

Entrepreneurial Mentorship: Implication on Small Scale Business Development in Uyo Metropolis

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Abstract: *The study focus on the implication of entrepreneurial mentorship on development of small scale businesses in Uyo metropolis. The rationale of the study is to ascertain the impact of apprenticeship on development of small scale business. The study adopted a survey research design. The accessible population of the study comprised all the owners (mentor) and mentees (apprentices) of registered selected small enterprises in Uyo metropolis (barbing salon (205); welders' (187); furniture maker (158); car mechanic (92)) which is six hundred and fourty-two (642). The sample size was determined using Taro Yanames' formula at 246 (barbing salon (79); welders' (72); furniture maker (60); car mechanic (35). The validity and reliability of the instrument was done using Test retest method at 0.80. The hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis. The study concluded that government should young entrepreneurs to acquire valuable skills that make them self-reliance, developed pro-activeness among entrepreneur and enable them take advantage of opening in their environment. Thus, apprenticeship is directly linked to small scale business development. This means that, apprenticeship facilitates small scale business development in Uyo Metropolis. Furthermore, government should ensure that every trainee is assigned to a mentor according to the areas of their interested.*

Keyword: Entrepreneurial Mentorship, Small Scale Business, Development, Uyo Metropolis

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Nigeria and other developing countries have shown great interest in promoting the activities of entrepreneurship. This is to enable them enhance the performance of small scale businesses, generate efficient and self-sustaining growth; increase self-reliant and sustain a wide range of developmental goals. Such goals include maximizing the use of resources, creation of employment, creation of domestic savings for investment and the encouragement of indigenous entrepreneurship (Orunshola, 2003). According to UNDP report, (2000), poor managerial skill, poor financial management, lack of innovative ideas, and poor attitude towards training has all constituted threats to entrepreneurial development. Consequently making poverty and unemployment rates to be very high in the country. Different regimes of government in a bid to reduce unemployment, poverty and enhance economic growth, have often attempted to improve on the activities of entrepreneurs by formulating policies including programmes and reforms that could reduce the risk.

According to Chukwu and Uzochukwu (2013), initiatives to encourage the development of entrepreneurship have led to the emergence of a variety of small company mentoring enterprise development programs. These mentoring programs aim to inspire aspiring business owners, increase public understanding of entrepreneurship, and support the advancement of entrepreneurial education. Other programs assist entrepreneurs create a workable company strategy and provide management and technical skills in an effort to remove obstacles and limitations to business development. Entrepreneur can be mentored through apprenticeship, internship and business seminar attended. Apprenticeship is a type of on-the-job training that is frequently used to train the next generation of trades' people. It makes it possible for new apprentices to obtain a license and engage in regulated professions. The majority of their training is completed while they are employed by an experienced individual who assists the apprentices in learning their trade or profession in return for their continued employment for a certain amount of time once they have attained demonstrable abilities. Any carefully supervised job or service assignment when a person actively comments on what they are learning throughout the experience or period of attachment is considered an internship (Richard, 2012). This experience helps interns move more easily from the classroom to implementation at the workstation, supports personal growth, builds soft skills like a strong work ethic and interpersonal skills, and sharpens analytical ability. It reshapes their planning ability for exploitation of opportunity and risk calculation. One of the most important activity areas required of an entrepreneur is that of planning which is the first among other functions (Inyang, 2004).

Entrepreneurs operate in an environment of uncertainty that requires effective planning. Most businesses use planning to try to forecast the future while minimizing uncertainty. Small scale business development is also operationalized as: innovation, exploitation of opportunities, creativity and increase in patronage. Innovation is the creation of new or the improvement of quality of the existing goods and services for the satisfaction of customers or creation of new market. In entrepreneurship, opportunity exploitation is an action carried out in order to gain competitive advantage and increase market share through the discovery of gap in the market. It entails the choice to take action on a perceived opportunity and the subsequent behavior intended to maximize the

benefit of the opportunity. As a result of the foregoing, this study aims to close the gap by determining the effect of entrepreneurial mentoring on the growth of small businesses in the city of Uyo.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The inexperience and incompetence of new business owners, as demonstrated by their lack of vision and difficulties or inability to identify a lucrative market niche for their enterprise, is one of the major factors contributing to the failure of start-up companies. Additionally, it seems that an entrepreneur's general growth in knowledge and abilities throughout the first years of a company's existence is a deciding element in its final survival. It appeared that lack of requisite skill for risk calculation, low level of creativity and innovation for improving existing businesses and adding value among young entrepreneurs in Uyo, and inadequate managerial competence for executing strategic plans, has hindered the growth, sustainability and survival of new business ventures. However, empirical studies on related study have been examined but there is still paucity of literature as it relates to small scale business development in Uyo Metropolis. Therefore, this present study seeks to investigate the implication of entrepreneurial mentorship on small scale business development in Uyo metropolis.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study is to examine the effects of entrepreneurial mentorship on small scale business development in Uyo metropolis. The specific objectives include the following:

- i. To examine the effects of apprenticeship on small scale business development in Uyo metropolis.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions were developed to guide the study:

- i. Does apprenticeship have any effect on small scale business development among entrepreneurs in Uyo Metropolis?

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The research hypotheses were formulated and stated in null form:

H₀: Apprenticeship does not significantly affect small scale business development among entrepreneurs in Uyo Metropolis.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 ENTREPRENEURIAL MENTORSHIP

Understanding the corporate world and the educational process as it relates to the growth of entrepreneurship is crucial. Despite the lack of understanding of the learning process involved in business and entrepreneurship development, programs have been developed and interventions have been made (Sullivan, 2000). According to his additional argument, "business mentoring is a way of aiding new-start businesses through the provision of expert help and assistance in overcoming obstacles." Entrepreneurs that work with business mentors gain valuable insight into managing a business and may learn from the mentor's prior expertise (Ejiogu, 2004).

One of the most popular tactics for ensuring a company's survival, prosperity, and sustainability is through mentoring (Agbionu, 2015). It is mostly utilized in developing countries to ensure that business knowledge and skills are acquired through teaching and learning (Agbionu, 2015). Beach (1980) defined entrepreneurial learning as the process through which humans acquire and change habits, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to change their behavior as entrepreneurs. Kolb (1984) offered an alternative perspective, contending that learning is experimental and involves the continuous modification of concepts as a result of experience. Mentoring has always been considered as a tool for social learning, wherein efforts were focused to inculcate in the mentored a particular set of values and practices (Dubois & Karcher, 2005). In a relationship when the elder mentor is trustworthy, kind, and experienced in guiding the younger, mentoring is a potent emotional contact between an older and younger person. Kram (1985) stated that mentoring is the support provided by an experienced person (known as the mentor) to a fresh or less experience person. The less experience person is known as a mentee. According him, a mentor support, guides and counsels a young entrepreneur as he or she accomplishes mastery of the entrepreneur world. Young, Cady and Foxon (2006) are also of the opinion that within the context of mentoring relationships, it can be effective only if individuals work together, communicate with one another and interact on a more social level. Modern organization are now seeing mentoring as an effective tool to enhance various aspect like socialization, instilling responsibility training and facilitating career development (Hezlett & Gabson, 2005).

2.2 SMALL SCALE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In poor nations like Nigeria, entrepreneurship is typically driven by necessity. Government policies favoring SMEs differ between developed and emerging economies, as well as between nations, due to differences in social and cultural norms, as well as in industrial and business environments (Naudé, Szirmai, & Goedhuys, 2011). According to Sathe (2006) in particular, government rules and associated bureaucratic processes can both help and impede entrepreneurial activity, such as the creation of new businesses. The creation of new technology, goods, and solutions can be aided and supported by government policy. On the other side, when the government implements policies that limit entrepreneurial flexibility and autonomy, it can appear as though they are hurting SME business performance. The government made the decision to make the former institution sector sound, stable, honest, dependable, competitive on a global scale, and to strengthen its capacity to acknowledge SMEs in an effort to reduce the failure rate of SMEs. Governments create the structures and patterns that allow different lines to compete with one another. SMEs will improve their operations as a result of the government's intermittent changes to these designs and frameworks. Government policies so severely hamper the performance of SMEs. Laws are frequently amended by the current administration in accordance with its political stances. Therefore, SMEs must frequently be forced to adapt to changes in the legal system. The competitiveness, ambition, and speed of SMEs will be significantly impacted by these policies.

Numerous ideas have been put out in the literature, and deliberate efforts are still required on the part of governments to establish a market environment that is favourable to effective and profitable operations of SMEs through a number of economic policies (Dandago & Usman, 2011). These ideas represent the government's decision to take specific steps to stop predatory pricing, counterfeiting, and the importation of cheap foreign goods, as well as to reduce corruption, promote social justice, provide market information, improve infrastructure, train SMEs, and encourage individual investment. For the government to have an impact on the universe of a sustainably market component, it can play an entrepreneurial role. The performance of SMEs is influenced by a number of variables, the majority of which are intricate and unstable.

2.3 APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is system that offers aspiring entrepreneurs opportunity to develop their own ventures and business skills. Businesses gain a fast-track to innovation from the new enterprise leaders, as apprenticeship offered aspiring entrepreneurs an opportunity to learn by doing, acquiring valuable skills, work experience and a structured pathway into entrepreneurship. Business apprenticeship has the potential to make a systemic change and shape the entrepreneurial landscape country, it enable new entrepreneurs to launch innovative ventures. Additionally, it will make it possible for businesses from a variety of sectors to reshape their corporate cultures to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. As they develop their entrepreneurial or business skills, as well as critical business attitudes like resilience, determination, and self-management, as well as project management, customer service, and networking for sustainability and opportunity exploitation, young people have the opportunity to gain work experience through apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship is a system by which an individual or less experience person learns a trade under the instruction of a master for a specified period of time and set or agreed conditions. According to Udu (2015), an apprenticeship is a training agreement between a skilled person and a less skilled person through which the apprentice acquires the abilities required for a specific job or profession. It is a system for imparting on-the-job training to the next generation of trade or profession practitioners. Under a formal or informal indenture-ship agreement, apprentices gain practical experience in a trade while working under an experienced professional (Business Dictionary, 2018). It is a method of learning under a master's guidance with the intention of receiving business teaching. From their apprenticeships, apprentices develop their careers. The majority of their training is done while they observe or work for a master who instructs them in their trade or vocation in exchange for their continuous labour for a predetermined amount of time once they have attained quantifiable abilities (Udu, 2015).

Almost all countries in the world practice apprenticeship but the difference is in the mode or method of operation. Some have organized and regulated system of apprenticeship while some have unorganized and unregulated apprenticeship system. The majority of industrialised nations have a regulated apprenticeship system; the system defines a vocational profile and framework and offers a platform that connects the apprentice and the company through laws, regulations, and other essential incentives. Review of the literature reveals that an unstructured and unregulated apprenticeship system is used in a developing nation; it lacks any externally driven structure or motivations that may inspire participants to be thus involved.

Palmer (2009) carried out research on formalising informal processes. This study demonstrates that Ghana operates a highly developed apprenticeship system where young men and women receive specialised private training in occupations that are often found in the unorganised sector. According to a study of the apprenticeship system conducted by Monk, Sandefur, and Teal (2008), persons who have completed junior high school or less often take part in apprenticeship. According to a study by Udu (2015) on the performance of micro-businesses and their orientation toward apprenticeship, these activities have helped keep micro-businesses in Nigeria's Ebonyi state alive and well. In terms of size, structure, capital expenditure, mode of operation, yearly turnover, and kind and number of employees, the majority of enterprises are small. As a result, apprenticeship is essential for the growth of entrepreneurs.

2.4 OPPORTUNITY EXPLOITATION

In competitive environment, opportunity exploitation is defined as actions carry out in order to gain competitive advantage and economic reforms through the discovery of gap in the market. It entails making a decision to take action on a perceived opportunity and engaging in behaviour that is intended to maximise the potential of the opportunity (Wikilund, 2015). An entrepreneur choice to exploit an opportunity represents a commitment to new market entry. According to the 2017 edition of the Business Dictionary, an opportunity is a newly discovered need, want, or demand trend that an entrepreneur can take advantage of because the competition is not addressing it. Additionally, it sees opportunity as a collection of exploitable conditions with a risky consequence that calls for resource commitment. An opening in the market when there is a chance for something better that adds value is called an opportunity. By developing an effective business system for large-scale operations, Choi and Shepherd (2004) describe opportunity exploitation as entrepreneurial actions and investments made to profit from the new product resulting from the opportunity. According to Wiklund (2015), opportunity exploitation refers to actions taken in an effort to profit financially from the identification of a possible business opportunity. He also affirmed that entrepreneurs during opportunity exploitation acquire organized requisite resources and competencies to develop a product or service and take it to an existing or new market. Exploiting opportunities results in new goods, services, or both. But this novelty has two disadvantages. On the one hand, it stands for something rare that can set a company apart from its rivals. However, it also brings forth a variety of difficulties or uncertainties regarding the worth of a new product (Walker & Ruekert, 1995; Sapienza & Gupta, 1994; Choi & Shepherd, 2004). Exploitation of opportunity relies on factors such as financial capital access, risk attitude and its perception, over-optimism and self-efficacy, tolerance for ambiguity, achievement need and information from precious engagement and its transferability (Kanyi, 2004).

Building from the above discussion, this study address the concept of opportunity exploitation as the entrepreneur's action to satisfy newly identified customers, need, wants or demand to gain market dominance or competitive advantage. It can also be refers to as yielding a resource to an identified gap in the market that is both desirable and feasible for sustainability of organization. Opportunity exploitation can also be expressed as a pro-active activity that enable a firm increase its market share and profitability.

2.5 IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Both the public and business sectors have recognised mentoring as a significant factor in professional growth. Mentoring connections can lead to beneficial organisational and development outcomes. Sometimes mentoring relationships and programmes fail for a variety of reasons, including minimal participation, a lack of leadership, inadequate planning, inflated expectations, and unclear goals (Olowu, 2013). Because of this, effective mentoring programmes need to be understood, planned, implemented, and evaluated. Learning is at the heart of mentoring process and it is important that both mentor and mentee understand the learning process (Olowu, 2013). The level of expertise of an employee affects productivity. Competence is described as the abilities that a person with a particular occupation should possess. The mix of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that a person needs to perform a specific profession or task to the needed standard is known as competence (Ilesanmi, 2015).

Rao (2010) defined competency as the capacity to deliver above and beyond expectations while boosting the firm's stock of certain resources. Core competencies are tasks that a company performs particularly well in comparison to its rivals and through which it consistently provides value to its products and services. According to research, people who are mentored tend to be happier and more dedicated to their careers, receive better performance reviews, earn higher wages, and promote career advancement than people who are not mentored (Wanberg, Weish, & Hazlett, 2003). The business sector has several facets and ranges from modest rural businesses to huge international corporations. When it comes to providing possibilities for the underprivileged to improve their living situations, its growth is strategically significant. There are a variety of strategies to encourage and strengthen the beneficial role of business in the development process through development cooperation (Ilesanmi, 2015).

High-potential employees are better prepared for future managerial jobs in that series thanks to mentoring programmes. A mentoring programme may also be of importance to a company seeking reorganisation in order to maintain organisational performance. Listed below are some important reasons why organization chooses to establish mentoring programs as posited by Bullis and Bach (1989):

1. During the on-boarding process, mentoring aids in the integration of new hires, trainees, or graduates;
2. Developing Skills: Through mentoring, skilled, seasoned employees can impart their knowledge to others who need to pick up particular skills;
3. Professional Identity: Younger workers who are just starting out in their professions want assistance in comprehending what it means to be a professional in the workplace. Professionals are self-initiating and self-regulating, and they exemplify the values of their field. Mentors are crucial in guiding new hires toward appropriate professional behaviour. When employees first join the federal workforce, this is particularly crucial;
4. Career Development: Mentoring aids in the planning, growth, and management of an employee's career. Additionally, it makes people more dependable in their employment, resilient during times of transition, and accountable as self-directed learners;
5. Development of leadership and management skills: Mentoring promotes the growth of leadership skills. In contrast to schooling and training, these competencies are frequently easier to acquire from experience, guided practise, or examples;
6. Support for Education: Mentoring helps connect theory and practise. a qualified practitioner's knowledge and practical experience complement formal education and training;
7. Organizational Development and Culture Change: One-on-one interactions with employees can help them comprehend the organisational culture and make any necessary changes. Mentoring can also assist in communicating the organization's values, vision, and mission.
8. Customer service: mentoring aids in promoting the development of customer service competencies, modelling appropriate behaviour, and, most importantly, nurturing the proper attitudes;
9. Employee retention: Mentoring creates a supportive atmosphere through ongoing interactions, coaching, teaching, and role modelling that facilitates advancement within the organisation. Mentoring has been found to have an impact on employee retention because it helps create an organisational culture that is alluring to top talent clamouring for growth opportunities. Employees can be shown through mentoring that they are valued and that they are a part of the company's future;
10. Recruiting: By providing additional incentives to potential employees, mentorship can improve recruitment goals; and
11. Knowledge Management/Knowledge Transfer: Through mentorship, members of various organisations can share and exchange information and knowledge.
12. Ease of Succession Planning: mentoring prepares employees for career growth so as to take up senior or managerial position in the future.
13. Productivity: mentoring programmed encourages employees to increase their contributions in terms of output, job satisfaction, and reduce rate of labour turnover.
14. Synergy: Mentoring encourages synergy since it helps both the mentor and the mentee grow and be more successful than they could be on their own.

2.6 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Behavioral Elastic Model

According to Agbaeze (2005), who cited John Kunkel's behavioural elastic model from 1970, entrepreneurship is a function of both the historical and contemporary social structure and environment, and it is also influenced by observable sociological elements. The emphasis here is on reward and punishment behaviour. The pursuit of entrepreneurship in this environment entails calculable risks and a corresponding payoff. The entrepreneurial talents are determined by cultural values and norms. He draws the conclusion that specific government initiatives in this area might encourage or deter entrepreneurship (Kunkel as cited by Agbaeze, 2005).

2.7 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In Nigeria's Ebonyi State, Udu (2015) studied the performance of micro-businesses and their orientation toward apprenticeships. A survey study design that is exploratory was used. The study sought to determine the association between apprenticeship orientation and the success of small businesses in Ebonyi State that offer direct training services. The sample size of 301 firms was selected from the population of 52, 291. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collected. Pearson product moment correlation was used as the analytical tool. According to the study, macrobusiness performance and apprenticeship orientation have a good association.

In Wukari, Taraba State, Onyima, Nzewi, and Chiekezie (2012) conducted a study on the impact of social capital and apprenticeship on the process of immigrant entrepreneurs starting new businesses. Techniques of sampling were used in the investigation. 40 Igbo-founded businesses in the Wukari local government area were randomly chosen for the study. A structured questionnaire was the major instrument or mechanism applied in generating data for the study. In order to examine the study's data, percentages and means scores analysis were used. According to the study, apprenticeship had a substantial impact on how company ideas were developed, modified, and located. It also showed the need to resuscitate and modernise information access practises and give ethnic-based union's legal recognition so they can serve social and economic functions.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. This is necessary because the study seeks to identify and make inference about the relationship between variables. The accessible population of the study comprised all the owners (mentor) and mentees (apprentices) of registered selected small enterprises in Uyo metropolis (barbing salon (205); welders' (187); furniture maker (158); car mechanic (92)) which is six hundred and forty-two (642). The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula at 246 (barbing salon (79); welders' (72); furniture maker (60); car mechanic (35), and 225 questionnaire were properly filled and was used in data analysis. The validity and reliability of the instrument was done using Test retest method at 0.80. The hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Test statistic: Multiple linear regressions

TABLE 1

Model summary for the effects of apprenticeship on small scale business development

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.995 ^a	.990	.990	.12021

a. Predictors: (Constant), apprenticeship

Source: Researcher computation, 2022

TABLE 2

Analysis of variance for the effects of apprenticeship on small scale business development

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	442.338	3	147.446	10204.386	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.306	298	0.014		
	Total	446.644	301			

a. Predictors: (Constant), apprenticeship

b. Dependent Variable: Small scale business development

Source: Researcher computation, 2022.

TABLE 3

Regression coefficients for the effects of apprenticeship on small scale business development

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.054	.020		2.735	.007
Apprenticeship	.557	.050	.553	11.057	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Small scale business development

Source: Researcher computation, 2022

4.1 INTERPRETATION OF THE TEST HYPOTHESIS

The regression tables (Table 1, 2 and 3) show apprenticeship being evaluated for its ability to influence small scale business development. Table 1, which is the model summary, reveals that the relationship between apprenticeship and small scale business development is 99.5 percent ($R=.995$) given an indication that there is a strong linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. The adjusted R^2 value (.990) signifies that up to 99 percent of small scale business development are influenced by apprenticeship.

The F-test, $f(3, 298=10204.386, p< 0.0005)$ of the relationship in Table 2 (ANOVA) indicates that the overall prediction of the independent variables to the dependent variable is statistically significant; therefore, the regression model is a good fit for the data and provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the apprenticeship has a significant influence on the small scale business development.

Analysis of the regression model coefficients is shown in the Table 3 the regression coefficient (B), the intercept (α), and the significance of coefficient in the model is subjected to the t-test to test the null hypothesis that the coefficient is zero. From the table it can be seen that apprenticeship have significant and positive influence on small scale business development as their p- values are less than 0.05 significance with positive t- values ($t= 11.057$). Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficient (0.553) shows that apprenticeship have strong impact on small scale business development. Nevertheless, from the t-statistics and the combined F-statistics results (with $p=0.000$) the null hypothesis is rejected. The results suggest that apprenticeship has significant influence on small scale business development in Uyo Metropolis.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the research, there is a strong correlation between apprenticeship and the growth of small businesses in the Uyo Metropolis. This suggests that business mentoring gives young people a ladder to career opportunities while developing their entrepreneurial or business skills and key business attitudes like resilience, determination, and self-management, as well as project management, customer service, and networking for sustainability and opportunity exploitation. This finding is consistent with empirical studies of Udu (2015) who found out that, there is positive relationship between apprenticeship orientation and performance of micro businesses. Additionally, Benjamin and Onyeizugbe (2013) hypothesised that effective learning and the growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria are positively correlated, and that one can build entrepreneurial skills through mentorship. The idea is to grow young entrepreneurs capacity and acquire valuable skills that make them self-reliance and ensure entrepreneurs' activities are channel toward realizing the value of the opportunity. Business mentoring enable young entrepreneurs take advantage of opening in their environment and build pro-activeness among today's entrepreneurs.

5.0 CONCLUSION

It was shown from the findings of the study that, entrepreneurial mentoring has a significant relationship with small scale business development in Uyo metropolis with the primary aim of using apprenticeship to enhance small scale business development in Uyo Metropolis. This implies that, apprenticeship allow young entrepreneurs to acquire valuable skills that make them self-reliance, developed pro-activeness among entrepreneur and enable them take advantage of opening in their environment. Thus, apprenticeship is directly linked to small scale business development. This means that, apprenticeship facilitates small scale business development in Uyo Metropolis.

5.1 RECOMMENDATION

In order to enhance small scale business development Uyo Metropolis, government should organize entrepreneurial programme that allow young entrepreneurs to acquire valuable skills that make them self-reliance, developed pro-activeness to take advantage of opening in their environment. Furthermore, government should ensure that every trainee is assigned to a mentor according to the areas of their interested.

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