



**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF HEAD TEACHERS' SUPERVISORY ROLE ON TEACHING
AND LEARNING OF ADAPTIVE SKILLS BY LEARNERS
WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perception on the effectiveness of head teachers' supervisory role on teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Kenya. The study used Effective School Theory advanced by Lezotte. A descriptive survey design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. The target population was 227 respondents (207 learners, 5 head teachers and 15 teachers). The sample size was 124 respondents (104 learners, 15 teachers and 5 Head teachers). Purposive sampling was used to select special schools and units. Stratified sampling technique was used to divide population into strata and then through simple random sampling, the exact respondents were identified, i.e., head teachers, teachers and learners in special programmes. Data was collected by use of interview guide for head teachers, observational check list for learners and questionnaire for

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teachers. Piloting was conducted in Kathelwa Special Unit in Igembe Central Sub-county. Test-retest method was done and a coefficient level of 0.7 was obtained. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Version 23.0 while qualitative data was analysed thematically. Data was presented using tables and figures for quantitative data while qualitative data was presented using reported verbatims and narratives. The key finding of this study was that majority of head teachers did not use appropriate instructional supervision skills due to lack of essential professional qualifications and knowledge of adaptive skills for learners with intellectual disabilities. The finding also established that teachers perceived majority of head teachers as ineffective in instructional supervision as they did not orientate or guide them in teaching strategies or even skills to teach their learners. The study also found that lack of adequate training and knowledge in adaptive skills, limited provision of teaching and learning resources hindered effective instructional supervision. The study recommended that there should be a policy that head teachers for special institutions be trained in the area of that disability so as to benefit both teachers and learners. The study also recommended that the government, through the ministry of education to provide and allocate adequate funds for both refresher courses and seminars for teachers and also for acquiring teaching and learning resources.

Keywords: teachers' perception, head teachers' supervisory role, adaptive skills, learners with intellectual disabilities

1. Introduction

Intellectual disability (ID) is a disorder characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, as demonstrated in conceptual, social and practical skills with onset before 18 years of age or rather during the period of development (World Health Organization, 2020). Inspection and supervision are not new terms in education field. Inspection was first used in developed countries such as United Kingdom and United States. For instance, France started inspectorate department in the Ministry of Education in 18th century while other European countries followed in the 19th century (Grauwe, 2007).

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced instructional supervision in schools through a legal Notice (MoE Circular No. 2009 QSA/2/1A/VIL.11/86). This Legal Notice recommended that school principals/head teachers to perform internal instructional supervision. The commissions suggested that skilled, competent, and knowledgeable staff supervise instruction in the schools. The aim was to create a positive impact on teacher motivation, contentment, self-esteem and a feeling of support (Atieno, 2019). They would use supervisor-teacher-friendly approaches rather than the conventional power and dictatorship methods (Wenzare, 2012). The outdated methods of inspection instilled fear to teachers and lowered their self-esteem and confidence (Republic of Kenya, 2009)

According to Zepeda (2010), instructional supervision was a continuous monitoring of classroom teaching with the aim of promoting professional practices particularly in enhancing acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID. Wanzare (2002) justifies that the prime reason for the position of a head teacher in the school is to give leadership in teaching and learning process. Dong, Fang and Hao (2012) posit that for an instructional supervisor to perform instructional supervision effectively, he must first understand the difficulties presented by persons with intellectual disabilities in their action skills. In addition, instructional supervisors should also understand that lack of early environmental experiences affect both cognitive and adaptive functions of the learners (Mungoma, 2011). In support of the above, Walingo (2010) assert that for instructional supervision to be effective, both the instructional supervisor and the class teacher should work together in a collaborative manner so that they make decision involving learners together.

Shama, Yusoff, Kannan and Baba (2011) found that supervisors seemed to be on a fault-finding mission. The teachers argue that supervisors do not consider instructional supervision as a platform to develop a sense of ownership for teachers and their professional growth, and therefore, teachers feel that they do not benefit from the process. This could have been the case in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County. There was scanty information about teachers' feelings on supervision in Igembe south sub-county, hence the need for the current study.

Instructional supervision had a positive effect on teachers' professional growth in terms of gaining expertise in curriculum, teaching methods and resources, classroom management, and evaluation, according to a study conducted in Ghana by Donkoh and Dwamena (2014). If such positive experience could be extended to institutions for learners with ID, teaching and learning of adaptive skills can be effective, thus, enable learners with ID live independently. Thus, it was important that the current study explored the status of instructional supervision in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County to avail practices of teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Learners with ID spend a long time in special schools and units where they are expected to acquire adaptive skills for independent living. Their numbers continue increasing while activity limitation is at standstill. Adaptive skills are therefore a critical tool that can liberate the dependent life of a person with intellectual disability because it helps one to adjust to the demands of the environment and to lead an independent life. Lack of effective instructional supervision to oversee effective teaching and learning of the adaptive skills still persists as the learners with ID will remain dependent on their caretakers throughout their lives. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to provide effective instructional supervision for achievement of educational goals and those learners with ID are taught relevant adaptive skills to be able to lead independent lives. In Kenya, many researches have been conducted on instructional supervision. However,

there has been limited research into the effectiveness of instructional supervision on teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID. This study was conducted to explore teachers' perception on the effectiveness of head teachers' supervisory role on teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID.

1.2 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Head teachers' instructional supervision in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe South Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Specific Objective of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to explore teachers' perception on the effectiveness of head teachers' supervisory role on teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Effective School Theory formulated by Lezotte in 2001. The theory states that effective school is measured in terms of student achievement and is characterized by good education that is accessible. Lezotte formulated seven correlates to be observed by schools in order to be effective. These correlates are: leadership in delivery of instructions, a well-defined mission, secure and organised schools, an environment where success is assured, frequent and close follow-up of learners progress, school-home collaboration and a chance to learn. Lezotte (2001) posits that leadership in instructional delivery is critical in collaboration as well as professional growth. The head teacher is expected to be proactive and knowledgeable as far as adaptive skills for learners with ID are concerned. It is also their duty to ensure that teachers are motivated through individual development. This may make all stakeholders to develop a clear and focused mission of ensuring achievement of adaptive skills by the learners. A clear and focused mission ensures that everybody in the school knows where they are going and why. This means that programs and activities are aligned for school improvement. This tenet enabled the study to collate pertinent data for objective on whose variables were head teacher qualifications, specialization, managerial acumen in SNE, administrative and supervision experiences among others.

According to Lezotte, safe and orderly environment must be accompanied by teaching methods and teacher characteristics that demonstrate teachers' confidence in the students, as well as believe in their own ability to teach students to high levels, and persist in teaching them. He asserts that teaching for understanding together with basic skills is essential for all learners, including those with disabilities. According to Lezotte's Theory of Effective School, family and community involvement describes many avenues that bring about collaboration among all stake holders to aid acquisition of knowledge and skills. The support from the community, frequent evaluation as well as a chance to learn

and the time the learner takes on a task implies that students appear to learn the content, they embark on most. That is, the more the time a learner takes on a task, the higher the understanding. Pupils of all abilities have equal chances to learn as this creates conducive environment for teaching and learning. This tenet enabled the study to collate data on head teachers' challenges such as level of training, teachers' attitudes and access to schools and working tools among others.

2.2 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps

M'Inoti (2010) used a descriptive survey design in a study titled "Impact of quality control and standards officers' monitoring on academic achievement of secondary school in Meru district Kenya and the results showed that school-based instructional monitoring is important for teachers' professional growth. This was due to the head teachers' roles as instructional supervisor in resource mobilization, discipline, and benchmarking for teachers and learners.

In a study by Jahananian and Ebrahimi (2013) on the principles for educational supervision and guidance, the findings indicated that orientation and induction of teachers by principals was essential to increase motivation among teachers. Ololube and Nanighe (2014) in their study revealed that effective instructional supervision for the teachers, improved their productivity but instructional supervisors did not have the knowledge on how to carry out instructional supervision, especially in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID.

A study by Moradi, Saleh and Khadiv (2014) on 'exploring Iranian EFL Teachers' perceptions on supervision showed that teachers in those observations tried to please their supervisors because they were afraid about getting 'unsatisfactory' rating by supervisors or even fired. Wanzare (2011), in a study on instructional supervision in Kenyan secondary schools found that supervision was viewed as a bureaucratic process to ensure that due procedure and regulations were followed, and that head teachers received minimal guidance on how to carry it out. The study did not point out what specific skills of supervision the head teachers were trained on. The current study therefore aimed at exploring the views of teachers on the effectiveness of the instructional supervision carried out by head teachers leading to effective acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID in Igembe South sub-county, Meru County.

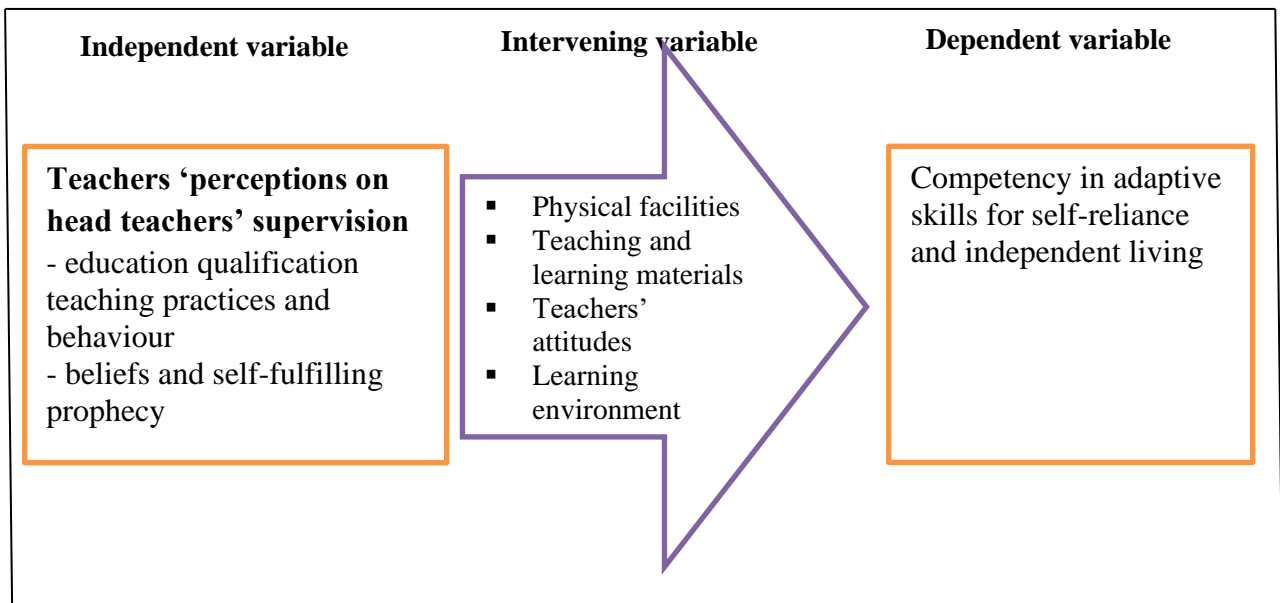


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variables were teacher's views on head teachers' supervision. The interaction between independent and intervening variables led to dependent variable which was acquisition of competency in adaptive skills by learners with ID leading to self-reliance and independent living.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Target Population

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive design describes trends, determine individual opinions, helped to identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals and also provide other useful information to evaluate programs in schools. The approach was suitable for this study in that the researcher was able to explain the impact of head teachers' qualification and acquisition of adaptive skills.

3.2 Sampling techniques and Sample Size

This study targeted a total of two hundred and seven (207) learners, five (5) head teachers and fifteen (15) teachers in five (5) public special institutions. That is, one (1) special school and four special units translating to a total sample of two hundred and twenty-seven (227) respondents. Stratified sampling was used to group head teachers, teachers and learners who participated in the actual study. Stratified sampling was used to group head teachers, teachers, and learners of this study. In stratified sampling, the researcher divided the entire population into different sub-groups such as head teachers, teachers and learners. Purposive sampling was used to select special schools and units for learners with ID. It was also used to select learners who could follow simple verbal instructions.

The sample consisted of five (5) head teachers, fifteen (15) teachers and one hundred and four (104) learners, making a total of one hundred and twenty-four (124) respondents.

3.3 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires, interview schedule and observational checklist. Questionnaires for teachers consisted of four sections with a total of 19 items (3 open-ended items and 16 close-ended). The items were scored based on a 5-item Likert scale. Interview schedule for head teachers consisted of 12 open-ended items. The interview guide for head teachers consisted of five sections, where section A was to establish the demographic information about the head teacher such as academic and professional qualification, area of specialization and years of experience as a head teacher. Section B to E was seeking to address the variables under study, arranged in accordance with the research objectives. An Observational Checklist is a research instrument of gathering data. In this case, the checklist had two sections, A and B. Section A contained demographic information such as name of school or Unit, class level, age of child, and date of admission. Section B contains a list of adaptive skills which are taught to learners with ID to enable them lead independent lives.

3.4 Pilot Study

Piloting was done in Kathelwa Special Unit in Igembe Central sub-County. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the research instruments. A Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaires and a value of 0.72 was obtained.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures, Analysis and Presentation

Before data collection, the researcher did a reconnaissance visit to each of selected schools for the study. The researcher informed the school administration of its selection for the study, purpose of the study and ethical clauses of the study. During field work, data collection procedure first involved administration of questionnaires, followed by filling of observation checklist, and finally interview schedules were conducted. Teachers were given questionnaires to fill out and were collected immediately after that. Observation checklists were filled by the researcher as she observed and interacted with learners as they carried out the activities. Interview guide was used to get information from the head teachers while probing questions were asked to get in-depth information. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. The data was sorted, classified, and categorized as per the study's themes. To conduct statistical tests on the quantitative data, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23.0) was used based on descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was presented using narrative passages while tables, frequencies, and percentages were used to display the quantitative data.

4. Results of the Study

4.1 Teacher's Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision

To meet this objective, the researcher provided the teachers with a range of statements on a Likert Scale based on a questionnaire where (1-strongly disagree [SD], 2-disagree [D], 3-agree [A], 4-strongly agree [SA]) and asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. Table 4.1 display the teacher's responses.

Table 4.1: Teachers' Perceptions on Head teachers' Effectiveness in Instructional Supervisory Role

Statement	N=15	1 [SD]	2 [D]	3 [A]	4 [SA]
Head teachers orientate and update teachers on new teaching strategies of teaching and learning of adaptive skills	F	6	7	2	0
	%	40.0	46.7	13.3	0
The head teacher in our school is quite aware of all adaptive skills taught to learners with ID for independent living.	F	3	6	5	1
	%	20.0	40.0	33.3	6.7
The head teacher involves teachers in planning and acquiring of teaching/learning materials and even to use them in class	F	8	4	2	1
	%	53.3	26.7	13.3	6.7
Our head teacher appears to be on fault-finding mission whenever he/she is checking our class-work	F	1	3	3	8
	%	6.7	20.0	20.0	53.3

It is evident from the Table 4.1 that 6(40%) of the teachers strongly disagreed that their head teachers orientate and update them on new teaching strategies of teaching adaptive skills while 7(46.7%) disagree on the same. Therefore, 13(86.7%) were of the opinion that their head teacher did not orientate or update them on new strategies of teaching and learning of adaptive skills. On the other hand, only 2(13.3%) of teachers supported the statement that the head teacher orientate and update teachers on new teaching strategies of handling adaptive skills. The findings were in line with a response from one head teacher who commented that:

"I have never interacted with anybody, or any information related to special needs education. So, I do not even invite teachers from the special unit for my meetings because I usually have nothing to tell them. I don't know the methods they use to teach learners with intellectual disabilities. I think they know better than me as far as teaching their learners is concerned. I only check and confirm that teachers are present and that their learners do not disrupt learning in the regular classes." (H/T, Special Unit, July, 2019)

The results depicted in table 4.1 and head teacher's comment clearly shows that there was no good relationship between the head teacher and the teacher. However, Johananian and Ebrahimi (2013) in their study insisted that orientation and induction of teachers by head teachers increased motivation as well as promoting interaction between the two. Teacher orientation was also supported by Darleen et al (2011). Their study found that orientation programs positively contributed to their professional growth and

self-esteem. This shows that if head teachers conducted teacher orientation as expected, instructional supervision practice would have been effective and thus affects teaching and learning of adaptive skills positively.

It is also evident from table 4.1, that 3(20%) of teachers strongly disagree while 6(40) disagree that their head teacher was aware of adaptive skills taught to learners with ID. Therefore 9(60%) disagreed with the statement. It is only 6(40%) who are of the opinion that head teachers have knowledge on adaptive skills for learners. However, that was a smaller percentage and could not affect the outcome of the study. Based on responses given by the teachers, it was clear that head teachers were not conversant with the adaptive skills needed by learners with ID. This was in line with Samoei (2014) who clarified that the various activities carried by the head teacher directed to teachers are the ones that benefit the learners. Furthermore, most of the head teachers themselves accepted that they were not trained in ID, and therefore were not aware of the adaptive skills, specifically those for learners with ID. Lack of the adaptive skills by head teachers therefore hindered their effectiveness in instructional supervision of teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID. It can therefore be concluded that support to learners with ID through instructional supervision was not effective because 80% of head teachers were not aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID.

An effective head teacher was expected to involve teachers from the special classes in planning, identify teaching and learning resources and even demonstrate how they can be used with learners with ID. However, 8(53.3%) of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that head teachers involved them in planning and acquiring of teaching and learning materials for teaching learners with ID. 4(26.7%) also disagreed with the same statement that head teachers involved them. Therefore, a total of 12(80%) opposed the statement that head teachers involved them in planning and acquiring of teaching and learning materials and even using them in class for learners with ID.

According to the findings in table 4.1, 8(53.3%) of the teachers strongly agreed that head teachers were on a fault-finding mission. 3(20%) also agreed that head teachers were on fault-finding mission whenever they had classroom observation. Therefore, a total of 11(73.3%) of teachers agreed that head teachers visit classrooms on fault finding mission. Out of 15 teachers, 11 of them agreed with the statement that most supervisors harass them during instructional supervision, specifically, during lesson observation. This was in line with Blumberg (1980) as he called such cold relationship between the head teacher and teachers, 'A Private Cold War'. On the other hand, 4(26.7%) disagreed that head teachers were never on fault-finding mission. This was a small number to affect the results.

5. Discussion of Findings

These findings suggest that head teachers lacked qualification and other professional skills that hindered their effectiveness in instructional supervision of teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID. In addition, the preceding observations

were revealed by the learner's performance in observation checklist where the percentage of those who performed specific adaptive skills by themselves was very small, which confirmed that 80% of head teachers did not influence teaching and learning of adaptive skills through instructional supervision. Samoei (2014) support these findings when he clarified that head teachers did not directly benefit the learners' academic performance and therefore the various activities by the head teacher are directed to teachers who trickle them down to learners.

Based on responses given by the teachers, it was noted that head teachers were not conversant with the adaptive skills for learners with ID. Furthermore, most of the head teachers themselves claimed that they were not trained in intellectual disabilities, hence did not know adaptive skills specifically those for learners with ID. The findings of the current study were in line with the Moradi et al (2014) as his study on Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on instructional supervision revealed that most supervisors were viewed as having no expertise in the field.

Head teachers from the four out of the five schools visited during data collection admitted that they were not aware of the adaptive skills for learners with ID. One of the head teachers claimed that the class teacher was best placed to identify the adaptive skills as he himself did not learn them during his EBD course. The findings from the current study portray head teachers as lacking qualification and experience needed to offer effective instructional supervision. This was in line with Amina (2015) recommendation that an effective head teacher must have leadership skills that make him effective instructional supervisor.

The findings from the study by Tshabalala (2013) agreed with the current study that majority of school head teachers 4(80%) lacked knowledge of adaptive skills for learners with ID. This was also echoed by Wanganga, Karugu, and Karangwa (2013) who found out that primary school teachers lacked adequate training in teaching strategies for learners with ID.

It can also be concluded that support to learners with ID through instructional supervision has not been effective. About 8(53.3%) of the teachers strongly disagreed that head teachers involved learners in planning and acquiring of teaching and learning materials for teaching learners with ID. About 4(26.7%) also disagree with statement that head teachers give any support to teachers for learners with ID. Therefore, a total of 12(80%) are of the negative opinion that head teachers involve teachers in planning and acquiring of teaching and learning materials and even using them in class for learners with ID. These observations were in similarity with Amina (2015) who contends that head teachers who involve their staff in decision-making have the advantage of improved performance, while those who do not end up with poor performance. This includes teachers for learners with ID. Additionally, a study by Waite (1993), established that effective supervision can also be ensured if instructional supervisors work hand-in-hand with teachers, a fact which was not practised in the current study.

According to findings in table 4.1, 11(73.3%) of teachers agreed with the statement that head teachers harassed them whenever they went for instructional supervision. They

were therefore on a fault-finding mission whenever they visited their classes for instructional supervision. A total of 4(26.7%) disagreed with the statement. These findings are in agreement with Wanzare (2002) who observed that some supervisors tend to behave like police officers and teachers tend to resent their presence. He observed that supervisors' offending behaviour can be curbed through training, so that both sides appreciate each other as team players in curriculum implementation. Training of supervisors in SNE may enhance acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID. Other concerns are those associated with unprofessional conduct of supervisors. Some seem to have 'cold war' with teachers. Some other supervisors harassed teachers in front of their learners. This affected head teachers' effectiveness in supervision role and that of classroom teachers. Further, Moradi et al (2014) in a study on Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions on supervision found out that teachers' view were negative in regard to bureaucratic administration. The study also revealed that most teachers were scared of supervisors as they could give 'a below-average grade' however prepared a teacher was. Generally, it can be deduced that the teachers perceive their head teachers to be ineffective in the supervision of teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with intellectual disability which would have a negative impact on ID learners' acquisition of adaptive skills. According to Tyagi (2010), instructional supervision is essential for professional development of the teachers which gears them towards improving students' and teachers' demeanour, attitudes and performance.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is logical to conclude that teachers perceive their head teachers to be ineffective in instructional supervision of teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID, and it impacted negatively on the learners' performance in adaptive skills.

7. Recommendations

- 1) The study recommended that provision of educational support services should be emphasized and be provided to learners with intellectual disabilities in special schools and units.
- 2) The government to ensure that all head teachers of schools for learners with disabilities be should be trained so that they offer relevant training and supervision of teaching and learning.
- 3) That a policy that SNE unit heads uses collaborative, peer or non-direct supervision techniques to promote consultation, cooperation and motivation between teachers and supervisors.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors therefore declare no conflicts of interests.

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