

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Secondary and college teachers use social media to engage their students in learning, but little is known about secondary school teachers' use. The issue is that, while secondary school students intuitively use social media in their personal lives, it is unclear why and how teachers use it for instructional purposes with digitally literate students. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the extent to which secondary school teachers from Karachi use social media with students for teaching. Braun and Clark's thematic analysis was used in this study. The research questions asked why and how secondary school teachers used social media for student engagement and learning. Data from semi-structured interviews with teachers were analyzed using verbatim coding to identify final codes, categories, and themes. The key findings indicated that teachers attributed their use of social media to the learners' needs and were influenced by administrators and their observations of other teachers using social media. Teachers created opportunities for students to actively collaborate, discuss, explore, practice, and work independently, which put students at the center of their learning and teachers as the facilitators and support system throughout the learning process. The results of this study provide teachers and school leaders with knowledge about the use of social media to foster autonomy in learning for secondary school students.

Keywords: *English Language Teachers; Social Media; Academic Purposes; Perception; Pakistan; Education Technology; Teacher Attitudes; Online Learning; Language Instruction, Teacher Perspectives.*

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers use different tools of technology to support student's education in a diversity of ways. For example, (Rodesiler, 2017) argues that whether the digital Generation is a generational occurrence, or is concerned with digital skill use, colleges and universities face various limitations because of differences in thinking in both generations. It is assumed that appropriate integration of social media can lead instructors to meet the criteria of 21st-century education needs (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). To engage teachers of this generation has remained a difficult problem.

Being migrants to advanced surroundings, they learn to get familiar with those surroundings. Consequently, this advanced world is like a "second" language to them, and they use it in a different way than digital natives (Prensky, 2001). It is a big challenge for most Secondary School instructors to teach these digital natives because the majority of the instructors are from the previous generation, and they become acquainted later in their lives with digital skills (Sloan, 2017). Digital skills are not welcomed by every individual, many individuals are still reluctant to use them.

This study, observing a general gap in the usage of social media for teaching purposes intends to investigate the perceptions of English language teachers that Why and how English language teachers use social media for student engagement and learning.

The researcher generally observed that it has been a common practice, in the Pakistani context to adhere to previously established, widely accepted, and long-standing instructional techniques, for example, teaching students with the help of a textbook by using a whiteboard. Some teachers also use the notes for teaching purposes which are usually the extracted content of any renowned author. It makes the class teacher-centered and boring without knowing the fact that how the world around us has progressed and these old teaching techniques are almost outdated now (Floater, 2009). While discussing importance (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) instigated that this, inevitably, leads one's mind to the validity and significance of the modern studies that have been carried out on account of its development and connecting the same to the state one perceives in the use of social media for academic purposes.

Secondly, on observed that some English language instructors are hesitant to use and integrate social media for academic purposes. There is a need to know whether social media tools are being used or not to teach the students and if teachers are using those tools, then what is their perception about it?

This study was focused on the following objectives:

1. To know the Pakistani teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical potential of social media, particularly to find the usefulness of social media and the teachers' affective feelings in secondary schools of Karachi city, Pakistan.
2. To know the reasons why teachers' preferences, differ for social media usage according to the targeted language skill.
3. To draw teachers' attention towards the use of social media for academic purposes.
4. To draw the attention of academics/researchers towards social media usage in teaching and research.

This study extends the body of literature about the impact of social media use on language learning. An in-depth study of teacher's experiences on social media could help future language teachers and educational institutions as well. This study may contribute to the present body of knowledge on social media technologies in language learning and may fill a gap in the work by finding language teachers' perspectives of their experiences. This study could help in finding the elements that simply or barrier social media use for pedagogical use.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Networking Sites

There are various famous social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, etc. (Boyd & Ellison, 2017) describe social networking sites as it is a web-based service that enables users to (i) create a public or private profile within a limited system, (ii) communicate with other users with whom they have a shared connection, (iii) view and pass through the list of their friends within the bounded system. There is no ambiguity in claiming that the integration and easy availability of social networking sites have evolved the way of communicating and interacting with each other.

Recently, (McBride, 2019) instigates that social networking is the most common technology among all social media technologies. Social networking can improve the learning of language skills with the use of social communication, association, and feelings of lack of restrictions. Many language instructors opt for the use of social media in the classroom to enhance the learning of the teachers because it enables the teachers to learn beyond the classroom. This makes the teacher independent and having fewer restrictions allows them to communicate in a way, in other words, the class becomes more teacher-centered, expressive, and productive.

Social Media Support for Classroom Teaching

According to Dakic (2021), social media use in a classroom can be guided and cultivated to provide better learning results and critical awareness. It can also allow students more freedom to connect and collaborate outside of the classroom and experience the globally connected world before they enter the workforce social media platforms can be active learning tools where students take place in learning in their specific way rather than assimilating information. Social media can shape and present information in a meaningful way and since students are mainly accustomed to social media, it makes the process even more exciting than learning by traditional tools.

Social Media is Different from other types of Technology

According to Sanjay (2019), social media may take the form of a variety of tech-enabled activities. These activities include photo sharing, blogging, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, business networks, virtual worlds, reviews, and much more. Even governments and politicians utilize social media to engage with constituents and voters. Multimedia is content that uses a combination of different content forms like text, graphics, audio, video, animation, colors, and interactive content. It is broadly used in the Information, Communication, Entertainment & Education sectors. Social media are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Social media often uses multi-media to provide impact information to grab the attention of users or effective communication of commercial advertisements. Social media puts the audience at the center. Even brands are on social media, they organize social media marketing campaigns and interact with their existing or potential customers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Why do English language teachers use social media for student engagement and learning?
2. How do English language teachers use social media for student engagement and learning?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative study aims to investigate the perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of social media on language learning. The purpose of the basic qualitative approach is to get a better understanding through first-hand experience, truthful reporting, and quotations of actual

conversations. It aims to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior.

Thematic analysis is an independent qualitative descriptive approach that is mainly described as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). Thematic Analysis has sometimes been introduced as one part of phenomenology (Holloway & Todres, 2005). However, Thematic analysis can be conducted within both realist/essentialist and constructionist paradigms, although the outcome and focus will be different for each (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Therefore, this approach allowed us to uncover teachers' views and unreported experiences through first-person interactions. The basic qualitative research approach (interpretivism) holistically understands the human experience in specific settings researcher is familiar with the interpretive techniques and wants to explore the participants' perceptions of the event (Liu et al., 2016).

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview is the interchange of words verbally occurring when the participant is asked a question by the researcher to elicit information. It enables the participants to highlight the important factors of the research problem. (Lavrakas, 2018). Open-ended questions paved the way for developing a conversation otherwise straight answering may occur which led to incomplete answers may explain the entire process of data collection that one opted for.

Interview

Interviews provide aid in validating and elaborating teachers' acceptance and intentions to use social media in their classroom instruction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ten out of twelve secondary school teachers were interviewed in this study. The duration of interviews varied between forty minutes to one hour. In terms of RQ1, interview questions supported details about secondary school teachers' willingness to use social media. The RQ2 interview question provided a comprehensive description of teaching techniques used for the learning environment with Social Media use. Addressing the research questions, Interview questions also supported details on how teachers used social media in different activities, coursework, and subject matter.

Sampling

Sampling is regarded as a process used for statistical study. It is usually comprised of observations extracted from a large number of people. The sampling methodology mainly

depends on the nature of the study. According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), a research study could be systematic sampling or simple random sampling.

Sampling Criteria

Purposeful sampling technique was opted for this study. As Patton (2015) defined it consistency and influence of purpose sampling depend on choosing cases that are rich in information to conduct an in-depth study. The case that enables the researcher to learn about problems of main importance in a study is called an information-rich case because it focuses on the knowledge of the population as well as the purpose of the study (Crossman, 2014).

Inclusion Criteria

Mostly, age, gender, and ethnicity are considered for demographic purposes. Potential participants in the research are based on inclusion criteria (Spall & Harriette, 2007). For this purpose, the population for this study was secondary school teachers who have used Social Media technology in their teaching practices for at least two semesters in Karachi. Finding key participants commenced by emailing teachers who were willing to share their Social Media experiences in the secondary school learning environment by email recruitment.

Exclusion Criteria

Spall and Harriette (2007) described it as an attribute of the participant which made it excluded from the study. This study was about English language teachers and has to find out the perception of English Language Teachers using social media for academic purposes in Pakistan. The study could have included English language teachers of all levels from elementary to tertiary level with no exclusion at all but, since the scope of study restricts it to a specific level, that is, high school English language teachers teaching at public and private high schools based in Karachi city, it excluded all other English language teachers who do not meet the set criteria.

Sample Size

The expected sample size for this study was eight to twelve participants, and the study does include ten teachers. In a qualitative study, the sample size can be as small as one; however, by collecting data from ten to twelve participants, data collection has a relatively high ability to attain saturation than a sample size of one (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a result, the sample size of this qualitative study was large enough to collect enough data to include an understanding of why and how secondary school teachers use Social Media technologies in teaching practice.

Participants

Purposive selection of the participants has been carried out for this study. They consisted of Secondary School teachers, who are using social media applications for teaching purposes. (Patton, 2015) defines purposeful sampling as: “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. 10 Participants were interviewed. Participants were contacted by email and in person, and a convenient location and time were determined for the interview. Before the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form. The participants of this study were Secondary School level teachers. The names of participants have been changed to provide confidentiality.

Table 1. Background Information of the Participants

S. No	Gender	Experience (Years)	Qualification	Institution	Interview Code
1.	Female	04	MA English	Private	FP1
2.	Female	02	MA English	Private	FP2
3.	Female	07	MA English	Private	FP3
4.	Female	03	MA. Diploma in English Teaching	Private	FP4
5.	Female	06	MA Education. Diploma in English Teaching	Private	FP5
6.	Female	05	MA English	Private	FP6
7.	Female	02	MA ELT	Private	FP7
8.	Female	03	MA English	Private	FP8
9.	Female	04	BS English	Private	FP9
10.	Male	05	MA ELT	Private	MP1

Interview Protocols

With the consent of the participants, audio of the interview was recorded. Participants were asked questions about their experiences being a language teacher. Participants were also asked to share their views regarding the implementation of social media in their classrooms. Participants had the right to stop the interview at any time.

Data Analysis Technique

Because of the nature of the research, this study followed a non-experimental study design which includes semi-structured, in-depth, and face-to-face interviews as the main method of data collection. This approach is helpful in the processing of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. According to (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) it also helps in finding meaning and understanding through inductive analysis of interviews, observations, or documents and includes comprehensive and descriptive findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews Findings

As per the collected data, 10 participants were selected for the in-depth interviews. An interview leads the researcher towards the lived experiences of the individuals which ultimately reflects their point of view, awareness, and philosophies. Individuals who have gone through the real situation can only comment or share their views with real examples. ‘Much of qualitative psychotherapy research relies on spoken interviews with participants to gather detailed information regarding the phenomenon under examination’ (Knox & Burkard, 2009). The interviews were based on semi-structured open-ended questions.

THEMATIC MAP

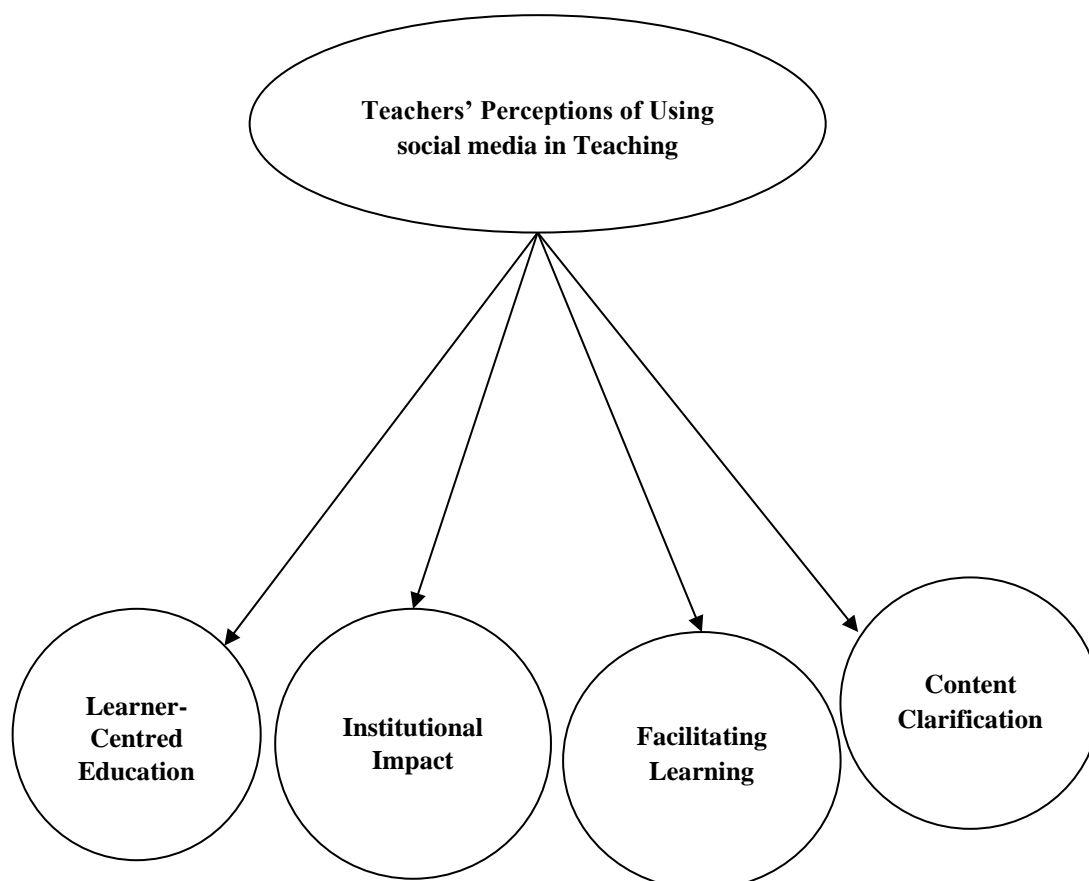


Table 2. List of Final Codes, Categories, Themes, and Examples for RQ 1

Final Codes	Categories	Themes	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Knowledge • Self-driven Knowledge • Self-regulated ideas • Active Knowledge • Asynchronous Knowledge 	Independent Preparation	Learner-Centered Learning	When discussing YouTube use, FP4 said, “By using YouTube, my students came to me with the possible solution or any query related to the topic. That is how my students try to solve the questions and find the answers by themselves, and they find it after one or two attempts”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Material • Find data • Gather Evidence • Assessment • Study 	Research and Exploration		While discussing Twitter use FP5 stated, “Use of Twitter can be used in the classroom for better results and outcomes I like it, because while using this one has to go with the same pace in which the world is moving. So, teachers must adopt himself or herself according to the use of technology”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for Understanding • Clarification of Perceptions • Knowledge aids 	Content Clarification		When discussing Clarifications of perceptions FP3 reported that, “Well, the most important social media tool in my reach is YouTube, and I know well how to use it. I go for the details like what I want to learn and what the content is going to deliver”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Impulsion • Administrative Encouragement 	Administrative Impact	Organizational Influence	MP1 said their principal encouraged them to use social media during the pandemic. MP1 further stated that, “Yes. I use a lot of social media technologies, like YouTube, Facebook, British Council, and many other different levels”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Assessment • Lesson Plans • Expressive Connections 	Observations		FP2 said “When I got you know how it can be interesting for the students like when I first used it, it was just an accident that I started to use it. I observed the students were taking much interest in learning about the use of social media. They were very involved. So, I decided to adopt social media in my teaching”

**RQ1: Why do English language teachers use social media for student engagement and learning?*

Table 3. List of Final codes, categories, themes, and Examples for Research Question 2

Final Codes	Categories	Themes	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating Learning • Class Debates • Collaborating Activities • Making and Sharing • Debate Posts • Connecting • Open Discussion 	Combined and Collaborating Assessments	Facilitating Learning	FP-7 “And I use social media because I know that this is the way this is a medium in which the students take interest in which they are interested. And obviously, they were attracted towards something where they find interest”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Resources • Student help 	Concerned Class Data		FP7- “I’m only supposed to use the Zoom class to start and then just to give the lecture to get their assignment or to give them test and then my comments and to get the outcome purposes of social media just to guide the students in the right direction and to utilize their time and to make them enhance their knowledge”

**RQ2: How do English Language teachers use social media for student engagement and learning?*

FINDINGS

Learner-Centered Education

The first theme elaborates that the instructor used the Learner-Centered education method when teaching with the help of social media. That’s why the instructors in this study conveyed

that with the usage of social media, their students can have independent preparation, research and discovery, and excerpt understanding. These sub-themes are further explained in this section. One participant stated: *“It’s focused on all four parts of skills with various reading, writing, listening, comprehension, and critical thinking. So, it’s comprehensive, and it gets easy for me to assign tasks over there, rather than making my task and then worrying about grading it and stuff like that. So yeah ...” (FP1)*

Institutional Impact

Another major reason for using social media in the classroom is the influence of the institute. Social media is mandatory in some places, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic it has become more significant. Even teachers are bound to work from home. Many teachers conduct online classes with the help of social media. Where it makes them independent in terms of office it also gives them a challenge—the change in the working ambience impacts the level of teaching and concentration of the teacher. One of the participants described that, *“Well, the impact is kind of it makes things easier for the students and for the teacher as well. So, it is like for example, if I’m using it. So, for example, if you go on a website where there are videos, giving instructions about different topics, or comprehension, or to reading or anything, you can easily make. Give homework by using Google Classroom, or you can conduct different kinds of sessions and mark them over there.” (FP2)*

Facilitating Learning

The use of social media is beneficial for both teachers and learners as well. The teacher gives interactive activities to the students. This activity helps me learn modern knowledge and new terms. For example, the usage of the symbol # (Hashtag) helps them to find a certain topic or anything related to that topic on the platform. Sometimes teachers use collaborative activities so that students can get the associated meaning and knowledge of the subject. One participant shared, *“I was going to YouTube and find the topic. For example, articles model conjunctions, prepositions, whatever the topic is, and I’ll go and see the videos. And if I want images, though, then I was going to Google and Google it. I sometimes find charts very easy to understand charts, we can explain things very easily, but it’s in the form of charts, I draw charts in my class on the board, so they can understand easily, and formulas and other things. Any tool which I can, which can help me in the class”. (MP2).*

Content Clarification

Content clarification is the paramount essence for learners to gain knowledge independently (Villarroel et al., 2020). In this study, teachers described that they referred to some YouTube

video material to the students that was used for the same topic. Five of the eight respondents reported that when students are provided with content from social media (YouTube) related to their subject, it gives more outcomes and students show more interest in that particular topic. That is why, the majority of the teachers mentioned YouTube as their tool of choice for content clarification in their concerned subject. For example, one participant said *“Well, the most social media tools in my reach are Facebook and YouTube, and I know well how to use them. I go for the details like what I want to learn and what the content is going to deliver” (FPI)*

DISCUSSION

One of the main points about RQ1 affirmed that secondary school teachers from this research, as well as other teachers from the research at various levels of education, have utilized Social Media technology to support learner-centered learning exercises (Obaidli et al., 2018). For example, a female teacher participant stated on the question related to the use of social media in the classroom that it has been very useful in preparing topics as the participant gets help from it through videos, these videos give thorough learning of the topic as participant believes human brain can easily remember the pictures more as compared to the written words.

The findings that emerged from RQ2 and the research literature confirmed that using social media in class brings more interest for the students (Carpenter et al., 2016). Participants also said that the students take much interest when they are exposed to social media, such interest they do not usually take when there is no usage of social media in the classroom. On asked about the likeness of this social media use in the classroom, the participant stated that that participant likes the use of social media in the classroom because it makes the work much easier as compared to explaining to the students without the use of social media. And also going to have without it is much more difficult for the teacher to make the students understand the content without using social media (Hsieh, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Summary

The thematic analysis reflects the ease of use and perceived usefulness inculcated by an individual's attitude and behavior (Dziak, 2017). Pertinent to thematic analysis, teachers use social media as a facilitator in teaching along with school-related information. Intrinsically feeling comfortable with Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook in the learning environment. The findings of Vrieling (2016) revealed that the teachers were motivated and had tendencies towards the use of technology. Findings from this study about Social Media's

effectiveness reveal that the core technology in the form of social media in the domain of education is being used at various levels and areas along with the content areas as well.

In integration with the literature and RQ1, findings explained that the technology acceptance and knowledge of all areas pertinent to the content in teaching and learning is required along with the pedagogies for the successful integration in the education field. It's needed from the administrative side to cater and inculcate thematic analysis frameworks to build a strong network to develop the education state on a state level as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The understudied issue of Social Media use recommends future research, in which secondary schools are recommended. Firstly, the replication is to be made for further study on a big scale. As the study has been expedited under schoolteachers' perceptions, the data can be collected across the city and can be shared in the school districts, which can enrich the data. Data could be valuable to the research in the discipline by providing insights about knowledge, interests, enjoyment, motivation, and attitude toward Social Media use through the lens of the learner.

The third recommendation is to construct the same research in a new context, to understand secondary school teachers' current experiences of Social Media use in a virtual and hybrid learning environment from observations and readily available lesson plans. The fourth recommendation is to study how and why teachers select and use specific Social Media applications in teaching environment. Another recommendation is to expedite the study in a new context so that a hybrid learning environment construct may bring new information and facets. Exploring how teachers use social media in a better way for secondary school learners.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study findings revealed three limitations, out of which the first one is the small size of the sample which debilitates the generalizability of the study to the other areas on a big scale. Usually, it's an inert weakness of a qualitative study. A small and limited sample used social media in their teaching purportedly for the student's engagement in studies. The small district size along with the small size of the sample does not allow the findings to be generalized in the commonly applicable areas. Limitations that may have occurred and acknowledgment of all the limitations were documented. Drafts, data tables, and other study findings were shared with the dissertation committee members to address any constraints that could affect the integrity of the study's findings.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present era holding the new learning standards can be influenced by the findings pertinent to Social Media use in teaching. The change was addressing awareness of dynamic development in the learning environment along with its benefits for the teachers, administrators, educationalists, and school district leaders before Social Media integration in the secondary school learning milieu.

Social Change Implications for Community

The participants showed positive attitudes towards Social Media technology. The reason for the acceptance is its support towards independent thinking and modeled collaboratively by the peers. The result revealed that the acceptance of technology has proven itself as a useful tool in learning and milieu for the students' engagement in their particular studies.

Educational Practice Implications

The teachers with the innovative implemented strategies are expandable with respect to the administration level. To use different effective ways to provide a milieu of learning may develop. Through the implementation of Social Media use in the classrooms may develop an improving learning system amongst students to cater their activities by being engaged in curricular in an efficient way.

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