School Principals' Instructional Leadership as a Predictor of Teacher Motivation

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Abstract

This study examined school principals' instructional leadership as a predictor of teachers' motivation. The sample included 306 elementary school teachers. The study took place in the western Black Sea region of Turkey. Data collection tools included two instruments: the Instructional Leadership Scale (ILS) and the Teacher Motivation Scale (TMS). Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teacher motivation. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify the predictive role of instructional leadership in teacher motivation. The findings of this study demonstrate significant relationships between instructional leadership and teacher motivation. Ultimately, instructional leadership can serve as a predictor of teacher motivation.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, teacher motivation, predictor of teacher motivation

Introduction

The concept of instructional leadership was first addressed in the United States in the 1970s, when scholars started investigating elementary school leadership in relation to school effectiveness (Ergen, 2009; Louis et al., 1996). According to De Bevoise (1984), instructional leadership is a set of behavior that the principal exhibits to increase the success of the students in the school. Krug (1992) defines instructional leadership as the application of knowledge in solving problems and the realization of the goals of the school. Other researchers (Gümüşeli, 2001; Prawat, 1993; Şişman, 2004) also emphasize that instructional leadership is a power that school principals use to influence teachers and students for quality education. The support of instructional leaders greatly affects teachers' behavior (Yılmaz, 2010). Instructional leaders' characteristics include having a vision, converting vision into behavior, creating a supportive environment, being aware of the work in the school, and activating knowledge (Özdemir, 2000; Smyth, 1997).

For the purposes of this study, I appropriate several definitions of leadership and motivation. First, leadership is defined as a process of influencing group activities toward determining group goals and developing such goals (Arslan, 2007; Blase & Blase, 2000). A leader is a person who can impact and encourage the members of a group in a positive direction (Başaran, 1992; Herbert & Tankersley, 1993). Leaders have the power to affect, direct, and act on others in line with certain goals and objectives of

the organization (Little, 1993; Sayın, 2010; Şişman, 2004). According to Çelik (2003), the task of the leader is to influence and lead people in achieving common goals. To this point, there have been many discussions on the definitions and types of leadership (Gardner, 1990; Hackman & Johnson, 2013). As far as schools are concerned, as a type of leadership, instructional leadership has been one of the most important topics of the leadership styles among researchers (Glanz, 2006).

The concept of motivation is crucial for instructional leaders since the level of motivation among school personnel will influence that school's success. According to Aydın (2010), motivation includes the internal and external factors that drive individuals' behavior. Eroğlu (2004) asserts that motivation has powers including activating, maintaining movement, and directing people in a positive direction. Motivation may also be defined as the sum of the efforts made to activate one or more employees to achieve the determined goals of an organization (Durmaz, 2004; Sabuncuoğlu & Tüz, 2001). It may be inferred that motivation encompasses all the forces that help individuals to fulfill their duties with enthusiasm (Akbaba, 2006; Avcı & Ayyıldız, 2020). Conditions involving maintenance, energy, arousal, and performance are associated with motivation (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Katzell & Thompson, 1990; Leithwood et al., 2002).

This paper examines the relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teacher motivation. The main goal of this study is to identify the impact of instructional leadership on teacher motivation. I put forth the two hypotheses: (a) Instructional leadership is positively associated with motivation; and (b) Instructional leadership is the predictor of motivation. The following research questions guide this study:

- Is there a significant relationship between instructional leadership and teacher motivation?
- What is the predictive level of instructional leadership on teacher motivation?

Literature Review

The concept of leadership is often conceived in the same way as management. However, most scholars do not consider these concepts synonymous (Algahtani, 2014). According to Algahtani (2014), management and leadership include distinct differences. People use management skills to direct and plan things for organizational aims and goals. On the other hand, leadership skills mostly include inspiration and motivation for organizational change (Algahtani, 2014). Connolly et al. (2019) indicate that management involves carrying out duties for the proper functioning of an organization. Lumby (2019) claims that the term management is mainly used in the organizational hierarchy for those who occupy higher positions. Maccoby (2000) explains that management is a function that administrators exercise in their organizations. Katz (1955) defines management as the practices of a group regarding their positions in the organization.

The term leadership has the potential to energize an organization (Maccoby, 2000). Leadership includes multidimensional phenomena such as an experience, an ability, or a behavior (DePree, 1989; Northouse, 2007). Leadership is the process of affecting a group of people in an organization for a common goal (Drucker, 1999; House & Aditya, 1997). Leadership is the practice of leading (Raelin, 2016) that brings about change in an organization (Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2003).

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between the impacts of leadership on teachers and on students. Blömeke and Klein (2013) report that teachers who had successful leadership in their schools felt that they had more autonomy. Robinson et al. (2008) reveal that strong leadership in schools has positive effects on promoting teachers and student learning outcomes. On the other hand, some researchers claim that a negative view of management in education can exist due to the confusion between leadership and management in practice (Cuban, 1988; Lumby, 2019). It is reasonable to assume that school administrators who solely focus on managing their teachers would not be able to foster teacher motivation. Such administrators would seem uncreative, bureaucratic, and controlling (James & Vince, 2001). On the other hand, school administrators with effective leadership skills would have a more positive impact on teachers than those who just manage such teachers by applying uncreative tools of constant monitoring and controlling (Cuban, 1988; Robinson et al., 2008).

Leaders' effectiveness can be determined by how they motivate the employees in the organization (Skaalvik, 2020). School administrators with influential leadership capabilities may be a driving force that increases the teachers' level of motivation (Supriadi & Yusof, 2015).

Because school principals are instructional leaders, the expectations are high for them (Reitzug & Cross, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1997). Instructional leaders may influence teachers' motivation by impacting their educational practices and aims (Butler & Shibaz, 2019). Schools may experience stress and burnout as a result of high expectations (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). The heaviness of the expectations is aligned with the extended responsibilities of the school principals. Typically, they are expected to deal with managing issues including schedules, finance, or school activities (Hallinger et al., 2018; Møller & Ottesen, 2011). However, along with these duties, their responsibilities have involved school mission, creating a safe zone, student learning, and the morale and motivation of the personnel (Point et al., 2008). Based on these assumptions, one may understand that effective instructional leadership not only creates a positive school climate but also motivates all teachers for the success of the school.

Teacher motivation is a great indicator that impacts students, curriculum, the teaching process, and evaluation in a school (Kirkhus, 2011; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Williams, 2012). Overall, success in schools is more than likely to be associated with strong instructional leadership of the school administrator (Kim & Liu, 2005; Sclan, 1993). Kandemir and Gür (2009) echo that teacher motivation is associated with achieving high management and academic success in schools. Education leaders need to understand the importance of teacher motivation, as it has strong effects on students' learning and academic progress (Neves de Jesus & Lens, 2005). Research suggests that teachers with a high level of motivation take the initiative to implement successful teaching sessions and tend to make meaningful reforms to increase the school's academic success (Durmaz, 2004; Jesus & Conboy, 2001). It is crucial to note that lower levels of teacher motivation may be deteriorating for students, teachers, and school (Mowday et al., 1984; Lens & Jesus, 1999; Prick, 1989).

Based on the aforementioned studies, it is clear that there is an association between effective instructional leadership and teacher motivation. However, few existing studies focus on the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher motivation. For instance, Rowley (1996) found that the leadership style demonstrated in a school affects teacher motivation. Most existing studies examine the

impact of leadership styles on students, teachers, and overall school success. For instance, studies focus on school climate (Fultz, 2011), teacher satisfaction (Johnson, 2005), teacher retention (Urick, 2012), and teacher commitment (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). However, studies examining the predictive role of the instructional leadership of school principals on teacher motivation seem lacking. Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to identify the level of instructional leadership's prediction of teacher motivation.

Several theories of motivation informed this study: Maslow's hierarchy of needs; McGregor's Theory X – Theory Y; Blake and Mouton's managerial grid; Herzberg's two-factor or motivator hygiene theory; McClelland's trichotomy of needs; and Likert's System 1 – System 4 (cited in Fisher, 2009).

For instance, teacher motivation can be examined through Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Gawel, 1996). Weinbach (1998) explains that in Maslow's pyramid, the specific levels of needs begin with physiological, followed by security needs, social needs, ego needs, and self-actualization. Thus, teachers can be motivated when their principals accept and recognize their work and effort. Further, teachers can feel no threats in the school and try to be successful at their fullest capacity, thus reaching the level of self-actualization (Latting, 1991; Lewis et al., 2001). Maslow's theory has particular relevance to this study.

Research Design

In this research, I employed correlational approach to examine the relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teacher motivation. Second, I intended to investigate school principals' instructional leadership as a predictor of teacher motivation.

Participants and Site

The study sample consisted of 306 elementary school teachers, including 173 females and 133 males (Table 1). The participants were selected through a convenient sampling method. The study took place in the western Black Sea region of Turkey. The participants were working at different grade levels; first grade (n = 31), second grade (n = 28), third grade (n = 79), and fourth grade (n = 168). They graduated from different faculties including the Faculty of Education (n = 172), Faculty of Science and Letters (n = 85), and others (n = 49).

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Features		1	2	3	4	5	Total
		Male	Female				
Gender	n	133	173				306
	$\%$	43.5	56.5				100

		20–30 years	31–40 years	41–50 years	51–60 years	61 and more	
Age Range	*n*	53	122	97	29	5	306
	%	17.3	39.9	31.7	9.5	1.6	100
		1–5 years	6–10 years	11–15 years	16–20 years	21 and more	
Years of Experience	*n*	50	64	41	57	94	306
	%	16.3	20.9	13.4	18.6	30.7	100
		Faculty of Education	Faculty of Science and Letters	Other			
Type of Faculty	*n*	172	85	49			306
	%	56.2	27.8	16.0			100
		First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade		
Grade Level	*n*	31	28	79	168		306
	%	10.2	9.2	25.8	54.8		100

Data Collection Tools

Two data collection instruments were used in this study: (a) the Instructional Leadership Scale (ILS) and (b) the Teacher Motivation Scale (TMS). ILS was used to investigate school principals' instructional leadership level based on teachers' perceptions. ILS includes items such as "The school principal sets specific yearly goals that concern the school as a whole," "The school principal discusses school academic goals with teachers at teachers' board meetings," and "The school principal conducts one-on-one meetings with the teachers to evaluate the academic progress of the students." TMS was used to examine teachers' level of motivation. TMS includes items such as "I enjoy learning new information about my profession," "The school administration's constructive attitude toward teachers gives me confidence," and "I am happy to feel the love of my students." These instruments were only applied to teachers to determine the association between instructional leadership and teacher motivation. Both instruments were also used to examine the predictive level of instructional leadership on teacher motivation.

Instructional Leadership Scale (ILS). This instrument was developed by Bellibas et al. (2016). It was constructed as a 5-point Likert-type scale (1: almost never, 2: rarely, 3: sometimes, 4: often, and 5: almost always). The scale had 44 items with nine subscales. The subscales were as follows: frames the school's goals (FSG), communicates the school's goals (CSG), supervises and evaluates instruction (SEI), monitors student progress (MSP), protects instructional time (PIT), maintains high visibility (MHV), provides incentives for teachers (PIFT), promotes professional development (PPD), and provides incentives for learning (PIFL). In this study, the scale was examined for its reliability. The findings showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .96 for the overall scale. Cronbach's alpha was .92 for FSG, .92 for CSG, .92 for SEI, .93 for MSP, .92 for PIT, .93 for MHV, .92 for PIFT, .92 for PPD, and .93 for PIFL. Also, the researcher used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the structure of the scale. The findings from CFA confirmed that the model for the structure was acceptable ($\chi2/sd = 2.71$, CFI > .90, TLI > .90, and RMSEA < .007).

Teacher Motivation Scale (TMS). This scale was developed by Yıldız and Taşgın (2020). As a 5-point Likert-type scale (1: absolutely disagree, 2: disagree, 3: partially agree 4: agree, 5: absolutely agree), it had 28 items. The instrument had three subscales: school management, professional satisfaction, personal development, and teaching process and students. In this study, the overall scale will be used rather than its subscales. The instrument's Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .95. In addition, for the subscales, the internal consistency coefficients were .94, .92, and .94 for school management, professional satisfaction, personal development, and teaching process and students, respectively. CFA results suggested that the structure of the instrument was acceptable ($\chi2/sd = 2.58$, CFI ≤ .94, TLI ≤ .94, and RMSEA ≤ .074).

Data Analysis

Before collecting the data, I obtained the confirmation of the department of ethics. The participants were reassured that to ensure confidentiality, their names and schools would not be released. Also, the tests of normality and homogeneity were done before addressing the assumptions of multiple regression. First, I conducted the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the findings showed that the assumptions of

normality were met (p > .05). Second, I conducted Levene's test for homogeneity. Last, the Mahalanobis distance was used to determine the outliers. The outliers are the observed cases that show an abnormal distance from the majority of data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The results suggested that two of the cases were outliers, and these were deleted.

I employed correlational analysis in this study. According to Jackson (2006), correlational studies examine the level of relationship between the variables, and they are also used to predict a variable based on the other variable. I used Pearson's correlation analysis to examine the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher motivation (Hypothesis 1). In addition, I employed a multiple regression analysis to examine the predictive level of instructional leadership on teacher motivation (Hypothesis 2).

Findings

As previously mentioned, this study examined the relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teachers' motivation. Table 2 shows the variables such as means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Correlations of the Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1-FSG	1										
2-CSG	.83**	1									
3-SEI	.73**	.72**	1								
4-MSP	.70**	.71**	.75**	1							
5-PIT	.67**	.67**	.66**	.70**	1						
6-MHV	.59**	.59**	.65**	.70**	.67**	1					
7-PPD	.66**	.66**	.68**	.68**	.67**	.72**	1				
8-PIFL	.63**	.67**	.62**	.69**	.67**	.68**	.77**	1			
9-PIFT	.62**	.63**	.63**	.67**	.61**	.76**	.81**	.71**	1		
10-ILTOTAL	.83**	.83**	.84**	.86**	.82**	.84**	.88**	.85**	.85**	1	
11-MOTTOTAL	.47**	.50**	.41**	.44**	.49**	.44**	.51**	.47**	.42**	.54**	1
Mean	3.67	3.79	3.56	3.54	3.76	3.38	3.54	3.76	3.43	3.60	4.24
Standard Dev.	.78	.75	.78	.87	.67	.86	.87	.82	.94	.69	.51

**: $p < .01$.

Table 2 reflects the finding that there was a statistically significant relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teacher motivation. The highest association was detected between motivation and PPD (r = .51, p < .01) in a positive direction. The relationships between motivation and FSG (r = .47, p < .01), CSG (r = .50, p < .01), SEI (r = .41, p < .01), MSP (r = .44, p < .01), PIT (r = .49, p < .01), MHV (r = .44, p < .01), PIFL (r = .47, p < .01), and PIFT (r = .42, p < .01) were significant and positive. In addition, the association between motivation and overall instructional leadership (r = .54, p < .01) was also significant and positive.

Table 3 shows that the results of linear regression point to significant predictors of motivation, including the subscales such as CSG, PIT, and PPD (p < .05). On the other hand, as Table 3 demonstrates, FSG (p > .05), SEI (p > .05), MSP (p > .05), MHV (p > .05), PIFT (p > .05), and PIFL (p > .05) did not significantly predict motivation. After determining these values, I performed a multiple regression analysis using the forward model as a type of stepwise regression. This model enabled adding from the most significant predictor to the least significant predictor in the regression model.

Table 3. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Motivation

Variables	B	Standard error of B	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	2.64	.149		17.701	.000
FSG	.109	.082	.164	1.334	.183
CSG	.184	.078	.270	2.367	.019
SEI	.003	.075	.004	.037	.970
MSP	.062	.074	.105	.838	.403
PIT	.187	.075	.244	2.487	.013
MHV	.102	.083	.171	1.234	.218
PIFT	.059	.071	.003	.749	.386
PPD	.231	.091	.390	2.531	.012
PIFL	.097	.076	.154	1.273	.204
ILTOTAL	.544	.441	-.734	-1.235	.218

Note. p < .01.

Table 3 depicts the findings regarding the subscales of instructional leadership and teacher motivation. Based on the forward approach, PPD was entered first in the equation, accounting for 26.3% of the variance in predicting motivation ($R^2 = .265$, adjusted $R^2 = .263$, $F_{1.304} = 109.665$, $p < .01$). Then, CSG was entered, accounting for an additional 4.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .310$, adjusted $R^2 = .305$, $F_{1.304} = 68.032$, $p < .01$). Last, PIT was entered, accounting for an additional 1.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .324$, adjusted $R^2 = .317$, $F_{1.304} = 48.290$, $p < .01$).

Table 4. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Motivation

Model	Variables	B	Standard error of B	Beta	t	p
Model 1	(Constant)	3.164	.107		29.709	.000
	PPD	.305	.029	.515	10.472	.000
Model 2	(Constant)	2.826	.128		22.005	.000
	PPD	.194	.038	.327	5.125	.000
	CSG	.193	.044	.283	4.435	.000
Model 3	(Constant)	2.651	.145		18.292	.000
	PPD	.151	.041	.255	3.672	.000
	CSG	.143	.048	.210	3.015	.003
	PIT	.137	.054	.179	2.527	.012

Note. $p < .01$.

In summary, the initial regression model included the subscales FSG, SEI, MSP, MHV, PIFT, PIFL, CSG, PIT, and PPD. However, the final regression design included only CSG, PIT, and PPD (Table 4). The final model did not include FSG, SEI, MSP, MHV, PIFT, and PIFL, as they were not statistically significant predictors of motivation. Based on the multiple regression analysis, CSG, PIT, and PPD were able to predict the variances of motivation by 31.7%. It is also crucial to indicate that in the final model, the value of the standardized beta coefficient was found to be significant for PPD ($\beta = .255$, $p < .01$), CSG ($\beta = .210$, $p < .01$), and PIT ($\beta = .179$, $p < .01$).

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant relationship between instructional leadership and motivation based on teachers' perceptions. The subscales of instructional leadership included the following: frames the school's goals (FSG), communicates the school's goals (CSG), supervises and evaluates instruction (SEI), monitors student progress (MSP), protects instructional time (PIT), maintains high visibility (MHV), provides incentives for teachers (PIFT), promotes professional development (PPD), and provides incentives for learning (PIFL). As mentioned earlier, I investigated the relationships of such subscales with the overall motivation scale.

With regard to the relationships of the subscales of instructional leadership and teacher motivation, the findings of this study suggest that there is a meaningful relationship between all. Among all the subscales, the highest significant relationship was between PPD and motivation. This finding suggests that promoting teachers' professional development may have an association with their level of motivation. Accordingly, Arslan (2007) and Blase and Blase (2000) claim that supporting individuals for their life goals may create incremental increases in their motivation. The type of support teachers receive from their principals would eventually create motivation. This approach is in line with the idea that a leader is inclined to promote and encourage employees in the organization (Başaran, 1992; Herbert & Tankersley, 1993). Clearly, and as the findings of this study confirm, teachers are motivated when

they are encouraged by their administrators to accomplish the goals and objectives of the school (Çelik, 2003; Little, 1993; Sayın, 2010; Şişman, 2004). Based on these conclusions, encouraging acts by the school leaders would eventually activate teachers' internal and external powers on behalf of the students and school (Aydın, 2010; Durmaz, 2004; Eroğlu, 2004; Sabuncuoğlu & Tüz, 2001).

The relationship between the rest of the subscales and teachers' motivation was significant and positive. This conclusion was evident between overall instructional leadership and motivation as well. These results support the claim that school principals' behaviors may have some effects on teachers' level of motivation (Gardner, 1990; Hackman & Johnson, 2013). The administrators' positive approaches to their teachers about teaching, learning, and the implementation of the curriculum may be a stimulating factor for teacher motivation (Glanz, 2006).

The findings of this study demonstrate that instructional leadership of school principals is likely to have an impact on framing and communicating a school's goals, supervision of instruction, monitoring student progress, and creating an effective school. This, in turn, supports the claim that instructional leaders create influential school environments that support a positive climate (Ergen, 2009; Kış, 2013; Louis et al., 1996). It is essential to understand that schools with a positive climate include important elements of motivation involving performance, enthusiasm, energy, and arousal (Avcı & Ayyıldız, 2020; Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Katzell & Thompson, 1990; Leithwood et al., 2002).

As mentioned earlier, one of the goals of this study was to examine the predictive role of instructional leadership on teachers' motivation. In this regard, the findings indicate that the subscales of instructional leadership were able to predict motivation. As the subscales of instructional leadership, the predictors of motivation included PPD, CSG, and PIT. Therefore, I can conclude that teachers are motivated when their instructional leaders address the needs of the school, encourage school personnel for professional development, and refrain from interrupting teachers' instructional time. Accordingly, Krug (1992) explains that instructional leaders are effective in realizing the school's goals and solving problems. These efforts by school principals can create a setting for quality education (Gümüşeli, 2001; Prawat, 1993; Smyth, 1997; Şişman, 2004). Such stimulating attitudes of school leaders have a positive effect on teacher motivation, commitment, retention, and satisfaction (Johnson, 2005; Urick, 2012; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Considering all these outcomes, one may conclude that instructional leaders have positive impacts on teachers' motivation, which results in providing a potent teaching and evaluation process in the school (De Bevoise, 1984; Kirkhus, 2011; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Williams, 2012).

The results of this study show variances of motivation by 31.7% as a prediction of teachers' motivation. This finding demonstrates that instructional leaders affect teachers' motivation to a great extent. Some of the behaviors of instructional leaders involve maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and learning, framing the school's objectives, and supervising the teaching process (Butler & Shibaz, 2019; Reitzug & Cross, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1997). These behaviors need to exist in school settings to guide and motivate teachers for the sake of the success of the students and school. Clearly, schools with motivated teachers tend to be more successful than those having unmotivated teachers. School leaders need to determine the factors that motivate teachers. They also need to understand the ones that do not motivate them, as the existence of unmotivated teachers may be destructive for a school (Rowley, 1996). Therefore, instructional leaders must seek opportunities that mainly create motivation

rather than discouragement (Butler & Shibaz, 2019; Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012).

In conclusion, the findings of this study showed that there was a strong correlation between school principals' instructional leadership and teachers' motivation. In addition, several subscales of instructional leadership were predictors of motivation. Considering the effectiveness of schools, school leaders need to find ways and solutions to increase teachers' motivation. This is especially crucial when school educators are appointed to the position of school principals. Educators who will serve as school principals should be aware of the tenets of instructional leadership. By knowing such tenets, school principals would be knowledgeable about the duties of school administrators. Such duties include schedules, finance, school activities and vision, the motivation of school personnel, curriculum, evaluation, and instruction (Hallinger et al., 2018; Møller & Ottesen 2011; Point et al., 2008). Thus, it is recommended that the Ministry of National Education must ensure that the appointed school principals are knowledgeable and qualified.

In terms of limitations of this study, it included a fairly small sample of participants, which did not allow for strong generalizability. Second, the participants of this study were only from one province. More provinces could have been added to make comparisons among different provinces. In addition to examining the relationship between school principals' instructional leadership and teachers' motivation, variables such as leadership style, teacher satisfaction, school climate, school effectiveness, and teacher retention could have been investigated as well. Finally, this study could have been conducted using mixed methods to provide a more in-depth understanding of the concepts under investigation.

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