Teacher Training and Teacher Labour Sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper discusses teacher education programme in Nigeria with emphasis on the fact that teachers are the life wires of any educational system, and as such they are indispensable factors in the development and advancement of any country. It has also been stressed that teachers have great influence in the life of the learning child and that a successful learning at all levels depends on the classroom teacher. It is against such background that it calls for assessing the state of teacher education in Nigeria. That is what it has been, what it is now and where it will be tomorrow. To this end, this paper analyses the historical background, the necessity of teacher preparation, the content programme, the quality of teacher and trainers/educators, problems militating teacher education, infrastructural facilities and conclusion with some suggestions on how to improve on teacher education programme in line with the present technological advancement in Nigeria.

Keyword: Teacher Labour Sustainability

I. Introduction

Teacher education is an institutionalized procedure designed for professional training of those who engage in the act of teaching in preparation of competent teachers who are knowledgeable in specialized area of knowledge and professional practice. The introduction of schools in Nigeria began in (1842). The action was not deliberately planned. It was an afterthought of the missionary bodies which in their evangelical mission thought that the establishment of schools would enhance their chances of recording more success in their bid to win souls through conversion.

The missionary bodies incidental views of establishment of schools as an indispensable tool for their mission brought the increase of schools as the missions scrambled for sets of instructions and converts.

According to Nwachukwu (1986:11) the belief was that the more schools that were established, the more students that would be recruited and the more converts would be made. Each church believed that it would be unusual for a pagan child to go through the long year of schooling without being converted to the religion taught in the school. Inspite of the Christian missions to establish schools for their catechistical evangelical functions among other things, lacked adequate personnel, an attempt to off-set the dearth of trained teachers as no trained teachers were available locally in Nigeria. Adesina (1977:5) stressed that the monitorial system was adopted where students in the top classes who show signs of academic promise or excellence were used to teach other children in the schools. Ochu (1986:63) further made it clear that monitorial system made it possible for one teacher to man a school of up to four classes with population of over hundred under this circumstances of poor quality of teacher, disproportionate teacher-pupil-ratio, the quality of education was not only poor, hence the need for the provision of teachers and establishment of teacher training institution.

During the early years of teachers education programme in Nigeria, teachers began with a study in method courses (professional courses) followed by specialized training for few optional subjects in teacher training college where they acquired appropriate professional spirit. It was from here that teachers moved into college of education or university of indepth knowledge in their various fields.

Today there are more than three institutions concerned with the preparation of teachers for all levels of formal education. Such institutions fall into four categories. For example teachers training colleges which has been phased out in many states, Colleges of Education, the Polytechnics and Universities.

According to Esu (1999), from the dawn of the Nigerian independence, education was and is still being perceived as the cornerstone of successful life by a large portion of the populace. Without the teachers the vision of educational system will not come true. Teachers are the life wires of any educational system and as such they are indispensable factors in the development and advancement of any country. The key to educational excellence is good teaching.

Nigeria has remained an independent nation for the past 50 years and many schools have been established to train people in diverse fields or disciplines including teacher education. Esu (1999) emphasized that over the years, man’s insatiable quest for knowledge the world over, has occasioned dynamic changes in the economic, social, cultural and political arena. In order to follow and understand this global picture in education system, it has become necessary to introduce, sustain and continue to up-grade more advanced teacher training.
programmes. This is based on the belief that teachers have great influence on the life the learning child and a successful learning at all levels depends on the classroom teacher.

Generally speaking, one can say, with a measure of certitude that Nigerian teacher education today has adequate quality of teachers. There are confirmatory indicators of this claim, e.g. (a) It is true that Nigeria has witnessed educational and explosion in the last 40 years. Esu (1982) stated that the production of people in different disciplines require teachers who were current in their different subject areas and in the techniques of teaching. (b) Teachers training institutions of the secondary education category have been phased out in the southern Nigeria. (c) The sandwich programme of some teacher education institutions such as those of Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe has been scrapped. (d) The number of students admitted in the existing sandwich programmes of teacher education institutions is getting slimmer and slimmer, that is remarkably reducing with the passage of years into the 21st century. (e) The agencies of political class or government educational policy formulators, education policy implementers, school management, no longer harp on teacher quality as a major factor militating against teaching in school e.g states such as Enugu state which have overflowing number of teachers in their system have in 1996 discharged teachers who are non-indigenes of the state. (f) Qualified teachers roam the street today in search of teaching position and schools.

After independence in 1960, government effort was directed towards eliminating the number of untrained teachers and also increasing the number of trained teachers in schools. With the introduction of educational courses in universities and the establishment of four Advanced Teachers’ Training College, teacher education relieved great impetus as well as became the key to the educational development of teachers in Nigeria. This level of training continued to get considerable attention and support from the federal and state government Esu (1982). Callaway and Musone (1969) asserted that most teachers were trained at governments expense and many received allowances while in training. Teacher education has been the most heavily subsidized level of education in Nigeria in 1976 when the Universal Primary Education was introduced in Nigeria.

In spite of this effort by the federal and state governments, it was noted that some of the teaching staff in teacher colleges did not receive specific preparation for their duties (Lewis, 1962). This situation seem to persist till today and teacher trainers, apparently often lack relevant experience which should facilitate the delivery of their service. In order to produce more graduates and non-graduate teachers in Nigeria, the “crash programme” was introduced into teacher education in 1968 and 1974 for secondary and primary school or UPE teachers respectively. Moreover, different structures of (1 year, 2 years and 5 years) training scheme were introduced in the Teacher Training colleges. Finally, the 6-3-3-4 system of education also affected the preparation of teachers in Nigeria. For instance, the 6-3-3-4 system of education emphasis functional education that stresses utilitarian purposes that prepares the learner for successful or useful living within the society. It also led to phasing out of Teachers’ Training Colleges.

The situation of teacher education in Nigeria

In the context of present day educative scene in Nigeria the training of teachers and establishment of teacher education is still a federal government concern and the stand is the same in all states of the federation. The unqualified teachers are given the opportunity to get into the training colleges. At the moment, section 9 sub-section 59(1) of National Policy on Education (FRN) 1981, states that all teachers in our educational institutions beginning from primary school to the universities will be professionally trained, and all teacher education programmes will be structured to equip teachers for effective performance of their duties. It adds that the following teacher training institutions will have to give the required professional training (i) Grade II Teacher Colleges (ii) Advanced Teachers College (iii) Institute of Education (iv) National Teachers Institute and teachers centres.

Classification of teacher education

In Nigeria education system, teacher education programmes are classified into three levels based on training, acquisition and certification. They follow the understated sequence; (a) Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) (b) Bachelors Degree in Education Programme (c) Post-Graduate Degree in Education Programme

At (NCE) undergraduate ad post graduate levels, teacher education programmes have been expanded to cater for the new development and requirements of academic professional subjects. All the levels produce resourceful teachers who have mastery of various subjects combined with academic and professional training
education. The teachers are exposed to identical teacher education curriculum frameworks. Variations in the preparation of classroom teachers is occasionally by their prospective operational level. In this regard, the operational curriculum of teachers colleges and facilities of education is continually structured on the following components:

(a) General studies in Education (basic academic subjects)
(b) Educational Fundamental studies (principles and practice of education)
(c) Studies related to the students intended field of teaching.
(d) Teaching practice
(e) Research projects

The way knowledge is distributed and transmitted in many teacher education programs has remained relatively unchanged from pre-civil war era. Possible reasons for the slow improvement in the pedagogical practice can be attributed to the following points.

Taiwo (2000) emphasized that the current Teacher Education Programmes are no longer adequate to realize the current goals of teacher education. It stands to reason therefore that current teacher education programmes which are now available cannot serve the needs of the Nigerian system in the present day.

The various Nigerian constitutions of (1989) provided political and social visions ideological statements for the nation concerning education. There is envisage unprecedented rate of social, economic and technological changes in this present day. These changes introduced new problems areas that require knowledge and skills that need to be tackled. Nigeria also envisage knowledge explosion which strongly needed new breed of teachers to cope with the situation.

The general view that teaching is a free-for-all career have made generations not to produce the crop of teachers demanded in the society thereby causing teacher education programme to remain in a state of decay.

Taiwo (1980) emphasized that teacher education programmes in Nigeria have wide diversity. In such scenario some unifying structure to teacher education today assume more complex roles.

The common impression about teacher education is that it has remained unchanged for long time because is not found relevant to citizenry as required in the national and global context.

In the present day, teacher education scene in Nigeria have sufficient quantity of teachers in our schools who are not willing to keep order in the institutions and classroom environment.

The assessment of the state of teacher education in Nigeria for sustainable development is made out by first highlighting that the life in the whole world is under threat and little can only be achieved through a paradigm shift in teacher education.

The truth is that despite the fact that Nigeria has over-subscribed to teacher education institutions, our teachers are of poor quality. According to Ukeje (1986:49) the poor quality does not only manifest in poor teaching which effects are not immediately observable but also on poor quality of schools products, ineffective schools and static educational system. So the era of search for quantity of sufficient number of Nigeria is over with the closing years of the 20th century.

II. Appraisal of teacher education in Nigeria

One compelling reason why once a while there is need for an evaluative study in a particular field or area within a field is that from such an exercise, it is possible to assess the trend, the focus as well as problems and prospects of research effort in the area in question. Teacher education is one such area of study that requires re-appraisal from time to time, going by the direction that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers" FRN (1981). The implication is that a qualitative teacher education programme would guarantee a qualitative education al super structure for the entire programme.

A critical appraisal of the teacher education programme in Nigeria reveals the following observation through a critical look at the problems militating against teacher education as highlighted above.

Taiwo (1980) noted twelve major sources of problems confronting teacher education in Nigeria and their consequences. The consequences of these problems are enormous and may get out of hand after sometimes if not properly addressed.

The pertinent question is where lie the problems about teacher education in Nigeria? The questions are broad and direction provoking questions e.g

(a) Is the problem with the quality of prospective teacher education trainees?
(b) Is the problem with the quality of the teacher to be.
(c) Is the problem with the quality of training programmes or curriculum?
(d) Is the problem blameable on implementation strategies of teacher education programme?
(e) Has the government a hand in the poor quality of teachers and trainees?
(f) Is poor quality teaching a function of financial or inflationary pressure on teachers.
(g) Is the society to be blamed, in any way, for the poor quality of the whole educational system and he commitant poor teaching?
(h) Are poor quality of teachers and poor teaching a function of unprofessionalization of teachers in Nigeria? etc.

**Sources of teacher education problems in Nigeria**

1. **Unqualified Teacher**
   Meziobi (1996:66) outlined the main sources from where the problems are drawn from e.g.
   (a) Students with low cut off points in the University Matriculation Examination (UME) who compared with credential gained entry into law and medicine.
   (b) Those who could not make it into other discipline of first choice but would now be taken to teacher education rather than stay at home.
   (c) Those who applied for admission into other discipline but for no choice found their names in education list of admitted applicants.
   (d) Those who initially thought of using education as a stop gap to other discipline but failed to accomplish this desire.
   (e) People who are not educable as teachers but found themselves into the teacher education institutions or programmes on account of political expediency, god-fatherism, government or catchment area policies.
   (f) Those who failed their pre-degree/remedial examinations and are sponsored by either the university or government to enroll in teacher education programme.

2. **Quacking Teaching**: There is teaching quacking in Nigeria. Meziobi (1966:6) explained that most of the teachers are non professional teachers. They are only concerned with content transmission without any commitment to how the content should be taught let alone understanding the psychology of learning and the learner. Fafuruwa (1971:82, 83, 84) buttressed this fact that teacher-type-produce-some-product kind. He noted that no adequate training can take place without complete teachers to handle the programmes.

3. **Poor quality of Training Programme Curriculum**: The curriculum in use in teacher education institutions in Nigeria is not only credential acquisition oriented. The curriculum emphasizes on theory with a passing attention to the actual teaching practice competence and skills. Most of the graduates came out of barren programmes that do not have up to the expectation of adequacy of curriculum provisions.

4. **Poor Policy Implementation Strategies**: The poor quality of teacher education is anchored on poor programme implementation strategies, e.g. absence of mechanism, inadequate education programmes funding, lack of technical know-how on the part of staff supervision etc.

5. **Government Role**: Government contribute greatly to sources of problems of teacher education e.g. government federal character or quota system, quota system and mass schooling policy led to the admission of uneducable people into teacher education institutions. Members of political elites influence the admission of poor quality materials into the institutions. Non-payment of teachers’ salaries and fringe benefits induce teachers morale, job, dissatisfaction, teacher truancy, absenteeism and lack of commitment, all these impair quality teaching. Government inadequate funding of teacher education institutions manifests insufficient instructional facilities. Today many school building have no sits, no laboratory equipment and wrong recruitment of right quality of teachers in time of need. For this reason teachers’ social standing is highly reduced.

6. **Economic Depression**: The monies budgeted for teachers education for production of high quality of teacher coupled with the putting in place as well as articulated policy implementation machinery are no longer available in desired amount to realized a good number of government policies for the production of good caliber of teachers.

7. **Incidence of Cultism**: Taiwo (1985:257) explained that teachers as a group in the school, have influence which gives a school its character and tone. By their professional calling are expected to stay clear from groups and individuals that resort to violence to settle scores in seeking redress. Students who are initiated into cult groups in Nigeria do not seem to believe in dialogue in the resolutions of conflicts. Teachers are not known for such violent behaviours. Theirs is to socialize, humanize and tame wild and animalistic tendencies behaviours. During some incidences teachers education suffer in the hands of cultists e.g it was noted that the Federal College of Education Pankshin is a teacher education institution, Akani (1996:7) reports that a lecturer in the above college was beaten in 1989 by students of the Buccaneer cult because he was strict in scoring students examination and test scripts. He also reported that in the same 1989, the College of Education Port Harcourt, expelled 48 students, because they were cult members. Cult organization in Nigerian Universities and colleges of education have display total disregard for due process of law in settling grievances. Consequently they have maimed, killed, terrorized and threatened lecturers and students. They have also raped female students. Such criminal actions are sometimes directed against themselves in inter and intra cult clashes. They

8. Society Role: The Nigerian society also contributes to poor quality of teachers in Nigeria, e.g. the image of teachers and teaching in the Nigerian society is too poor. Teaching is stigmatized as a never-do-well “profession”. This labeling discourages parents from encouraging their children with good brain to take to this profession. To many Nigerian parents, teaching is a job of last resort. Individuals, groups, organizations, philanthropists, communities and Nigerian society at large do not take notice of teachers plight towards contributing substantially to save the poor teacher and his teaching ability crises. Absence of professionalism of teaching in Nigeria is not yet-professionalized in the strictest sense of word. The quality control of teachers council that would prescribed certification prerequisite, operational teaching, professional ethics and act as a pressure group to enhance practice do not contribute to engineering quality teacher behaviour and quality teaching. The depreciation is as a result of the negligence and negotiation of their welfare, denial of their rights and humiliation. A good number of teacher feel frustrated because their promotions and other entitlement are delayed. Their grievances are never positively attended to until they embark on strike. The strike action o be embark on by nation affect also the teachers over the non payment of new minimum wage of N180,000 is a very good example.

9. Information Explosion: In Nigeria today the nature of the global society has changed with information explosion. Rapid changes in science and technology are taking place a very high frequency and unpredictable. The availability of electronic devices for storing information has made the human brain redundant. The computers have micro processors for their brain do not have the ability to think like human brain has so the thrust of learning leads in children the ability to think and for making them problem solvers and creative thinkers. The teachers role thus shift from that of a person who control learning in children by pouring information in their brains to a person who facilitates their learning by making them think. Each child is endowed with the capacity to construct his or her knowledge. Therefore, pedagogy, which recognizes the diversity of learning styles of children and capacity to construct their knowledge motivate teacher education teachers to learn, acquire and build new areas of interest in teaching outside what they had learnt in the past.

10. Negligence of Teachers’ Personality: In the past teachers were looked upon as responsible citizens in the society. Communities seek them out for useful advice, yet people seem not to recognize their personality and the job. A teacher is hardly placed among the higher ranking personalities. Evidence abound to show that there is decline in teachers work morale according to Okafor (1988); Mkpa (1995). The decline seems to worsen as one descend the academic ladder. The reason being that the university dons are easily heard whenever they agitate while their counterparts in primary and secondary schools are easily intimidated or neglected.

III. Sustainability of teacher education in Nigeria

According to Emeh (2011) sustainability implies a strategy by which a particular policy made can survive over a time. It also imply that any decision taken now to carry the needs must be able to incorporate the needs of the next generation. E.g. the policies like UBE involve cost that teachers must be prepared, resources for teachers to use must be provided, the classrooms must be built and well equipped. When these needs have been provided, there still remain the problem of the size of the population of teachers, e.g. if the population of teachers is too small, then the project of UBE is unsustainable and if the population is large it becomes unmanageable. This affects the teacher education system because many teachers are left to become idle and the initiators of UBE scheme retile before time assigned to them. This action cause unemployment as a result of the death of the policy made.

In the years past, ministries will demand from Teachers Training Colleges, from the Universities the number of teachers likely to graduate and receive employment letters for work even before they graduate. There is always a ratio of graduation of fresh teachers and posting to their respective places of work. This ratio was a mechanism for maintaining sustainability.

Today it is not so in Nigeria therefore teacher preparation is becoming unsustainable. The reason being that the Nigerian teacher community is today riddled with tales of corruption. There exist a conflict of interest which arises when a citizen assumes position in an office, he abuses the prerogative given to him by the public to exercise power, discretion, influence or responsibility on matters that directly or indirectly affect the interest of the nation. He privatizes his office. In this case where there are allocations within the jurisdiction of his public office, he remains in the disposition of ever being tempted to re-allocate public benefits directly or indirectly according to his public office holdings to his private interests. Ake and Kalu (1993) office held by such batch of Nigerians show lack of prudence and unnecessary waste of public fund, lack of accounting, the sinking of funds into projects viable enough to help siphon public money into private accounts, and the absence of checks and balances topurish severely corrupt education officials. All these affect teacher education sustainability in Nigeria, Ake and Kalu (1993); Onamuga (1993).

On the other hand, many teachers are idle and not properly utilized in the school system. This is because at the beginning of UBE, there was over supply of teachers and the projection for feature became a failure. This is because many ghost workers were discovered. The use of contract approach for supply of materials in schools also drained funds meant for needed resources through inflated costs. Many school buildings have no sits, no laboratories and equipment they are obsolete. Many school buildings are in dilapidated conditions as well as collapsing, standards of education falling
unexpectedly, the social condition of teachers not improved. Teachers’ quarters no longer exist; teachers’ profession is exposed to capitalist society for survival of life; no more respect for dignity of the profession; teachers’ social standing is drastically reduced or vanished. This becomes total loss in the dignity of teacher education sustainability. Another grievous factor is that the capitalist society which downgrade teachers because of what rules in the society and what is derived in the society gears towards ultimate profit maximization. All these factors point to unsustainable of teacher education in Nigeria.

When all these are put into consideration, one may now ask for the way forward for the maintenance and sustenance of the assessment of the state of teacher education in Nigeria today and the future.

Some questions will come to the mind to enable one give vivid answers through vital suggestions to be made to rescue the situation e.g.
(a) What will be the future of teacher education in Nigeria in the years to come?
(b) Do we still have good teachers as we know them today?
(c) Will schools go on surviving as poor as they are today?
(d) Will there still be teachers who are willing to go on teaching with low salary structure in years to come? etc.

**Necessity for change towards the assessment of the state of teacher education in Nigeria**

Behavioural and attitudinal changes in teacher education programmes when employed will change or limit the problems militating against the necessity for teacher preparation in the school system. The preparation in the school system must be accorded high priority. If we do not want our educational system to continue to reproduce their kind in the society, it is high time we paid great attention to the preparation of prospect teachers and those who train them. If teacher education is to function effectively and educate our future leaders, they need to be well prepared because adequate preparation of teachers is absolutely necessary in this technological age.

Educators and educationists all over the country know that ill-prepared teachers willinheritably produce half backed future leaders or professionals. Therefore teacher education institutions should take into account that teaching is an art that we cannot continue to hide under the illusion that anybody can teach. It is noted that the skill of a professional teacher depends in part on his understanding of certain activities of pedagogy. The use of such foundation will help to train the mind of others to learn. Adler (1982). To this end, adequate teachers’ preparation is very important to any educational system. This fact makes the concept of assessment of paramount importance, especially at time when interest in teacher education is at a new height.

It is noted that over the years, prospective teachers have been ill-prepared to meet the demand for more teachers and the requirements of the newly introduced courses. This means that the qualities of teachers in schools were filled with those who require further preparation in order to satisfy a minimum level of competence. National Policy on Education 1981: Awokoya (1980). For example in some schools, subjects such as English, mathematics and science are taught by those without teaching qualification or untrained teachers. This situation meritably resulted in poor performances by students in these subjects in public schools and external examinations. In this case, study will demand teachers who are sufficiently trained with learning experiences and are ready at all times to keep abreast of scientific and technological discoveries that are likely going to take place during the century and beyond. E.g. understanding the new appropriate use of new technological device in information management techniques, work analysis for teaching efficiency, problem solving techniques that can pass from one generation to another etc.

There should be behavioural changes that will oppose or eliminate corruption among the Nigerian teacher of today. Such behavioural change will need to happen not just as event but as processes that will gradually adapt to expected changes in the context of the Nigerian teacher and community at large. Important facilitators to such behavioural change will need to include models that will be freed from corruption. That is teacher education programme must be of a nature that will enable members of already corrupt Nigerian teacher population determine and shape their identities in relation to an immediate corruption free or freed teacher community. This will strongly influence the community values which will in turn help to create its own positive strategies to achieving the aims, goals and objectives of teacher education. (UNDP 1991).

Teacher education programme will need to provide increasing connection on the need for teachers to support one another in the fight against corruption at local, state and national levels in the Nigerian society. The programme will also need to show the presence of a great potential for change, compassion, consensus, involvement and celebration against the general problems of aims, goals and objectives, content and learning experiences and organization, integration and evaluation. There will also be need for programme to show concern about the price of honesty, openness. Counseling will need to have a significant role to play. The anti-corruption campaign will be needed to reach the affected teacher within the field and a follow-up activities designed to educate the affected and help teaching profession that is already collapsing.

Banjo (1974), Taiwo (1980) and Joshua (1997) all agreed that instructional delivery personnel should possess certain minimum levels of competence in their chosen fields in order to guarantee that the graduates are endowed with the appropriate skills for improvement of teacher education for the labour market. This is because a teacher can perform well only if he is hard working and trained by competent hands.
The training of teachers is an indispensable foundation for any policy on education. Majasan (1995: 217) observed that the work of the teacher in the society is so important that it cannot be surely brushed aside if the society is to make good progress and correct all the ills that gradually slow down the prospects of teacher education programmes.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has traced the history of teacher education from the early years up to the present. The paper notes that both the old and new systems of education in Nigeria are characterized by low output of teachers from the tracing institutions, poor quality teachers, poor quality of instruction etc. An examination of the assessment of the state of teacher education in Nigeria show that if the teacher training institutions in Nigeria are properly given attention needed, funded and well managed, they could compete favourably with their counterparts in the developed world. It is therefore in the light of this that the following recommendations are proposed.

(i) The primary responsibility of teacher education institutions in Nigeria should be to turn out dedicated and competent professionals, not just graduates in sufficient numbers to fill every vacancy in schools.

(ii) The spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers should be encouraged.

(iii) Well equipped infrastructure facilities should be provided in any institution concerned with the preparation of teachers.

(iv) There should be improvement in the method of instructions employed by the teacher educators as well as spending more time on teaching practice.

(v) Education of professionals e.g. school teachers should be handled by those who are well versed in the field of education and not any department within the university.

(vi) The school of education or institute of education should be charged with the responsibility of preparing well qualified and dedicated teachers.

(vii) Teacher colleges in Nigeria which have been phased out should be reintroduced to prepare grounds for entrants into the university.

(viii) A period of one year probation should be required of every teacher before certification by the state government to teach.

(ix) Government should provide adequate funds for the purchase and supply of teaching aids, employment of qualified staff, provision of research grants and facilities etc. these inputs are essential for enhancing the quality of teacher.

(x) Only candidates of proven intellectual ability and who are really interested in the teaching provision should be admitted to train as teachers.

(xi) All professional trained teachers should be encouraged to improve on their professional status while non-professionals should be assisted to achieve professional status through in-service.

(xii) Professional trained teachers who are not only competent but found to be competent and skillful in their chosen fields of study should be placed to train the would-be teachers to ensure optimum productivity at the lower levels.

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