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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Navigating through In-service Education and Training Programs to Public Secondary School Teachers in Tanzania

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Author's Contributions

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to navigate through teachers' In-Service Education Training programs focusing on the challenges in its provision to public secondary schools in Nyamagana District Mwanza- Tanzania. The study was done using primary data gathered from Nyamagana District in 2024. The study population comprised of 1268 Nyamagana District public secondary school teachers, 34 heads of schools, 18 ward educational officers (WEO) and 1 district educational officer (DEO). Data were collected using questionnaire and interview guide. Analysis was done using content analysis approach and descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that teachers' INSET programs are influential in teaching and learning process. However its provision encounters a number of challenging factors which hinders its effectiveness in teaching and learning. The challenging factors includes; financial resources, time limitations and unclear education policy on INSET. Thus, this study recommends that The Ministry of Education Science and Technology should develop a clear education and training policy for the provision of INSET programs. Also the ministry should ensure allocation of enough budget for the provision of INSET programs. Educational stakeholders such as DEO, WEOs and heads of schools should ensure conducive environment for trainings that will facilitates teachers' active participation as well as the acquisition of knowledge in INSET programs.

Keywords: In-Service education and training (INSET); teachers; trainings; programs and challenges

INTRODUCTION

In-service teacher training is an essential component of teaching profession. In practice, it is recognized as an indispensable part of the whole process of teacher education. The trainings involve attending lectures, films, exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and workshops in which practical solutions to current difficulties are introduced (Osamwonyi, 2016). The significance of INSET programs is grasped in developing teaching as a carrier as well as catering for the changes that are brought about by globalization and development in science and technology. The training

impact teachers with skills in ICT usage and pedagogical knowledge once need analysis is done prior to the trainings. Through the trainings teachers are able to use internet and multimedia presentation in a teaching (Arap and Cakmak, 2015). In-service trainings are an excellent source of changes that curriculum developers expect from teachers also assist teachers through all necessary professional development and promote their teaching efficacy (Mahmood et al. (2019), Nzariwehi & Atuhumuze, 2019). This means that INSET programs fuels teacher professionalism in self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, knowledge

and pedagogical skills.

Moreover, as enlightened by Olujuwon and Omiyale (2021), perpetual in-service education and trainings equips teachers with new knowledge and skills which are significant in addressing new challenges and reformation in education in this knowledge-based economy. This implies that INSET programs are significant in the provision of quality and relevant education. Therefore, INSET programs has a role to play not only on teacher development but also in educational performance of teachers (Mahara, 2024). Meaning that proper in-service trainings enhance teaching and learning process which in the end improves students' academic performance.

In acknowledging the importance in-service education and training for teachers various nations across the globe has taken various initiatives in providing teachers with in-service education trainings. Both developed and developing countries in diverse ways, have developed organs, bodies, institutions as well as policies to ensure the provision of in-service trainings.

In the United Kingdom, the government and other education stakeholders initiated bodies for the provision of in-service trainings. The bodies facilitated increase in the opportunities for teachers to receive in-service trainings. Those bodies include the Department for Education (DfE) and the TTA (Teacher Training Agency), LEAs; (local education authorities), School governing bodies, The National Union of Teachers, and NATE (National Association for Teaching English), The ASE (Association for Science Education) and Mathematical Association (Altun, 2011).

In sub-Saharan African countries, Ghana, through the ministry of education developed a comprehensive INSET policy framework (Education Act 778) of 2008 which guide the National Teaching Council (NTC) in providing INSET and upgrading programs (Asare et al, (2012), as cited in Junaid & Maka, 2015). In addition, in 2011 the government of Ghana introduced pre-tertiary teacher professional development and management which foster the provision of INSET programs as a way of developing world class teachers who are capable of enhancing student learning and attainment (Junaid & Maka 2015). Similarly in Central African Republic, the government introduced a National Strategy for the Sector of Education (SNSE) 2008–2020. The aims was to improve methods and content of teacher training through the development of the curricula which emphasize on competency-based instruction. The government also introduced 'Bachelor–Master–

Doctorate' (BMD) programs and online in-service teacher trainings.

In Tanzania the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 paved way for the provision of INSET programs (URT 1995). The policy statement instruct that professional development shall be compulsory to all teachers. However the policy was not followed with clear strategic plans to back up the policy statement (URT 1995, Mwakabenga & Komba, 2019). This entails that the policy statement alone was not sufficient in ensuring the provision of INSET programs to teachers in public schools in the country. Even though, in recent years the Tanzanian government in association with other education sponsors have initiate various teachers' INSET programs such as Literacy and Numeracy Support System (LANES), School Based In-service training (SBIT) and Teachers' Continuous Professional Development (MEWAKA) among others, whereby most of them are donor funded (Mwakabenga & Komba, 2019).

Public secondary schools teachers in Nyamagana district Mwanza Tanzania are one of the beneficiaries of those programs. However, the expectation from most of the INSET programs provided is not attained due to under performance of teachers as well as students (Mwanza City Council, 2022). Meaning that the teaching and learning processes, activities and achievements do not reflect the efforts (trainings). In other words, the influence of INSET programs to the effectiveness of teaching is still limited. Therefore, this study sought to examine the reasons behind the failure by looking at the challenging factors in the provision of INSET programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewed studies on in-service education training shows it to be of substantial importance in teaching profession. As Iqbal et al (2019) pointed out teachers' in-service trainings influenced teachers' job performance. Meaning that the in-service trainings enhanced the performance of teachers in teaching processes and activities. Affirmed by Nzariwehi and Atuhumuze (2019) who noted that INSET programs have noteworthy supports on teachers' educational credentials and proficiency. The trainings influenced teachers' knowledge and skills which in turn foster escalation in teachers' competence, reliability and duties. Similarly, Olujuwon and Omiyale (2021), enlightened that teachers' in-service trainings are significant in equipping teachers with new knowledge

and skills which enable them to face new challenges and reformation in education. In addition INSET programs in teaching profession are substantial in improving the performance of teachers as noted in several literature (Junejo et al, 2017; Iqbal et al, 2019; Mduma & Mkulu, 2021) that the performance of teachers in classroom settings improved as result of knowledge and skills gained from in-service trainings. However, the realization of the benefits associated with teachers' in-service education and trainings is hampered by many factors such as lack of organization in carrying out the trainings, lack of constant examination and absence of definite resources and motivation as revealed by Nzairwehi and Atuhumuze (2019). In the same way Uddin (2020) also contended that INSET programs are challenged by insufficiency of facilities. He further added that the trainings does not achieve the expected outcomes due to lack of professional trainers, insufficient content of the training and lack of motivation for trainee teachers. This implies that each component of the INSET programs is important without which the trainings are likely to be unsuccessful.

Furthermore, Alfaidi and Elhassan (2020) pointed out that the INSET programs are challenged with many issues. One among them is the insufficient content of the trainings which does not cater for the educational needs and personal needs of teachers. Moreover, most of the in-service trainings provided are not continuous. This entails that the absence of continuation in-service trainings inhibits its benefits in teaching profession. Similarly Mahara, (2024) also indicated that the infrequency of in-service training opportunities for teachers were attributed to geographical challenges, government policies, unstable state of the education sector and the managerial reluctance. This implies that changes in government policies, education sector and geographical location will increase the frequencies of teachers' opportunities to in-service trainings.

However the reviewed literature showed that financial difficulty is a predominant challenge in the provision of INSET programs to teachers. Denoting that other challenges such as insufficient facilities, absence of evaluation and lack of motivation resulted from it (Ooi and Othman, 2023). Understood in the same way Mahara, (2024) who propounded that, lack of sufficient financial resources hinders the provision of INSET programs. Nonetheless, the INSET programs also stumbled upon time limitations whereby trainees find it difficult to balance their time for work and time for the

programs (Ooi & Othman, 2023). Though literature shows that the issue of finance to be the predominant factor in provision of INSET programs, shortness of the trainings as a challenging factor cannot be ignored. As indicated in a study by Junaid & Maka (2015) in sub Saharan countries such as Madagascar, Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Zambia in-service trainings for teachers take short duration and mostly lack continuation. The shortage of INSET programs was also noted by Olujuwon & Omiyale, (2021) in Nigerian schools. The situation hampered with teachers' improvement in the job performance. Understood in the same way Alfaidi and Elhassan (2020) added that the teachers in-service training programs provided were neither continuous nor diverse meaning most of them lacked continuation and follow ups.

Furthermore, in East Africa specifically Uganda and Tanzania INSET programs encounters a number of challenging factor in its provision such as few opportunities to attend the trainings, uncoordinated in-service trainings and poor environment for training and lack of evaluation on the effectiveness of the programs (Nzairwehi and Atuhumuze, 2019; Komba and Mwakabenga, 2019). This signify that the trainings discriminate teachers' attendance. That is those who benefit from the INSET programs are minority were by the majority do not partake the opportunities. In the same way there is a lot of bureaucracy associated with teachers' involvement in INSET programs specifically those involving qualification upgrading as stated by Meli (2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed research approach under which convergent parallel design was used. The research population comprised of 1268 Nyamagana District public secondary school teachers, 34 heads of schools, 18 ward educational officers (WEO) and 1 district educational officer (DEO). Data were collected using questionnaire for teachers and interview guide for head of schools, WEOs and DEO. A sum of 91 teachers from 3 public secondary schools were selected randomly to participate in the study. On the other hand 3 heads of schools, 2 WEOs and 1 DEO were purposively selected to participate in the study due to their positions and qualifications. The research instruments were pilot tested to ensure their validity and reliability. The two methods were used to countercheck the weakness of the other.

Data analysis was done separately. Data from

questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics aided by SPSS 23th version. Results obtained were presented through frequency tables, percentages and pie charts. Whereas the data from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis and the results were reported in summary form. Throughout the process of data collection and data analysis, the study abided to all aspects of ethical consideration. Including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was navigate through the provision of INSET programs focusing on the challenges in the provision of teachers' in-service education and training programs to public secondary school teachers. Both questionnaires and interviews

used, which required the respondents to respond to the questions on the challenges in the provision of INSET programs to public secondary school teachers.

Challenging Factors in The Provision of Inset Programs to Teachers

The focus of the study was to determine the challenges associated with the provision of INSET programs to public secondary schools teachers, through respondents' responses on questionnaires and interviews. Likert scale which was determined by 1 strongly disagree 2 disagree 3 Agree 4 strongly agreed was used. Results from questionnaires for teachers indicated that the provision of INSET programs encounters a number of challenges. To attain to this overview, a total of 11 statements were tested during the data collection and presented as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Likert scale ranking of statements on challenges in the provision of INSET programs.

No.	Statements on the challenges encountered in the provision of INSET programs	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I.	the trainings were conducted in non-conducive environments	1.1%	11.0%	42.9%	45.1%
II.	The training contained irrelevant contents	12.1%	29.7%	41.8%	16.5%
III.	Teachers had negative attitudes towards the training	15.4%	26.4%	34.1%	24.2%
IV.	The in-service training was not frequently provided.	7.7%	18.7%	41.8%	31.9%
V.	Leaders were irresponsible in ensuring the provision of INSET programs.	7.7%	40.7%	30.8%	20.9%
VI.	The inadequate mentorship and inactive support to the trained teachers.	3.3%	26.4%	42.9%	27.5%
VII.	Inadequate opportunities for teachers to attend INSET programs.	2.2%	13.2%	49.5%	35.2%
VIII.	The traditional (centralized) approach of providing INSET programs.	6.5%	30.8%	46.2%	16.5%
IX.	Inadequacy of professional INSET trainers.	5.5%	6.6%	46.2%	41.8%
X.	Shortage of funds to run or conduct INSET programs.	1.1%	6.6%	52.7%	39.6%
XI.	Shortage of time to conduct the training.	2.2%	28.6%	45.1%	24.2%

Source: Field Data (2024)

The findings from the likert scale indicated that several challenges were encountered in providing of INSET programs for public secondary school teachers. The study findings from both questionnaires and interviews

on the challenges are discussed using the following themes.

Inadequate Financial Resources

The researcher asked the respondents if the inadequate of financial resources was a challenge in the

provision of INSET programs. The finding indicated that inadequate of financial resources as the foremost challenge. Results through a likert scale as seen in table 1 indicate that a total of 92.3 percent (52.7% agreed, 39.6% strongly agreed) of respondents established that inadequate financial resources is a major challenge in the provision of INSET programs. This means that a deficiency of financial resources hinders the provision of INSET programs and its effectiveness in the teaching and learning process. This

concurs with Mahara (2024) who pointed out that financial constraints constitute a major obstacle in implementing the teachers' in-service training initiatives. In the same way, results from open-ended question on the challenges in the provision of INSET programs to teachers showed that inadequacy of the financial resources is a major challenge in the provision of INSET programs. Table 2 shows the results from open-ended question on the questionnaires for teachers.

Table 2. Teachers' responses on the challenges in the provision of INSET programs.

No	Teachers' responses on challenges in the provision of INSET programs.	Frequencies	Percentage
i)	Short training session	19	18.7
ii)	Insufficient organization	17	20.9
iii)	Inadequate financial resources	35	38.5
iv)	Fixed school calendar	9	9.9
v)	Shortage of evaluation of training	9	9.9
vi)	Shortage of professional trainers	2	2.2
Total		91	100

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2 revealed that 38.5 percent of the sampled teachers outlined inadequacy of financial resources as a challenge in the provision of INSET programs. This implies that insufficient funding of the INSET programs inhibits the effectiveness of the trainings in teaching. Comparable findings were also found by Tahira et al (2024) which indicated that teachers' in-service trainings in Pakistan has been confronted with lack of financial resources which led to the provision of poorly equipped training programs. Respondents from the interviews also pointed out that the most challenging factor in the provision of INSET programs is the issue of inadequate financial resources. One of the interviewed head of school noted that the provision of INSET programs to public secondary school teachers is in most cases constrained by inadequacy of funds. He emphasized that:

"Funds is the most essential components in providing successful in-service trainings to teachers whether in or out of school compounds." He added that: "financial resources are needed for buying equipment to be used in the training and for trainers and trainees allowances. However there is shortage of funds to support the provision of these trainings to secondary school teachers." (Interviewee C, July 2024)

This shows that heads of schools are aware that the success of the trainings are triggered by the presence of enough financial resources. Therefore, the government should ensure that there is a specific budget for the trainings in each public secondary school as well as the district. Understood in the same way Ooi and Othman's (2023) findings indicated that the delivery of in-service education training for teachers is challenged by financial difficulties.

Time Limitations

Time limitation was noted as a challenge in the provision of INSET programs through data collected from interview and questionnaires. Results from the likert scale as indicated in table 1 showed that 69.3 percent (45.1% agreed, strongly agreed 24.2%) of teachers affirmed that shortage of time to conduct the trainings was a challenge in the provision of INSET programs to public secondary school teachers. This suggests that time for conducting in-service trainings is always limited and, in most cases, does not realize the expected results. Similar findings were noted by Alfaidi and Elhassan (2020) that most of the in-service training programs for teachers were very short with no continuation.

Correspondingly, findings from open-ended questions in the questionnaire for teachers also reveal that time limitation is a challenge in the provision of INSET programs to teachers. As indicated in table 2, 20.9

percent of the sampled teachers indicated that a short training session is a challenge in the provision of INSET programs as it hinders its influence in improving the quality of teaching. This finding concurs with Ozturk (2019) who commented that in-service education and trainings for teachers are normally one-short and took a short period of time which obstruct teachers from acquiring relative knowledge and skills.

Related findings were revealed during interview sessions as noted by one of the interviewees that the time for the in-service programs is insufficient to cater for teachers' needs to comprehend the content of the trainings. Furthermore, time limitations is mostly triggered by shortage of funds to run the trainings as well as fixed school academic timetables. This implies that time is a significant factor in providing INSET programs to teachers and that when sufficient time is guaranteed good results could be obtained from these trainings. Sustained by Alfaid and Elhassan (2020) who commented that most of the trainings offered to teachers had short duration therefore hindered expected goals from being achieved. In addition, Normwani et al (2017) also revealed that most of the INSET programs are neither continuous nor diverse. That means that the programs had short spin of life and did not accommodate the individual needs of teachers. Another respondent added that:

"Time for such training is very limited but also it interferes with the school timetable. This situation hinders many teachers with many periods from attending such programs. In addition due to the shortage of the training sessions in most cases the intended content is not fully covered." (Interviewee A, July 2024)

This entails that if enough time for the trainings is allocated, good results could be yielded. Therefore, the government should ensure that providers of the trainings allocate enough time for each in-service training delivered to teachers. Understood in the same way Junaid and Maka (2015) pointed out that most of the trainings offered had short lifespan therefore failed to achieve the desired goals.

Inadequate Environment for Trainings

Inadequacy environment for trainings was noted by respondents as one of the major challenge to the provision of INSET programs. Majority of the sampled teachers as shown in table 1, that is 88.2% (42.9% agreed, 45.1% strongly agreed) approved that deprived learning environment during training sessions was a challenge in achieving the goals set for in-service

trainings. Evidence from the interview also displayed that the respondents were of the same view that an inadequate environment of trainings is a challenge in the provision of INSET programs to teachers. This implies that the deprived environment of the trainings hinders the effectiveness of the trainings because teachers lose interest on the content of the trainings which in the end manifest in the teaching process. Supported by Tuncel and Cobanoglu (2018) who noted that the setting of the in-service trainings did not motivate teachers to actively participate in the trainings. In addition, another interviewee grieved that:

"Teachers attending the training are always condensed in one room which do not have enough facilities for the training and do not give room for active participation." (Interviewee D, July 2024)

This means that the condition of the place where the trainings took place can either hinder or promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills expected from the trainings. Therefore, the respective authorities should ensure that the training environment facilitates the trainings rather than hindering the learning process. As further explored by Tuncel and Cobanoglu (2018) that novice teachers showed negative views on the environment of the sessions which involved crowded classes, hence made a lot of teachers to lose interest in attending the trainings. Moreover, Mahara (2024) also noted that the deprived environment of trainings hindered teachers' full participation in the trainings therefore interferes with its expected outcome.

Unclear Policy for Inset Programs

During the interview session majority of the respondents identified the issue of unclear policy as a challenge in the provision of in-service trainings. Interviewees argued that the education and training policy in use does not clearly specify roles of educational stakeholders in the provision of INSET programs, hence hinders its implementation. One of the interviewees expounded that:

"The current education and training policy of Tanzania which is a key for the provision of in-service trainings to teachers is insufficient. The policy does not clearly state about the source of funds, organization of the trainings, and duration of the trainings. The policy also does not identify responsibilities of educational stakeholders in providing in-service trainings. This challenge the provision as well as routine

of teachers in INSET programs.” (Interviewee E, July 2024)

This denotes that the policy does not provide a clear framework on how to conduct in-service education and trainings for teachers. The lack of explicit policy on teachers’ in-service trainings for that reason hampers with its provision. Hence, it is a call for the government and other educational stakeholders to work on amending the policy to ensure its effectiveness in teaching. This also means that the Tanzanian education policy should be amended to provide clear strategic plan on how in-service trainings for teachers should be piloted, organized and implemented. Correspondingly, Komba and Mwakabenga (2019) indicated that, in Tanzania, there is no specific policies and guidelines for teachers’ in-service education and training programs. Thus, there are numerous providers of INSET programs who are uncoordinated and scattered in the country. Understood in the same way, Mwila et al (2022) also noted that several nations including Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique did not have a clear policy on teachers’ in-service trainings while others were working towards establishing the policies.

Limited Opportunities to Attend Inset Programs

Few opportunities to attend the trainings also emerged as a challenge in the provision of INSET programs. Results from questionnaires showed that 84.7% (49.5% agreed, strongly agreed 35.2%) of the sampled teachers affirm that limited opportunities for teachers to attend the trainings was also a challenge in the provision of INSET programs. This surmise that there is limited opportunities of secondary school teachers to attend INSET programs which hinders it from being effective. Similar finding was noted by ADEA et al (2022) whereby the findings indicated that opportunities to attend in-service trainings were limited to urban school teachers leaving rural school teachers behind. Equally results from interview session also indicated that limited opportunities to attend the training programs hindered their influence in teaching. One of the interviewees asserted that the opportunity to INSET programs is not given to all secondary school teachers. He emphasized that:

“Apart from the ongoing MEWAKA program, opportunities to attend other in-service training programs is always limited. Teachers are discriminated base on their teaching subjects and departments.” Affirmed by another respondent who stated that, “most of the training programs provided to teachers mainly

focused on science subject teachers and language teachers leaving the art teachers behind.” (Interviewee B, July 2024)

This implies that most of the in-service trainings provided to secondary school teachers discriminates against teachers based on their teaching subjects. That is most of the programs focuses on science subject teachers and English language teachers. Therefore, there is discrimination against the teaching staff from those who benefit from the INSET programs and those who do not. This finding is supported by Mahara (2024) who noted that most of the trainings focused on English as a foreign language teachers discriminating other subject teachers.

Deficiency of Professional Trainers

Findings from the questionnaires for teachers revealed that deficiency of professional trainers is one of the major challenges in the provision of INSET programs. Teachers who were respondents in questionnaires for teachers affirmed that deficiency of professional trainers as another major challenge in the provision of INSET trainings. Results from the Likert scale as shown in table 1 indicated that 88 percent (46.2% agreed, 41.8% strongly agreed) of teachers affirmed that lack of professional trainers is a challenge in the provision of INSET programs and their effectiveness in teaching. This implies that the deficit of professional trainers leads to the use of unqualified trainers in most of the in-service trainings. The situation inhibits the transfer and acquisition of the intended knowledge and skills to teachers. Hence, it is a call to the government and other educational stakeholders to ensure that trainers receive training before training teachers.

Furthermore, findings from open-ended question (what are the challenges in the provision of in-service teachers training programs?) in the questionnaire for teachers also revealed that teachers mentioned deficiency of professional trainers as a challenge in the provision of trainings. Table 2 indicates that 9.9 percent of the sampled teachers outlined shortage of professional trainers as a challenge to the effectiveness of the trainings. This means that professional trainers are significant in the provision of in-service trainings and their absence reduces the value of the programs. Similar finding was pointed out by Uddin (2020) who asserted that INSET facilities were insufficient, and they did not achieve the expected outcomes due to lack of professional trainers. Moreover, respondents from interviews revealed that most of the trainers who train teachers were not professional trainers. One of the

interviewees signified that the lack of professional trainers hinders INSET programs from being effective in teaching. In explaining that he specifically stated that:

“Another challenge in the provision of in-service trainings to teachers is the issue of trainers. In most cases trainers are not professional and in other occasions they just take more experienced teachers to train their fellow teachers.” (Interviewee A, July 2024)

This suggests that the provision of INSET programs to teachers is characterized by the use of in experienced and non-professional trainers who fail to deliver the content of the trainings. This finding is similar to Tuncel and Cobanoglu (2018) who established that teacher trainees had negative views on the trainers which affected their participation in the trainings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations offered in this section focused on the strategies to address the challenges revealed through the findings. Therefore the recommendations focus on the actions to be taken in order to improve the provision and implementation of INSET programs to public secondary schools teachers.

The study recommend that the Ministry of Education Science and Technology through policy makers should make initiatives in developing education and training policy for teachers that embraces the framework for the provision of INSET programs. The policy should provide a structure on how various stakeholders can take part in financing and facilitating INSET programs. In addition the ministry should allocate enough budget for the provision of teachers INSET programs when preparing the annual ministerial budget to be presented in the parliament for verification. Moreover, the ministry should ensure the capabilities of the trainers in facilitating in-service trainings. This implies that the trainers in INSET programs should be well-informed on a particular training before assisting teachers during the trainings.

Other education stakeholders such as DEO, heads of schools and WEOs should initiate and facilitate various programs for teachers such as workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers. They should also ensure conducive environments for the teachers' in-service trainings within their educational jurisdictions.

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