

Evaluating Quality Performance of Somali Universities

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Abstract

Purpose- Mini research conducted 1st April to 10th June 2012 planned to understand and report more about the quality performance of Somali universities. To create more information the research was used qualitative method of interviews. Research findings were explained in detail; main findings indicated what do Somali universities lacking and what are the main areas need to improve in term of quality performance of Somali universities.

Design/methodology – In order to obtain deep information the quality performance of Somali universities, six interviews were conducted, participants were selected among Somali students study Malaysian Universities in Malaysia. Mainly respondents were post graduate except one respondent. Example two former Somali university lecturers doing PhD in Malaysia, one master student used to work with managerial office one of Somali universities, two master students have taken their undergraduate in Somalia and one under graduate student had chosen overseas instead of local Somali universities.

Findings- During the analysis five themes were promoted (1) Students' quality satisfaction. (2) Work force such as Lecturers (3) Operation focus (4) Quality strategy for the universities and (5) Leadership. In the discussion part, I compared the existing literature and the respondents' point of view. I managed to get from the literature cases related to the themes of the mini research and compared respondents' experience. This method clearly can see the gap between existing literature and the situation in the ground.

Practical implications- Findings of this mini research will be useful in general Somalia particular area of quality performance of Somali universities. The findings encourage developing and re-evaluating quality performance of Somali universities.

Originality/value- This study was conducted in Malaysia where more than five thousand Somali students study universities. The objective of this paper is to understand what do Somali universities are lacking in term of quality performance?

Keywords: Quality, University, lecturer, graduate, facilities

1.0 Introduction

Government era Somalia has only one university and it was Somali National University (SNU) and no longer now because of the civil war erupted in 1991 in the country. SNU had 12 faculties (Education, Languages, Law, Economics, Political Science, Journalism, Geology, Industrial chemistry, Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, and Veterinary). Medium of instruction was English and Italy. There were international lecturers as well as international students at the university. George (1985) reported, Somali National University each year an average of 700 students was graduating. University workforce was equivalent to students, ILO (1987) stated SNU has 445 full time and 170 part time teaching lectures meanwhile staff student ratio was 11:1

To improve quality education the regime has taken many steps forward as Abdi (1998) highlighted, education was given the first priority, hundreds of schools were built and gave training thousands of teachers and the goal was aiming for 100% literacy across Somalia.

To achieve the vision and gain good quality education new initiatives were under taken, Abdullahi (2004) Somali language was written Latin script in 1972 and the literacy campaign was conducted by the government in 1973 to 1975 not only that but also to improve the quality education in 1982, the government allocated education 11.2% of the national GDP budget.

After the government invested quality education, the outcome of quality performance measurement of NSU was; many graduates of Somali National University performed excellence at national level as well as international level these include:

- 1- Abdulahi Yusuf Ahmed – Former president of Somalia
- 2- Abdirahman M. Farole- President of Puntland
- 3- Abdiwali Mohamed Ali – Prime minister of Somalia
- 4- Abdulqawi Yusuf – International lawyer and judge of International Court of Justice
- 5- Hassan Abshir Farah – Former prime minister
- 6- Nur Hassan Husein – Former prime minister
- 7- A. Mohamed Gedi - Former prime minister

1.1 Quality Education (after civil war)

After 1991, Somalia has experienced for 21 years of civil war, if not all, most of governmental system has collapsed. Jabril (2009) mentioned all government infrastructures and services were either looted or destroyed during the civil war and Somali National University (SNU) was one of the sectors damaged by the civil war. Since 1991 law and order were out of the hand Harry (2007) claimed, unstable politics, continue displacement, looted equipment and destruction of education infrastructure has greatly affected the quality education of Somalia. Besides that, other challenges were reported, UNDP (2003) Somali institutions did not develop new curriculum since 1990 and higher education institutions are using text books published 20 years ago.

Missing facilities and using old traditional teaching materials caused many people to

under estimate the quality education, European Commission (2004) many students and parents lost confidence of quality education in Somalia. The quality problem is not only one angle but other challenges are reported such as leadership, United Nation (2007) described education sector in Somalia there is shortage of qualified principles.

Having good quality education and producing students can compete in the labour market universities need to have proper materials and manpower. EFA Global Monitoring (2005) declared, if schools have no enough teachers, advanced textbooks, enough teaching and learning materials they will not be able to do an effective job. In the case of quality education of Somali universities challenges have faced in term of manpower. UNDP (2009) reported, more than one Million of Somali population are diasporas, leaving outside of the country included scholars and professional people. Brain drain challenges of qualified manpower were not only reported United Nations but locally and internationally was equally reported and this has challenged the quality education of Somali universities. Ministry of higher education (2009) stated, most of the graduates hoping to serve the nation run away from the country in order to survive and to get better live. World Bank (2007) reported quality challenges of African universities are mainly shortage of man power. However, Concern world (2006) reported, Somalia there is shortage of teachers and students do not have qualified and trained teachers and this reflected ratio of the teachers and students.

Even though shortage and demand of lecturer were highly reported, but there were few scholars remained in the country and sacrificed the hard situation meanwhile they are sometimes killed. The situation of quality education got worse when Minister of Interior (2010) reported, university convocation ceremony had used suicide bomb attack and were killed 23 people included ministry of education, ministry of health, six graduate students, doctors, university lecturer, parents and other participants.

It is undeniable there are numerous quality challenges in the education sector but still there are some progresses and hope. Ministry of Education (2011) announced, it is the rights of Somali citizen to get good quality education, the minister added improving and delivering quality education and developing the nation through education is due to the ministry of education.

Looking strategic planning the quality education of Somali universities; Ministry of education (2007) advocated, since collapsed Somali state, planning and management of education at the national level almost nonexistent; therefore the ministry had the strategic plan of having education partnership and registering Somali universities international education associations.

1.1.1 SWOT Analysis Somali Universities

Briefly I explain here SWOT analyzes to see the main challenges of university quality. I am here to compare how strengthens can cover weakness and how opportunity can eliminate the threat in term of quality aspect, lastly to see whether it is achievable good quality education the near future.

Strengthens: Last 21 years Somalia has experienced dramatically grow number of

private

universities

Weakness: all government infrastructures were either destroyed or looted included National University, training centres and ministry of education; therefore there are shortage of text books, qualified teachers and attractive learning spaces and lack of new curriculum.

Opportunity: More than one million of Somali citizens are Diasporas, many of them are studying international universities. One day Diasporas will back home and benchmark universities they graduated as well as countries they immigrated. The diasporas will contribute the economic and quality education very fast.

Threat: Lack of security is the biggest challenge for Somali Universities followed by lack of enough professionals; most man power emigrated from the country. Universities do not have required facilities such as good infrastructure, libraries, and laboratories. Most of the universities use residential area.

1.1.2 Reopening education Sector after the civil war

Abdullahi (2004) after civil war started in 1991, all education windows were closed, but early 1993, significantly growth of private universities were reported and 100% Somali universities became private. It is important to note communities and teachers began to re-open universities (particularly in urban areas) this became responsibility of parents and community members to provide university education for their children without ministry of education. For instance the capital city Mogadishu, there is nearly an estimate of 20 private universities included the one I graduated Indian Ocean University (I.O.U)

People are entrepreneur to set up universities to fulfil their children's' education demand Abiikar (2011) local communities never give up setting up educational system. The first initiative idea after government collapsed was to set up educational institutions without any support from a government. Referring to local media, all universities are private owned by individuals and organizations. From 1993 the country was opened more than 50 Universities and either does not control the government.

Opening university or any other institution does not mean the minimum required quality is available that is why World Bank (2004) reported, lacking central government in Somalia has encouraged many entrepreneurs compete opening education sector even though education and health unit of Somali are very weak and can not cover the required level of quality. Population is increasing year after year parallel to this pupils are increasing so UNESCO (2005) reported both secondary schools and students are increasing dramatically in Somalia, therefore to provide higher education quality is important for all stakeholders (Students, Parents, and community at large)

Generally speaking, there are conditions and materials improve university quality and customer satisfaction. Referring UN reports, Ministry of education and the literature more or less most of Somalia universities do not have facilities to build quality education as satisfy customers, such as :- enough well qualified lecturers, computer labs, class room facilities, conducive environment of learning, partnership with international associations

and so on.

1.1.3 Cross border education for Somali students

UNESCO (2006) defined cross border education “The movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers and curriculum across national or regional borders”.

As literature highlighted in many times, there is quality gap for Somali universities, so people are rational they need to have good quality education for their children. Therefore last twenty years cross border education became a common among Somali students wanting to pursue university. For instance most of the rich and middle class economic level people send their children overseas universities.

There are other education chances get Somali students as Schubert (2009) declared, there are few developed countries like Australia offer scholarship Somali students but not in Australia, they outsource countries like Malaysia to study there. Speaking Schubert said “when Somali students graduate in Malaysian universities, they return home to contribute to the country, but those who study in Australia try to get resettlement and live there as second home” for instance Abdirahman Ibi, IIUM graduate became ministry of Somali transitional government.

Jabril (2009) when Somali students graduate from African or Asian universities soon they went back home country and some of them lead companies, government ministries, while high percentage are managing universities and institutes. For instance Somali president Sheikh Sharif who graduated Sudan University after 1995 went back home and now he is Somali president. Jabril added cross border education has positive impact to Somalia rather than education; students gain civilization and benchmark the development and good leadership of the countries they have studied.

Abdiaziz retired Professor in Kuala Lumpur (2009) attending Somali students conference in Malaysia said. “Getting knowledge modern Islamic country like Malaysia is an opportunity for Somali Students”. They are not only getting basic knowledge but they are getting modern knowledge and Islamic civilization, therefore coming and studying a country like Malaysia is a positive impact; it improves the moral and the creativity of the students. Muse (2011) said, there are five thousand Somali students only in Malaysia and most of them are self sponsored. So students are looking for quality education in overseas rather than home country.

1.1.4 Overseas Scholarships for Somali Students

Since Somalia is member of United Nation, Arab Union, African Union and Islamic Countries, most of the countries donate scholarship education for Somali students since the country has no strong central government for 21 years. In 2010, Pakistan was held 14th Meeting of COMSTECH (Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific & Technology Cooperation) Ministry of Education demanded to get scholarship for Somali students in Pakistan, meanwhile Pakistan allocated limited number of Somali students scholarship for every year. El-Safi (2004) stated, Sudan is one of African countries which host most of Somali students, he said, only Khartoum University enrolled hundred students within one

year. Sudanese President, Al Bashir (2011) declared, we are ready to support education sector for Somalia people, in Sudan there are about 3,000 students in general education, while university students are 600. A survey carried Abdullahi (2004) found how Somali students have chosen subjects/faculties after scholarships were given in Sudan and Egypt universities in the year of 2002. Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ (2011) announced, Turkish universities will give full scholarship 500 Somali students, 230 students will get the scholarship for the private universities meanwhile 270 students will get the scholarship from the government universities.

2.0 Objectives of the study

Fundamental objective of this study is to evaluate quality performance of Somali Universities. The research will assess independent variables of quality universities in Somalia. The main areas that the research will explore will be; understanding how top management is committed university quality, to categorize strengths and weakness of strategic planning, assessing facilities available universities, understanding the quality level of working force (experience, education level i.e Master, PhD, publication) assessing customer satisfaction (students, parents, employers and so on). The findings and the quality standard of Somali universities will report to all stakeholders, policy makers and global at large.

2.1 Methodology

Data was collected a method of interview. Respondent were asked structured interview questions. According to Polkinghorne (2005) researcher followed list of pre-pared and detailed questions. Adopting a standardized format made easy to follow up the interview.

2.1.1 Interview method

The researcher carried out face to face interview, in order to create climate of trust, researcher started start ice-breaking both interviewer and interviewee. The first few questions were common point view. Researcher started easy and friendly questions, it was to open up to the interviewee. The interviewees were asked variety of questions focused on the research topic, always keep on track interview schedule.

Since the main objectives of this research is to understand quality performance of Somali university, the researcher prepared questions about leadership, strategic planning, operation management, workforce, customer satisfaction and data collection method and data processing method, each of these items have dimensions. Interviewers were randomly selected Master and PhD Students from Somalia but studying in Malaysian universities.

All respondents' voices were recorded and analysed accordingly. Interview questions were adopted partial from two main areas which are literature review and university ranking databases, such as Shangia , US News and World Report, Daigaku Ranking.

2.1.2 Sample Size

Sample Size of this study was (2) PhD students used to be lecturer Somali university (2) Master students did undergraduate Somali university in Somalia, (1) Master students worked with managerial office one of Somali universities (1) one undergraduate chose his first degree in overseas rather than Somali universities. Most respondents were self sponsored, only two have scholarship came Malaysia education on leaf.

Respondents were selected randomly in Somali students study the different universities and colleges in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. The only undergraduate student interviewed was chosen because, he had chosen overseas university rather than local university and he is self respondent.

2.1.3 The sampling criteria

Sample selection criteria were included.

- Master student should be graduated one of Somali Universities
- Two PhD candidates who did minimum one degree in Somali University.
- Two out of five respondents must not be sponsored their tuition.
- Minimum Forty percent should be female respondents.
- Respondents' universities should be different from one another.

2.1.4 Data Collection Method

The researcher interviewed all the respondents and respondents were contacted before 3 days and make with an appointment. In order to get accurate data and avoid misinterpretation all interview questions and responds were Somali language. The respondents' voices were recorded and during writing the transcript it was translated in to English language. In this method researcher and respondents would able to communicate mother tongue, chance of communication barrier was reduced.

Here are the main expected outcomes of data collection method after interview was carried out Somali language.

- The respondent required less time and give accurate answer.
- High response rate and more information.
- Period of data collection was two month and probably was finished on time.

2.1.5 Research Limitation

Somalia has no central government for 20 years. So limited or no available articles published local universities, most literature published international NGOs and United Nation Agencies in Somalia and they are not academic journals. Most cited in this report are documents that are not published international journals. Moreover only private s universities will investigate due to lack of public universities.

2.1.6 Data analyze.

During data analyzing and interpreting, the researcher focused on the total meaning of the

research subject. Whenever respondents talked out of the research area or any other issue not related to the objectives of the research is considered irrelevant issue. Researcher listened the recorded voices by writing critical and accordingly. Nothing will leave during analyzing.

2.1.7 Conclusion

The researcher was used qualitative method. The language of interview was Somali. The researcher was collected the data from all the respondents. The sample size of this research was 5 respondents selected randomly.

3 Result and findings

Interviewers' opinion and experience towards quality performance of Somali universities were same in many cases. However, some topics were disagree. During the interview different variable came to forward and these variables seemed to have same importance and objectives of quality performance of Somali universities. The variable were kept as group and considered interview guide themes.

Summary table of the themes

Themes	Key words	significant indicates
Students' quality satisfaction	Quality satisfaction	Before 2005 quality education was not good but now it is getting better and we are quite satisfied
Work force (Lecturer)	PhD, Master, Bachelor years of experience and publications	Most of the lecturers are Master degree before 3-4 years most lecturers were bachelor holders, PhD lecturers are very view, no international publications.
Operation focus	Library, Laboratory, class room facilities Eg. projector, internet	Universities mostly don't have all required facilities. Eg. Libraries are use manual system, getting original text books is very difficult. Only one or two projects available whole the university
Quality strategy for the universities	Low quality competitive among universities, they only compete students enrolments.	Low quality competitive among universities, they only compete students enrolments.

Leadership	Leaders under estimate the lecturers, no two way communication	Lecturers are under estimate, Leaders dictate what to do for the lecturer and lecturers are not given enough facilities to implement their teaching duties. No two way communication
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3.1 Discussion

Interviewers were presented their experience of quality performance of Somali universities. There were some themes that interviewers disagree to the existing literature. However, among respondents were also disagreeing in some cases. There were themes responded positively while others negatively responded. On the other hand participants more or less preferred to talk about generally quality of Somali universities rather than the one they are representing.

In the discussion part, I compared the existing literature and the respondents' point of view. I managed to get from the literature cases related to the themes of the mini research and compared respondents' experience. This method clearly can see the gap between existing literature and the situation in the ground.

CompLetcher (2007) main factors can satisfy for the student are; curriculum, classes instruction, quality teaching, extra-curricular activities, student advising, instructor feedback, satisfaction with computing facilities.

"I was lecturing one of Somali universities and it has library, although the size of the library was small and internet facilities was low. Similarly most of the Somali universities share with our university such shortage/demand" (2)

"AAA, there is great weakness in the curriculum, all our curriculum from primary to university are other countries' curriculum, the curriculum do not cover country needs" (3)

Nesset (2007) argued, university administrators are required to encourage students to continue learning in order to reach the target quality goal. Author suggested universities must understand the needs and wants of the student to meet their quality expectation.

As the literature reported and the reality exist in Somali Universities is quite different as second respondent declared.

"AA yes, universities motivates students, when students get high score he/she is given free

Education/ Scholarship" (1)

"Somali universities could not able to cover only needs of the students forget wants, universities don't have enough projectors to teach classes, no internet facilities, library is manual, and most books are books published 1980s. So forget sports field and other wants facilities" (2)

Stodnick and Rogers (2008) argued universities can only meet customer satisfaction

when they prepare good quality courses. Take a look at universities in Somalia; they have challenges as respondents 1 and 2 reply.

“I remember curriculum experts from overseas hired our university to evaluate the curriculum. But availability of the text book is quite difficult; there is only one original copy in the university and lecturers use that copy” (1)

“AAA some subjects, no text book available, only slides are available, so students have challenge for the curriculum text books and the course itself. The problem is the university tries to get one copy for the lecturer and that one bought overseas not available in the country” (2)

European Commission (2004) reported students and parents are not happy the quality education offering Somali universities and they question amount they pay and the quality education getting for the students. But these findings denied different respondents; for example, university lecturer preparing his PhD here in Malaysia said the quality is not low as the literature reported; secondly, master student graduated one of Somali Universities and now doing master degree in Malaysia. Both respondents said;

“The quality of graduate students is so good, for example Malaysian universities and other universities in the world, many patches graduated in Somali University are studying master or PhD. Considering the literature, there is some quality weakness although not very high” (1).

“AAA even though I cannot say the quality of Somali university 100% is good, but the students are satisfied their education and the standard is good, because when students graduate and come to study international countries they perform better the courses they are taking. Of course quality improvement is required in different angles of Somali universities, mainly we need up to date facilities, we need books, experienced lecturers especially we need prof. level and AAAA almost 75% satisfy we satisfy quality of Somali universities.

Thomas (2008) listening student's voice may lead strong relationship between the institution and the students furthermore it builds the quality of the University. Interviewers were different in this case and this shows the gap between the literature and reality in the universities.

AAA AAA yes university listens voice of students, AAA but things do not happen as the

Students want, sometimes they are listened but no action is taken (1)

To listen students' voice is the development of the university, the university depends on the students therefore it is important to know their complaints. Our university has a dependent court, even students can sue to the lecturer if he/she has clear evidence” (2)

“AAA universities give the priority for the lecturers rather than students, if students complain nobody gives care, for example if teaching method of a lecturer is not as required and whole faculty students complain as group as well as individual no consideration is given so this shows teachers are the priority not

for the students and no one listen students' complain" (3)

"Yes, university listens voice of the students and it is important, there is student union any complain goes through students union, then the union contacts the office may concern the case/issue" (4)

R. Islam (2007) stated achievement, recognition and motivating for the lecturer and staffs is necessary for the university. Furthermore Ben-Ayed (2010) found gap between higher education leaders and education staff, research finding says, decision making are not participate staff member, moreover, most of the leaders use an authoritarian style, they under estimate lecturer and other staff.

"AA Lecturers are dictated what to do and they are not given enough facilities to implement their teaching duties. We are less motivated, even we are not call for general management review meeting, and leadership seems authoritarian" (1)

"AA lecturers do not have regular meeting, there was a time we use to have a meeting and the meeting was stopped until now I don't know why it was stopped, only teachers used to meet and even there was no good outcome, I can point pointless meeting, because teachers were not given suitable topics to discuss. On the other hand lecturers and top management don't have regular meeting, no two way communication. So the management used to dictate what to do, that is all. No teacher empowerment" (2).

Johnson et al. (2003) Argued changes must not only from the mind of the leaders but also change must from the subordinates, departments, lecturers and sometimes customers. Meanwhile, Ayed et al (2010) reported there is gap between university leaders and education staff. Equally important, Mark K (2008) stated when people share same objective and have common goal they affect one another. "The action of one can affect the outcome the second person", therefore university leaders should think their subordinate in order to get good quality outcome. In addition, Johnson et al (2003) indicated subordinates always resist changes therefore university leaders face challenges when they have new system of quality improvement.

"AAA Really I can so no, I was lecturing more than 5 years and I did not see any management review meeting. We only dictate what to do and how to do, like or not like it is up to you. We teach more than 30 hours a week"(1).

"Lecturers are highly pressured, they are given huge classes, all the day he should be in the class, so the teacher was not given chance to do other activities . the worst case the lecturer should teach two shifts morning and afternoon shift. Even if you can do all your teaching in a morning university will not allow, you will assign classes morning and afternoon and even you don't have your own office to wait afternoon classes, you have to be in the library until afternoon or to sit in the canteen. No office for the lecturer" (2)

UNESCO (2005) reported that Somalia teachers don't get enough salary based on their daily consumption. This was supported one of the interviewers and he said;

"Yes, we are not given enough salary but we sacrifice our Ummah. The good

thing is we get our salary on time or earlier than our expectation period”(1)

Salary is not good, it is too low, working hours is too much, lecturers do not got opportunity, no scholarship, no training, no enough facilities, no retirement, no on leave”(2)

Cassanelli and Abdikadir (2005) reported Somalia, places control war lords universities are compelled to employ low profile and unqualified people because of powerful clan.

“AA Yes, it commonly happen unemployment rate is high in Somalia, so people try to get job by any means regardless qualified or unqualified”(1).

“Sometimes happen one clan/ethnic to be the dominant of the workers, always people say one clan/ethnic is always more than others and this myth exist” (2)

Koch (2003) universities do not think more on quality but they focus on students’ enrolment rather than teaching and learning. European Commission (2004) mentioned that, in Somalia education facilities are very low, lack of application of modern teaching/learning concepts and it is not fit customer requirements’.

“Reality AAA we have basic facilities of our universities based on our capacity. AAA universities do not get support from the government so they cannot able to get full facilities like here in Malaysia” (1)

“Mostly lectures use the projects periodically, sometimes they have time table using the projector. Example lecturer X will use every Monday while lecturer Y use every Tuesday. So this shows shortage of class materials especially teaching facilities” (2).

UNDP (2005) found that Somali education is at the bottom line of financial resource and average fees paid by the pupil is only about \$ 25 per annum therefore Somali universities has shortage both human and cost. As the interviewer declared students are price oriented, in some case they control university fees, meaning that if university fees higher than other university definitely students will go cheaper university

“Most of Somali students choose for the universities base on the amount of money charges for the universities (fees) students are rational for monetary term, they are not quality oriented they only give priority fees”.

World Bank report at (2007) reported that “the main challenges of quality assurance in African countries are two things which are cost and human capacity requirements”. In the same way, Concern world (2006) declared, Somalia there is shortage of teachers; students do not have qualified and trained teachers and this reflected ratio of the teachers and students. Nevertheless, respondents underlined that Somali universities have the challenges reported international organizations.

“AA yes, there is high shortage of qualified lecturers. AAA good quality people already employed United Nation Agencies in Somalia who pay higher salary than universities”(1)

AAAA there is huge demand in the universities for experienced lecturers, so the country need high quality lecturers especially prof. Level” (2)

Muhammad (2009) stated strategic planning helps university in different aspects such as

sustainability, having clear vision and mission, scanning working environment, customer satisfaction, knowing its position of the competitors.

“AAAA our university we have vision, mission as well as objectives and all are based on good quality performance. We are committed to produce right people having the required quality; our strategy is high alumni in the labour market. We also need to compete our counterpart universities; we need to enrol students more than other universities every intake”.

Somalia; ministry of education (2007) since collapsed Somali state, planning and management of education at the national level almost nonexistent, therefore the ministry had the strategic plan of having education partnership and registering Somali universities international education associations.

“AAA if we talk about before 2,000 AA quality education of Somali universities were not good, it was weak, but now it is getting better, universities are trying to adopt rest of the world. Universities started to have partner other international universities and colleges. Example Open University has partner with one of Somali universities meanwhile you can prepare diploma online Oxford University while you are in Mogadishu- Somalia. Universities are benchmarking international universities are try to adopt quality system”

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