

X-RAYING THE IMPACT OF GRAZERS/CULTIVATORS' CONFLICT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated impact of grazers/cultivators' conflict on the management of secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 5110 teachers in 297 grant-aided secondary schools in Benue State. A sample of 511 teachers was used for the study. The selection was done using a simple random sampling technique. A 10-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Grazers/Cultivators Conflict Questionnaire (GCCQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts, one in Educational Management from Benue State University, Makurdi and a second expert in Measurement and Evaluation from Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The reliability of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.82 which indicated that the instrument was reliable for usage. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant impact on school facilities and the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that Government at all levels should find a way of encouraging mass education among the grazers and cultivators. This would not only lead to better perception but also create better opportunity for awareness of realistic coping strategies in the crises situation which will in turn help to sustain school facilities in schools and enhance effective and efficient management of schools.

Key words: Impact, herders/grazers' conflict, management of secondary schools.

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Introduction

The need to create an environment that is not only conducive but also free from any form of intimidation and fear for staff/students and school properties in schools across Nigeria and Benue State in particular cannot be overemphasized. In regard to this, Idoko (2010) states that various school authorities try to create a conducive environment where necessary manpower, learning facilities and materials are adequately provided. Though in the 21st century, schools in Benue State seem to have experienced a lot of setback as regard effective and efficient management of schools as a result of frequent grazers/cultivators conflict.

Historically, relations between grazers and cultivators have been harmonious. By and large, they lived in a peaceful, symbiotic relationship: herders' cattle would fertilise the farmers' land in exchange for grazing rights. But tensions have grown over the past decade, with increasingly violent flare-ups spreading throughout central and southern states; incidents have occurred in at least 22 of the country's 36 states (Ubwa, 2018). According to report by Ubwa, in 2016 over 2,000 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in Benue and Kaduna states alone. According to another, incidents involving herders accounted for 44 per cent of all fatalities in the country in 2016. Among the principal causes and aggravating factors behind this escalating conflict are climatic changes (frequent droughts and desertification); population growth (loss of Northern grazing lands to the expansion of human settlements); technological and economic changes (new livestock and farming practices); crime (rural banditry and cattle rustling); political and ethnic strife (intensified by the spread of illicit firearms); and cultural changes (the collapse of traditional conflict management mechanisms).

Moreover, propelled by desertification, insecurity and the loss of grazing land to expanding settlements, the southward migration of Nigeria's herders is causing violent competition over land with local farmers. Grazers/cultivators conflict from northern Nigeria and sedentary agrarian communities in the central and southern zones have escalated in recent years and are spreading southward particularly in northern Nigeria thereby not only threatening the country's security and stability but also seem to affect the effective and efficient management of schools. With an estimated death toll of approximately 2,500 people in 2016, these clashes are becoming as potentially dangerous in the Northern Nigeria. Yet to date, response to the crisis at both the federal and state levels has been poor. President Muhammadu Buhari's administration and affected state governments need to work together, taking immediate steps to shore up security for herders and farmers, strengthening conflict-resolution mechanisms and initiating longer-term efforts to reform livestock management practices, address negative environmental trends and curb cross-border movements of both cattle rustlers and armed herders.

In his submission, Afegbua (2010) posits that crises are common and unavoidable in all human society. All over the world, crises occur because society is made up of people with different interests and values. In most societies, crises occur when parties in a state of independence perceives divergent views or believe that their aspirations or goals cannot be achieved simultaneously. Therefore, it is only natural that where there is inequality in access to the control of natural resources and political power for instance, there would be discontent, opposition and controversy. Ogbonnaya (2013) observes that there are factors that could stifle the process of growth in the education industry which includes: natural disaster, insurgencies and crises between grazers and cultivators. When there is insurgency for instance the grazers and cultivators conflict, this affects the quality of management of schools in such areas.

Conflict

Conflicts occur as a result of inequalities among ethnic groups. Conflicts or dysfunctional disputes usually occur between groups of people and could be ethnic, religious, demographic, cultural (chieftaincy), political, economic or civic. Such disputes or conflicts occur at urban, rural or national levels. They may also be over farmlands, ponds, rivers or sites of construction of houses among others. Such disputes may last longer than necessary and is capable of hindering rural development in spite of other efforts.

Akinibi and Akinola (2009) define conflict as a situation of disagreement, fighting or even outright war. North (2008) observes that conflict occur when two or more person (or groups) seek to possess the same objects, occupy the same space or the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes. In his own submission, Bujra (2012) in looking at the various forms of conflict in Africa describes conflict "to mean a violent and armed confrontation and struggle between groups, between the state and one or more groups, and between two or more states. In such confrontation and struggle some of those involved are injured and killed.

Onsarigo (2007) defined conflict as a condition when one party feels that the other party has frustrated or is about to frustrate some concern of that one party. It therefore implies that conflicts exist whenever an action by one person or group of persons prevents, obstructs and interferes with the desires of a particular individual or a group of people. Agu (2005) attests to Onsarigo's (2007) viewpoint that, conflict manifests when someone has a chance to achieve his or her purpose at the expense of someone else. Onsarigo further states that conflict is a relationship which exists between two or more parties who believe that they have incompatible goals, interests, perceptions and preferences. Hence, there is no way; two or more unique persons can be alike in all aspects of life. Conflict therefore remains a natural and constant feature of every social organization.

Conflict between grazers and cultivators in Nigeria, especially in the Benue Valley; usually result to loss of lives and properties of schools (Tenuche & Ifatimehim, 2009). Moreso, insecurity in many Northern states (a consequence of the grazers/cultivators conflict in the North east and of less-well-reported rural banditry and cattle rustling in the North-west and North-Central zones) also prompts increasing numbers of herdsmen to migrate south. The growth of human settlements, expansion of public infrastructure and acquisition of land by large-scale farmers and other private commercial interests, have deprived herders of grazing reserves designated by the post-independence government of the former Northern region (now split into nineteen states). This is capable of causing conflict among grazers and cultivators which may affect effective management of schools.

Herdsmen migrating into the savannah and rain forests of the central and southern states according to Kato (2017) are moving into regions where high population growth over the last four decades has heightened pressure on farmland, increasing the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution and cattle theft. As these conflicts increase in frequency, intensity and geographical scope, so does their humanitarian and economic toll. The increasing availability of illicit firearms, both locally-produced and smuggled in from outside, worsens the bloodshed. Over the past five years, thousands have been killed including students and teachers; precise tallies are unavailable, but a survey of open source reports suggests fatalities may have

reached an annual average of more than 2,000 from 2011 to 2016, for some years exceeding the toll from other insurgency. Tens of thousands have been forcibly displaced, with school properties destroyed, crops and livestock worth billions of naira destroyed.

According to Adogi (2013), conflicts between grazers and cultivators in Benue State have been on the rise since the 1990s. Adogi further posits that Nigeria in general and Benue State in particular, has experienced resource-related communal clashes (often mis-represented or mis-interpreted as ethnic, political and religious clashes) since the beginning of the 1990s. Moreover, cases of grazers/cultivators conflicts seem widespread in recent times. Vast geographical area of Benue State has placed cultivators in a situation that seem to compel them to live with the grazers particularly during the dry season (November to April). Furthermore, that the grazers still practice the free range system, they move from one place to another in search of pasture and water. This usually forced them to migrate from far North to Benue valley, where both pasture and water resources can be found. This has increased the competition for arable land between grazers/cultivators resulting to hostility and social friction among the two user groups in the Benue State which seem to impact negatively or positively on the effectiveness and efficiency of school management.

Management of Secondary Schools

Management is viewed as the field of human behaviour in which manager's plan, organise, staff, direct and control human and financial resources in an organised group effort in order to achieve desired individual and group objectives with optimum efficiency and effectiveness (Markson, 2011). Management of schools is the process of deciding what to do in school and getting it done through effective use of available resources (Cotton, 2013). Jones (2015) defines school management as the day to day planning, organizing, resourcing, directing and controlling the outputs of the school to enable it reach its desired goals and mission. However, in the quest to achieve this goal, cult activities have become militating factors to the achievement of the school goals and objectives of secondary education. Olaniyan (2010) defines school management as the process demanding the management of specific school functions. It is the control and making of decisions in school.

In the opinions of Ozumba (2007), school management is the process of allowing the head teachers and teachers to make the best use of majority of the people, people to do their power, and people to do their hearts. In another perspective, Solomon (2013) defines school management as the processes of planning, organizing, leading and controlling school members using available human, physical, financial and information resources to achieve school objectives. School management according to Idoko (2005) is coordinating the efforts of people through human and material resources to accomplish the objectives of educational enterprise. Hoy and Sabo (2008) view school management as the day-to-day planning, organizing, resourcing, directing and controlling of the school to enable it to reach its desired goals and missions. This is generally done by one or more persons at different levels in the school, each with separate roles and responsibilities.

Conflict between grazers and cultivators seem to have negative or positive effect on secondary school management in the areas of school facilities and the lives of teachers and students among others. School facilities refer to non-human and non-financial resources. They also include all movable and immovable materials, which are

used for teaching, learning and other school activities. Olagboye (2011:17) states that school facilities consist of instructional resources such as audio and visual aids, graphics, printed materials display materials and consumable materials. They also include physical resources such as land, building, furniture, equipment, machinery, vehicles, electricity and water supply infrastructure. In line with Olagboye, Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) found that both farmers and herdsmen agreed that herdsmen were not accepted by their host communities. Displacement of both farmers and herdsmen and destruction of school facilities around the area were the major effects of conflicts between grazers and cultivators in the area.

Commenting on the issue of safety of teachers and students in schools, Adebayo (2006) notes that grazers and cultivators conflict in the country are usually characterized by wanton destruction of school facilities such as: school buildings, classrooms, hostels, staff quarters, workshops, laboratories, Information and Communication Technology centres, libraries, health centres and sports facilities among others. Similarly, Hagher (2013) points that grazers and cultivators' conflict has continued sporadically since 1999. However, from 2011, it assumed the dimension of a full scale war of aggression against the Tiv in Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States. Hagher further maintains that the present crisis between grazers and cultivators in Benue State is not the first one between these two contending groups. Such crises have been recorded over many years, which resulted in wanton destruction of school infrastructural facilities.

The lives of teachers and students seem to be at stake as a result of conflict between grazers and cultivators. This is as speculated in the study area by relevant educational stakeholders such as school administrators, teachers, parents, students, the community leaders among other. In line with the speculation, Sunday Trust Newspaper as reported by Okoli and Atelhe (2014) shows that about 13 cases of grazers and cultivators conflicts across states of the federation have claimed 300 lives of the citizens. In Benue State and Kogi State, there have been cases of conflicts between grazers and cultivators in Igalamela/Odolo, Ibaji/Ofu local governments and host of other local governments over crop destruction by cattle, killing of farmers which includes teachers and students following reprisal attack on different occasions. Ikyase (2016) found that herdsmen/farmers conflicts had significant effects on human lives and properties in Guma local government area of Benue State.

In the same vein, Hagher (2013) posits that conflict results to death or displacement of teachers, staff and students. For example, more than two-thirds of teachers in primary and secondary schools were killed or displaced as a result of the grazers invasion of community lands in Benue State. Damian and Haroun (2016) maintain that there has been a dramatic escalation of the grazers and cultivators crises over the years. The brutality and impunity with which the assailants operate without regard for law and sanctity has gone beyond reason. The tension and attack in recent time include kidnappings and killing of students and teachers by the Nomads. Grazers brutally kill natives of invaded farming communities including women and children of school going age.

Similarly, report from Ibrahim (2015) who witnessed the crises between grazers and cultivators in Bagana Omala local government area of Kogi State showed that a lot of damages were done to human lives which includes students and teachers in schools around the areas that were also affected. Furthermore, Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) notes that conflict affects human well-beings, reduces quality of life, and the

capabilities of people to live the kind of life they value, and the real choices they have. It results to loss of lives, livelihoods and opportunities, as well as human dignity and fundamental human rights. These situations seem to be the same in secondary schools in Benue State, which seem to have been attributed to the cause of ineffective and inefficient management of schools.

Statement of the Problem

Educational stakeholders such as: school managers, teachers, students, parents and the general public have expressed worry on a daily basis now on the issue of grazers/cultivators conflict which may have negative or positive effect on the effective and efficient management of secondary schools. In addition, there is hardly any passing day that the issue of grazers/cultivators conflict in Benue is not discussed. The seemingly effect whether negative or positive are grievous as school facilities such as: building, furniture, equipment, machinery, vehicles, electricity and water supply infrastructure, laboratory, library, staff offices and the lives of students and teachers seem no longer safe as the result to destruction. School administrators and the entire school management team have been finding it difficult to manage their schools because of frequent conflict between grazers and cultivators. This is because, in most cases, after they experience conflict, school management tries to put in place some of the school facilities destroyed but, before the school begins to stabilize, another worse hit will occur again between grazers and cultivators thereby putting everything off again.

Personal observation by the researcher also revealed that lives of promising young teachers and students have been at stake hence such conflict hardly live them untouched. Most of the teachers and students continue to live in perpetual fear of been killed at any time there is conflict between grazers and cultivators. Such situations seem to have made it increasingly difficult to achieve set objectives of secondary schools in the study area which has prompted the need for this research. Thus, the problem of this study is therefore stated in a question form: In what ways does grazers/cultivators conflict impact on the management of secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of grazers/cultivators conflict on the management of secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the impact of grazers/cultivators conflict on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the impact of grazers/cultivators conflict on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. How does grazers/cultivators conflict impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. In what ways does impact of grazers/cultivators conflict impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho₁. Grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.
- Ho₂. Grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are being studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population. The study was confined to Benue State which comprised of 23 local government areas namely; Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Katisna-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya Local Government Areas. The population of the study comprised 5110 teachers from 297 secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. A sample of A sample of 511 teachers representing 10% of the population was used for the study. The selection of respondents were done using simple random sampling technique. A 10-item structured four-point scale questionnaire titled "Grazers/Cultivators Conflict Questionnaire (GCCQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The instrument was validated by two experts, one in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Measurement in Benue State University, Makurdi. The reliability of the instrument was conducted on 30 teachers in two secondary schools that were not part of the sample for the study and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable for usage. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. A mean cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as having the desired influence while any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as not having influence. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section presented and discussed the results of the study.

Research Question One

What is the impact of grazers/cultivators conflict on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the Respondents on the Impact of Grazers/Cultivators Conflict on School Facilities in Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	STD	Decision
1	School library is destroyed during grazers/cultivators conflict.	28 2	20 9	11	9	3.50	0.63	Strongly Agree
2	During grazers/cultivators conflict, school laboratory facilities are destroyed.	31 6	16 8	9	18	3.52	0.73	Strongly Agree
3	All school buildings of the school are destroyed during grazers/cultivators conflict.	21 5	24 8	15	33	3.28	0.75	Agree
4	Some school facilities are not destroyed during grazers/cultivators conflict.	21	19	21 3	25 8	2.39	0.84	Disagree
5	All furnitures of the school are burnt down during grazers/cultivators conflict.	28 8	15 9	48	16	3.38	0.82	Agree
Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation						3.21	0.75	Agree

Data on Table 1 showed that the Mean rating for items 1-5 were 3.50, 3.52, 3.28, 2.39 and 3.38 respectively with their corresponding Standard Deviation of 0.63, 0.73, 0.75, 0.84 and 0.82. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents accepted items 1, 2, 3 and 5 in the cluster that have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, while item 4 was not accepted based on the cut-off mark of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. The cluster mean of 3.21 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that grazers/cultivators conflict have negative impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two:

What is the impact of grazers/cultivators conflict on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Impact of Grazers/Cultivators Conflict on the Lives of Teachers and Students in Secondary Schools in Benue State

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	STD	Decision
6	The lives of promising teachers and students are lost during grazers/cultivators conflict.	242	239	17	13	3.39	0.68	Agree
7	Teachers and students are hardly speared during grazers/cultivators conflict.	110	214	86	101	2.66	1.17	Agree
8	During grazers/cultivators conflict, students and teachers are raped to death.	221	256	14	20	3.32	0.74	Agree
9	Teachers and students are speared during grazers/cultivators conflict.	56	51	189	215	2.08	0.47	Disagree
10	During grazers/cultivators conflict, students and teachers are seriously beaten.	271	205	15	20	3.42	0.73	Agree
Cluster Mean						2.97	0.76	Agree

Table 2 indicated that the mean ratings for items 6–10 were 3.39, 2.66, 3.32, 2.08 and 3.42 with their corresponding standard deviations of 0.68, 1.17, 0.74, 0.47 and 0.73. Based on the decision rule, it means that respondents accepted items 6, 7, 8 and 10 in the cluster that have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, while item 9 was not accepted based on the cut-off mark of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. The cluster mean of 2.97 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that grazers/cultivators conflict have negative impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses One:

Grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square test of the Influence of Grazers/cultivators Conflict on School Facilities in Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig.	df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	23	127.8	-104.8	0.05	3	435.17	0.00	Sig.
D	4	127.8	-123.8					
A	202	127.8	74.3					
SA	282	127.8	154.3					

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 76.5.

Table 3 revealed that $\chi^2 = 435.17$, at $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since p-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria was therefore, rejected. This implies that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant negative impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses 4:

Grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-Square test of the Impact of Grazers/Cultivators Conflict on the Lives of Teachers and Students in Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Opinions	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Level of Sig.	df	χ^2 -cal	P-value	Decision
SD	29	127.8	-98.8	0.05	3	386.50	0.00	Sig.
D	5	127.8	-122.8					
A	235	127.8	107.3					
SA	242	127.8	114.3					

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 76.5.

Table 4 revealed that $\chi^2 = 386.50$, at $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since p-value of $0.00 < 0.05$ at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that grazers/cultivators conflict has no significant impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary

schools in Benue State was therefore, rejected. This implies that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant negative impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant impact on school facilities in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with Olagboye, Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) who found that both farmers and herdsmen agreed that herdsmen were not accepted by their host communities. Displacement of both farmers and herdsmen and destruction of school facilities around the area were the major effects of conflicts between grazers and cultivators in the area. The finding also support Adebayo (2006) who notes that grazers and cultivators conflict in the country are usually characterized by wanton destruction of school facilities such as: school buildings, classrooms, hostels, staff quarters, workshops, laboratories, Information and Communication Technology centres, libraries, health centres and sports facilities among others.

The second finding of this study revealed that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant impact on the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State. This finding relates with Sunday Trust Newspaper as reported by Okoli and Atelhe (2014) that, about 13 cases of grazers and cultivators conflicts across states of the federation have claimed 300 lives of the citizens In Benue State and Kogi State, there have been cases of conflicts between grazers and cultivators in Igalamela/Odolo, Ibaji/Ofu local governments and host of other local governments over crop destruction by cattle, killing of farmers which includes teachers and students following reprisal attack on different occasions. The finding also relates with Ikyase (2016) who found that herdsmen/farmers conflicts had significant effects on human lives and properties in Guma local government area of Benue State.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that grazers/cultivators conflict has significant impact on school facilities and the lives of teachers and students in secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended as follows;

1. Government at all levels should find a way of encouraging mass education among the grazers and cultivators. This would not only lead to better perception but also create better opportunity for awareness of realistic coping strategies in the crises situation which will in turn help to sustain school facilities in schools and enhance effective and efficient management of schools.
2. Government should also strengthen conflict mediation, resolution, reconciliation and peace building mechanisms: this should be done at state and local government levels, and also within rural communities particularly in areas that have been most affected by conflict. This will not only help to minimize conflict but would go a long way in keeping teachers and students safe in their respective schools.

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