda (2003), who stated that principals' and teachers' knowledge of school-based supervision has helped in the promotion and improvement of student learning, improvement of teachers' instructions and has promoted changes that result in a better developmental life for teachers, principals and students, and their overall learning.

The study also showed that the school supervision is faced with a lot of problems/challenges which include supervisors are fault finders rather than rendering assistance to teachers, non-availability of training facilities for supervisors, lack of relevant supervision manuals in schools, lack of support from higher officers and relevant educational authorities, inadequate number of supervisors to assist school teachers and perform school supervisory activities properly, supervisors are overloaded with classroom activities and administrative tasks, and lack of adequate instructional materials to enhance proper guidance and assistance to teachers. This finding corroborates Rashid (2001), who opined that lack of training for supervisors, weak relationship between teachers and supervisors, and lack of support for supervisors from higher offices affect supervisory practices in schools. It is also in tandem with Merga (2007) who posited that the lack of a continuous training system for supervisors to update their educational knowledge and skills is an obstacle to the practice of supervision.

With respect to the influence of sex, educational qualification and teachers' and principals' years of experience on their knowledge of school-based supervision, it was only years of experience that significantly influenced their knowledge of supervision. The study showed that those with ten years experience and above had better knowledge of school-based supervision. The finding agrees with Beach and Reinhartz (2000) who affirmed that supervision as a complex process involves working with teachers and other educators in a collegial,



collaborative relationship to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within the schools and promote the career-long development of teachers. He understands that sex was never a determinant of the success or failure of supervision. The study also corroborates Benjamin (2003), who averred that supervision efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to the teacher and educational workers is regardless of their educational qualification.

Another revelation from the study was that there was no significant difference in the perception of secondary school teachers and principals of school-based supervision. This finding is in agreement with Sullivan and Glanz (2000), which revealed that proper use and understanding of various approaches to supervision enhances professional development and improves the instructional efficiency of both teachers and principals. Sergiovanni and Starrath (2002) alluded that supervision is a copra venture in which supervisors (principals) and teachers engage in dialogue for the purpose of improving instruction which logically contributes to student-improved learning and success. This agreed with Nolan and Hoover (2004), who posited that supervision is an organizational function and its basic purpose is to enhance the educational experiences and learning of all.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, secondary school principals and teachers in Benin metropolis have a good understanding of school-based supervision, and years of experience plays a major role in the knowledge of school-based supervision practices. Despite the fact that the principals and teachers have a good understanding of school-based supervision, the challenges it faces makes it difficult to be properly carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The choice of supervisor should not be based on qualification but on years of experience.
2. Educational resources such as funds and other materials needed should be made available for supervisors to enable them carry out their duties properly and with ease.
3. Government should do more in conducting seminars for school-based supervision in order to update them on the latest techniques in school-based supervision, make their work easier and better and enable them to be efficient and effective.
4. More school-based supervisors who are grounded and more knowledgeable in the act of supervision should be employed in schools to assist the already present ones so as to reduce their workloads.



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