PERCEIVED CHALLENGES OF OYO STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGES: IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT SKILL ACQUISITION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The importance attached to technical and vocational education (TVE) lies in its capacity for enhancing skill acquisition of beneficiaries, quality of human capital, development of a nation's economy, advancement of technology and reduction of youth unemployment. However, it has been noted with worry that the training received by the beneficiaries of TVE especially at technical colleges does not meet the requirements of the world of work. Therefore, the paper examined student and teacher perceptions on challenges and implications of skill acquisition in Oyo State technical colleges, Nigeria. Survey research design of the ex-post facto type was adopted and involved all the 3,405 students' and 128 members of staff of Oyo state technical colleges. Simple random and proportionate-to-size sampling techniques were employed to select 850 final-year students and 50 teachers while the five principals were purposively selected. Staff and Student Perceived Challenges Questionnaire (SSPCQ: r=0.79), Effects of Perceived Challenges on Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (EPCSAQ: r=0.081) and Effects of Skill Acquisition on Economic Development Questionnaire (ESAEDQ: r=0.71) were used to obtain data. Using the percentage, the results revealed that shortage of resources, production units, poor policy and curriculum implementation, wrong attitudes, inadequate practical and staff

motivation negatively influenced skill acquisition and economic development. Therefore, Government should adequately provide factors that hinder skill acquisition while other stakeholders should have positive attitudes towards TVE.

Keywords: Technical education, Technical colleges, Skill acquisition, Economic development.

Introduction

Every nation of the world appears to attach importance to technical and vocational education (TVE) because of its potential for enhancing the acquisition of skills by the beneficiaries for the purpose of economic development and advancement of technology. However, several attempts being made by Nigeria towards effective TVE have not really produced the desired results. For example, the society seems to have adjudged graduates of TVE half-baked and incapable of meeting the challenges posed by continuous technological change and the dictates of globalisation. This seeming low quality makes it challenging for TVE products to be relevant in the area of application of science and engineering in the nation's industries, powering the nation's economy, advancing the course of economic production and services for national prosperity.

As Adebisi and Ayeni (2013) noted, most beneficiaries of TVE in Nigeria, particularly at the technical college level seem to experience considerable low patronage because of perceived defects in programme implementation. Akhuemonkhan and Raimi (2014) investigated the impact of quality assurance (QA) on technical and vocational education and training in Nigeria. They found that the impact of TVET has not been impressive because of ineffective QA at all levels. Ozoro (1990) posited that TVE has remained uncoordinated, unplanned, inadequate and, to a considerable extent, irrelevant to societal needs. To Alam (2003), the quality of TVE is poor and cannot provide sufficient significant knowledge for jobs, while TVE students are socially neglected. It might be difficult to experience good economic development in Nigeria without reliable TVE. The economic recession Nigeria is experiencing presently may be linked to inadequate TVE. For instance, TVE makes positive contributions to the quality of human capital and promotion of entrepreneurship. In this capacity, TVE plays

significant roles in the development of a nation's economy and by extension has capacity for skill acquisition of youths, reduction of youth unemployment, promotion of self-reliance, Job creation, poverty alleviation that together capable of resulting in economic development of a nation.

According to Oranu (1992), the recipients of TVE are not providing all the job training they are theoretically capable of providing, to the extent that the training received has not always matched critical employment needs. This is probably why TVE is always accused of low rate of return. In the opinion of Sarkar (2007), demand for skilled workers in the knowledge economy is a major bottleneck for the majority of the youths all over the world to be gainfully employed in the new labour market. As Okolocha (2012) noted, the demand of the new labour market is a major factor responsible for the ever-increasing population of unemployed youths, notwithstanding the various good certificates obtained. It is always observed with worry that the type of commitment required for the real dictates of the modern society that largely requires sound TVE skill acquisition is lacking in the Nigerian society. In Nigeria, particularly in Oyo State, TVE seems not to have been able to stress the development of the innate abilities of learners through practice.

Skilled local manpower is sine qua non to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development (Omodia, 2009). In other words, TVE plays a significant role in the socio-economic growth of a nation (Adepoju and Famade, 2010). One of the major problems of the development of the Nigerian economy is inadequate manpower. Nigerian youths require a broad range of TVE skills in order to contribute to both local and national economy for them to be relevant to the technology of the twenty-first century (Carnevale, 1990). In this situation, manipulative skills, which TVE provides, constitute important factors for the enhancement of proficiency on any task.

The present sharp reduction in the price of crude oil worldwide and the astronomical rate at which the value of naira reduces compared with the value of United States (U.S) dollars that has culminated in the dwindling economic development, makes white-collar jobs less feasible and unpopular. Nigerian youths may not be able to do without effective TVE skills because it is one of the prominent factors for self-reliance, job creation, poverty alleviation and economic

development. Ubeku (1975) averred that at every point in time, there must be the right level of skills, in the right jobs, at the right time, performing the right activities. Graduates of TVE are expected to demonstrate work competencies capable of meeting global quality expectations and possessing the capacity for adaptation to the nation's changing economic situation. Okorie (2000) observed that inadequate training facilities are one of the major problems facing TVE institutions. In Oyo State, specifically, the existing five Government Technical Colleges are experiencing similar challenges. For example, there is acute shortage of standard workshops, laboratories, libraries, teaching and non-teaching personnel, equipment, tools, classrooms, consumable materials, power supply, water supply, student hostels, student and staff furniture, drawing rooms, drawing tables and chairs, information and communication technology (ICT) rooms, computers for ICT while production units are not existing at all. For TVE students to acquire relevant skills, nearly all the important facilities already identified are expected to be readily available and efficiently utilised. However, the availability or otherwise of these items depends largely on the funds allocation to technical education. Inadequate facilities have the tendency for low productivity, high level of unemployment, poverty, over-dependence on foreign nations, increase in crime rate as well as political and economic instability, which together may cause loss of national reputation and under-developed economy.

Statement of the Problem

The shortage of fund allocated to education, generally, and technical education, particularly, seems to be taking its toll on the availability of infrastructural facilities. This, in turn, is seriously affecting the quality of teaching and learning negatively, particularly the acquisition of technical skills by students. Students' low acquisition of the necessary skills has negative effects on the quality of labour and productivity at workplace. Owing partly to these situations, the nation's economy remains underdeveloped. This trend, has therefore, necessitated the need for seeking the opinions of staff and students on the major issues that militate against students' skill acquisition in Oyo State technical colleges and the consequent implications of this on economic development. This study therefore, investigated the challenges militating against effective teaching and learning in Oyo State technical

colleges and the extent to which such factors hinder students' skill acquisition and economic development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

i. What are the major challenges of Oyo State technical colleges?
ii. To what extent do the major challenges (Shortage of standard workshops, laboratories, libraries, teaching and non-teaching personnel, equipment, tools, classrooms, consumable materials, water and power supply) affect Oyo State technical colleges in skill acquisition?
iii. To what extent does the present level of skill acquisition by graduates affect economic development in Oyo State?

Literature Review

Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition can be described as a large behavioural domain which can be learned, and usually involves a combination of cognitive, perceptual and motor processes. It is an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustainable effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills) and /or people (interpersonal skills). According to Idoko (2014), skill acquisition requires the accumulation of different skills purposely for task performance by making use of both theoretical and practical types of knowledge. Thus, skill acquisition necessarily requires effective training. The innate ability of a person does not really determine his/her level of skill acquisition but the quality of training, practice and experience exposed to (Ezeani, 2012).

Imam (2003) asserted that learning is fundamental to skill acquisition, the emphasis of which is on the psychomotor domain. In the opinion of Talavera and Perez-Gonzalez (2007), all skills are learned or capable of being learned and developed and necessarily involve the appropriate and observable performance of particular types of activity and task. There are generic skills that can be transferred to various contexts and situations and specific or technical skills, the content of which is linked to a specific area of work (Levy-Leboya, 1997).

Skill acquisition seems to be fundamental to the development of human capital. Thus, the amount of investment in human capital, such as education and training, is an important factor to the quality of the workforce and the economic vibrancy of a nation. In other words, education and training are key factors to the participation in the new global economy. According to Oguntuyi (2013), the development of any nation is determined by the level of economic survival and vibrancy. Resources, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence and training are necessary for human resource and efficient economy (Marshall, 1998).Undoubtedly, the acceleration of the rate of human capital formation is required for solving the problem of labour shortage and weak economy. Education and training have been identified as the most important components of investing in human capital. For example, Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) investigated human capital theory in relation to educational development. They claimed that investment in education has positive correlation with economic growth and development. For education to contribute significantly to economic growth and development, it must be of high quality to meet the skill demands of the economy. Apparently qualitative education is built on buoyant human, material and financial resources.

Economic Development

Economic development has been defined in different ways. Of all the definitions, the one that is more relevant to the context of this paper views economic development as "the attainment of a standard of living equivalent to that of industrialised countries'' (Hla and Anne, 2009). In other words, it is the growth of standard of living of a country's people from a low- income (poor) to a high-income (rich) economy. When the local quality of life is improved, there is more economic development. Haller (2012) noted that economic development has four dimensions, namely: the initial level of development (reflected, for instance by the income per capita), the human capital or the people's level of education and professional training, the internal economic condition or the economy's structure and external economic circumstances. One of the major conditions for fast economic development of a country is the degree of education and civilisation. Haller (2012) argues that developed countries are characterised by significance of industrial sector, high rate of capital formation, use of high production

techniques and skills and low growth population. The use of high production techniques and latest skills helped countries like Japan, Germany and Israel to develop their economies rapidly, notwithstanding the limited natural resources.

Acquisition of technical skills by youths plays significant roles in the development of a nation's economy because of its positive contributions to the quality of human resource. According to Idoko (2014), exposing youths to skill acquisition programmes will reduce youth unemployment and enhance their self-sustenance. Ogundele, Feyisetan and Shaaba (2014) claimed that, when skills are acquired in any occupation, it will improve the standard of living, with capacity to fight against poverty, thereby sustaining national development.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design of the *ex-post facto* type. The population for the study consisted of the students and staff of the five technical colleges in Oyo State. Simple random and proportionate-to-size sampling techniques were employed to select 850 final-year students, 50 teachers from all the colleges while the five principals were purposively selected. A total of 823 students, 47 members of staff and the five principals returned the copies of the questionnaires given to them. Therefore, the total number of respondents that returned questionnaires was 875. Staff and Student Perceived Challenges Questionnaire (SSPCQ: r =0.79); Effects of the Perceived Challenges on Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (EPCSAQ: r =0.81); and Skill Acquisition Effects on Economic Development Questionnaire (SSAEEDQ: r =0.71) were used to obtain data. Percentage was used to answer the three research questions raised for the study.

Results

Table 1: Perceptions of Staff and Students on the Factors that Constitute Major Challenges to Teaching and Learning in Oyo State Technical Colleges

	FACTORS	Constitute a major Challenge	Constitutes a Challenge	Does not constitute a challenge
1	Budgetary allocation to recurrent expenditure in the technical colleges.	209 (39%)	172 (32%)	155 (29%)
2	Shortage of trade technical instructors	257 (48%)	209 (39%)	70 (13%)
3	Quality of the available trade technical instructors	113 (21%)	272 (51%)	150 (28%)
4	Quality of the available general education teachers	129 (24%)	263 (49%)	145 (27%)
5	Non-existence of laboratory attendants	134 (25%)	295 (55%)	107 (20%)
6	Non-existence of workshop attendants	123 (23%)	327 (61%)	86 (16%)
7	Shortage of storekeepers	156 (29%)	257 (48%)	123 (23%)
8	Non-existence of librarians	123 (23%)	295 (55%)	118 (22%)
9	Shortage of classrooms	348 (65%)	172 (32%)	16 (03%)
10	Shortage of standard workshops	284 (53%)	209 (39%)	43 (08%)
11	Shortage of science laboratories	268 (50%)	145 (27%)	123 (23%)
12	Non-existence of standard libraries	327 (61%)	134 (25%)	75 (14%)
13	Lack of standard information and	257 (48%)	150 (28%)	129 (24%)

	communication technology (ICT) rooms			
14	Unavailability of drawing rooms	290 (54%)	155 (29%)	91 (17%)
15	Unavailability of drawing tables	263 (49%)	150 (28%)	123 (23%)
16	Unavailability of suitable administrative offices	70 (13%)	123 (23%)	343 (64%)
17	Unavailability of student hostels	160 (30%)	225 (42%)	150 (28%)
18	Unavailability of staff quarters	113 (21%)	252 (47%)	171 (32%)
19	Shortage of student furniture	391 (73%)	134 (25%)	11 (02%)
20	Shortage of staff furniture	97 (18%)	145 (27%)	294 (55%)
21	Unavailability of departmental stores	145 (27%)	252 (47%)	139 (26%)
22	Inadequacy of equipment available for trade subjects	311 (58%)	139 (26%)	86 (16%)
23	Inadequacy of tools available for trade subjects	279 (52%)	220 (41%)	37 (07%)
24	Shortage of science equipment	306 (57%)	150 (28%)	80 (15%)
25	Shortage of computers for ICT	252 (47%)	225 (42%)	59 (11%)
26	Shortage of computers for administrative work	155 (29%)	70 (13%)	311 (58%)
27	Shortage of typewriters	198 (37%)	252 (47%)	86 (16%)
28	Shortage of consumable materials for trade subjects	247 (46%)	166 (31%)	123 (23%)
29	Shortage of consumable materials for science subjects	220 (41%)	102 (19%)	214 (40%)

30	Shortage of consumable materials for ICT	209 (39%)	139 (26%)	188 (35%)
31	Lack of power supply	300 (56%)	182 (34%)	54 (10%)
32	Lack of water supply	134 (25%)	209 (39%)	193 (36%)
33	Non-existence of production units	209 (39%)	198 (37%)	129 (24%)
34	Policy formulation on TVE	150 (28%)	145 (27%)	241 (45%)
35	Policy implementation on TVE	134 (25%)	236 (44%)	166 (31%)
36	Political influence on TVE	155 (29%)	209 (39%)	172 (32%)
37	Entry qualification of TVE students	177 (33%)	236 (44%)	123 (23%)
38	Duration of TVE programmes	139 (17%)	198 (36%)	252 (47%)
39	Relevance of the existing curriculum on TVE	155 (29%)	177 (33%)	204 (38%)
40	Implementation of curriculum on TVE	182 (34%)	198 (37%)	156 (29%)
41	Review of curriculum on TVE	166 (31%)	193 (36%)	177 (33%)
42	Teacher attitude to work	75 (14%)	188 (35%)	273 (51%)
43	Student attitude to learning	220 (41%)	182 (34%)	134 (25%)
44	Societal attitudes to TVE	177 (33%)	263 (49%)	96 (18%)
45	Relevance of places of industrial training (I T) for students	172 (32%)	155 (29%)	209 (39%)
46	Duration of Industrial Training	177 (33%)	166 (31%)	193 (36%)
47	Amount received as basic salaries	273 (51%)	145 (27%)	118 (22%)
48	Other allowances	188 (35%)	209 (39%)	139 (26%)
49	Re-training programmes for teaching staff	145 (27%)	252 (47%)	139 (26%)
50	Re-training programmes	118 (22%)	161 (30%)	257 (48%)

	for non-teaching staff			
51	Promotion of staff	209 (39%)	236 (44%)	91 (17%)
52	Housing loan facility for staff	139 (26%)	204 (38%)	193 (36%)
53	Car loan facility for staff	182 (34%)	188 (35%)	166 (31%)
54	Information processing	102 (19%)	166 (31%)	268 (50%)
55	Information dissemination	145 (27%)	193 (36%)	198 (37%)

Table 2: **Perceptions of Staff and Students on the Effects of the Present Situation of Some Items on Students Acquisition of TVE Skills**

S/No		Positive Effect	Negative Effect
1.	Teaching staff	220 (41%)	316 (59%)
2.	Non-teaching staff	295 (55%)	241 (45%)
3.	Funding of TVE	150 (28%)	386 (72%)
4.	Physical facilities	91 (17%)	445 (83%)
5.	Equipment	166 (31%)	370 (69%)
6.	Tools	241 (45%)	295 (55%)
7.	Consumable materials	198 (37%)	338 (63%)
8.	Production units	257 (48%)	279 (52%)
9.	Policies on TVE	327 (61%)	209 (39%)
10.	Attitudes of stakeholders	247 (46%)	289 (54%)
11.	Industrial training for students	306 (57%)	230 (43%)
12.	Staff motivation	263 (49%)	273 (51%)
13.	Information matters	316 (59%)	220 (41%)

Table 3: Perceptions of Principals and Teachers on the Effects of the Present Level of Students' Acquisition of TVE Skills on Some Indicators of Economic Development

S/No		Positive Effect	Negative Effect
1.	Poverty alleviation	17 (37%)	30 (63%)
2.	Increase in employment opportunities	14 (29%)	33 (71%)
3.	Money supply	23 (48%)	24 (52%)
4.	Gross domestic product (GDP)	21 (44%)	26 (56%)
5.	Gross national product (GNP)	23 (48%)	24 (52%)

6.	Creation of new jobs	15 (31%)	32 (69%)
7.	Creation of new business	23 (49%)	24 (51%)
8.	Increase in entrepreneurship	21 (45%)	26 (55%)
9.	Improvement in technology	20 (43%)	27 (57%)
10.	Household income	29 (62%)	18 (38%)

Discussion

Table 1 reveals that the major challenges of Oyo State technical colleges were budgetary allocation to TVE capital projects (42%), budgetary allocation to recurrent expenditure on TVE (39%), shortage of trade technical instructors (48%), shortage of general education teachers (41%), insufficient classrooms (65%), lack of standard workshops (53%), and non-existence of science laboratories (50%).Others were lack of standard libraries (61%), unavailability of standard ICT rooms (48%), non-existence of drawing rooms (54%), lack of drawing tables (49%), shortage of student furniture (73%), shortage of equipment for trade subjects (58%), insufficient tools for trade subjects (52%), consumable materials for science subjects (41%), consumable materials for ICT (39%), erratic power supply (56%), non-existence of production units (39%), students attitudes to learning (41%), and basic salaries of teachers (51%).

The following items constituted challenges: quality of available trade technical instructors (51%), quality of available general education teachers (49%), shortage of administrative staff (49%), non-availability of workshop attendants (55%), shortage of store keepers (48%), non-existence of librarians (55%), shortage of security personnel (43%), unavailability of student hostels (42%),unavailability of staff quarters(47%), shortage of departmental stores (47%), and shortage of typewriters (47%). Others were lack of water supply (39%), policy implementation on TVE (43%), political influence on TVE (39%), entry qualification of TVE students (44%), implementation of TVE curriculum (37%), irregular review of TVE curriculum (36%), societal attitudes on TVE (49%), other allowances of TVE teachers (39%), lack of retraining programmes for teaching staff (47%), irregular promotion of staff (43%), shortage of housing loan facility for staff (38%), and shortage of car loan facility for staff (35%).

However, staff furniture (55%), computers for administrative work (58%), policy formulation on TVE (45%), duration of TVE

programmes (47%), extent of relevance of the existing curriculum on TVE (38%), teacher attitudes to work (51%), relevance of places of IT (36%), lack of re-training programmes for non-teaching staff (48%), information processing (50%), information dissemination (37%) did not constitute challenges to teaching and learning of TVE in Oyo State technical colleges.

This result is in line with Puyate (2008), who notes that schools are characterised by a dearth of professional and qualified teachers for the teaching of vocational/technical subjects, inadequate infrastructure and equipment in schools, insufficient instructional materials, books and poor funding. He also claims that teachers are not provided with enough allowances, there is lack of government appreciation for vocational education, coupled with poor attitudes of parents to TVE in Nigeria private secondary schools. Wilkin and Nwoke (2011) aver that many high school programmes are faced with serious challenges, including the difficulty in attracting qualified career and technical education teachers. The results also corroborate Koko and Akpan (2014), who note that the capability of vocational education for job creation is not doubted but constrained by several challenges, among which are poor funding, as well as lack of trained personnel and facilities.

Also, Umunandi (2014) identifies inadequate infrastructure, issues of technology, teaching students theoretically and government interference as challenges to the promotion of skills required for self-reliance and job creation. Yusuff and Soyemi (2012) argue that for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to be a key sustenance economic development in Nigeria, there is need for changes in the perception and image of TVET.TVE institutions must be overhauled, the TVE teachers should receive the same salary and allowances as their colleagues in industries, and technical education institutions should partner with industries.

Based on their findings, Tafida, Clement and Raihan (2015) recommended that accommodation should be provided for technical teachers within the college compound, technical teachers should earn the same salary as their counterparts within the same qualifications in industries, and the society should be enlightened on the importance of technical education. Olajide (2015) avers that the original intention of TVE has been distorted, hence the need for sincere repositioning in the

area of adequate funding, infrastructural development, human capital development, educational policy restructuring toward skill acquisition, research development and restructuring of the regulatory body, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

The results of research question two, as shown in table 2, indicated that the present situation of teaching staff (59%), funding of TVE (72%), physical facilities (83%), equipment (69%), tools (55%), consumable materials (63%), production unit (52%), attitudes of stakeholders (54%) and staff motivation (51%) had negative effects on students' acquisition of TVE skills. Also, the table indicates that, at present, the non-teaching staff (55%), policy on TVE (61%), industrial training for students (57%) and information matters (59%) had positive effects on students' skill acquisition.

Several reasons are likely to be responsible for these results. The present situation of Oyo State Technical Colleges, characterised by shortage of physical facilities, funds, equipment, tools, consumable materials; lack of production units; low staff motivation; and wrong attitudes of parents and students to TVE, is not likely to make positive contributions to students' skill acquisition. The important educational inputs involved are so fundamental to the effectiveness of any aspect of educational outcome. Students' skill acquisition cannot be achieved without having in place functional infrastructure and sufficient funds. Motivation is equally of paramount importance to teachers' job performance, which also cannot be disconnected from students' level of skill acquisition.

The results of research question three, as presented in table 3, revealed that the present level of students' acquisition of TVE skills in Oyo State technical colleges had negative effect on: poverty alleviation (63%), increase in employment opportunities (71%), money supply (52%), gross domestic product (GDP) (56%), gross national product (GNP) (52%), creation of new jobs (69%), creation of new business (51%), increase in entrepreneurship (55%) and improvement in technology (57%). However, the result indicated that students' acquisition of TVE skills in Oyo State technical colleges at present had positive effect on household income (62%).

Summary

The role of technology in the development of a nation's economy is largely responsible for the importance attached to TVE globally. However, this level of education is being faced with series of inadequacies to the extent that the majority of the beneficiaries are deficient in certain areas of skill acquisition, job knowledge and job creation. This impact negatively on societal needs and the nation's economic development. Inadequacies in the financial, human and material resources, wrong attitudes of students and parents and low staff morale were the major factors that hinder students' skill acquisition in Oyo State technical colleges. These are largely responsible for the high level of poverty, unemployment, inadequate money supply, low GDP and GNP, difficulties in the creation of new job and new business as well as underdeveloped entrepreneurship and technology.

Conclusion

Technical skill acquisition has become a major determinant of the quality of a nation's technology and the buoyance of the economy of any country. However, inadequate resources for TVE have greatly limited students' competency in the various trades and also served as a major hindrance to technological advancement. This has created challenges. Consequently, the development of human capital for the labour market, the needed capacity for poverty alleviation, gainful employment, job creation and the promotion of a vibrant economy have been adversely affected.

Recommendations

The numerous challenges like inadequate workshops, classrooms, ICT facilities, equipment, tools, student and staff furniture, laboratories, libraries, consumable materials, power supply, water supply, lack of production units, shortage of teaching and non-teaching staff, societal wrong attitude to TVE amongst others facing the learning environments of technical colleges in Oyo State have constituted major hindrances to skill acquisition by the students and by extension hinder graduates' ability to function effectively in the work place or be self-reliant. It has been shown that the cumulative effect of all these on the economy of Oyo State is not encouraging.

Therefore, Oyo State government should fund TVE significantly and urgently provide all the required facilities in each of the five technical colleges in the state. Also, prompt attention should be paid to the training, promotion and motivation of teaching and non-teaching personnel. Parents, students and the society at large should have positive attitudes towards TVE.

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