Status of School Safety and Security among Elementary Schools in the Fifth Class Municipality

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Abstract-*This study attempted to determine the status of school safety and security in terms of the school sites, school playground, school canteen services, water safety, fire safety, campus security, building security, and sanitary facilities situation in eight (8) elementary schools in Libertad town.*

The descriptive survey was used to find out the status of school safety and security in the elementary schools of Libertad, Misamis Oriental. A checklist on the standards of facilities as implemented by the Department of Education was used to gather the data. Checklist was based from the 2010 Educational Facilities Manual.

Evaluation based on the checklist showed that some of standards on 2010 Educational Facilities Manual were not observed. The schools have not complied with the requirements and specifications. The evaluation showed further that most of the schools did not comply within the standards set by the 2010 Educational Facilities Manual.

School authorities may review the standards in the 2010 Educational Facilities Manual. The school should try to meet the standard to ensure safety and security of the pupils. Action plan may be prepared to be implemented in case of emergency.

Keywords: *School Safety, Security, Elementary Schools, Department of Education, facilities*

INTRODUCTION

Educators have come to realize that the foundation of all learning was safety and security. Attendance and academic performance were closely linked to how safe students perceive the school environment to be. It was hard for young people to concentrate on learning when they feel vulnerable, and a climate of fear forces teachers to shift their focus from teaching to policing. Safety and security concerns were fast becoming an important part of any dialog about improving school wide academic performance. Schools were among the safest places for our children [1]-[4]. Mayer[5]and Best Practices in School Security [6] further added that a child should feel pulled towards the school, in the same way that they react when a mother's face welcomes them with a wide smile and kind eyes. The school building and grounds can be made to convey this same feeling. We also welcome students into learning with our enthusiastic and positive attitudes toward them.

On the other hand, the Philippine Department of Education, Educational Facilities Manual [7], added that, the availability of safe, secured and satisfactory educational facilities such as: site, building, furniture, and equipment should be assessed in terms of its vulnerability to various geological and hydro meteorological hazards. Hazard-specific resilient features that have undergone thorough feasibility and viability studies must be incorporated in the design of the buildings or structures.

However, Anderson [8], further explained that the history of school climate research is reviewed, noting the influence of climate instruments developed to study climate in settings other than the total school building, such as business, college, and classroom settings. The difficulty of defining school climate is reflected in the diversity of climate typologies that have evolved, despite their often common roots.

Moreover, the schools those engage in a large number of activities ranging from security and surveillance, through school climate change, to counseling and curricular or instructional programs have strict rules about dangerous behaviors [9].Violence in schools may have serious long lasting

negative physical, physiological and emotional consequences [10].

There were several cases which imply the importance of school safety and security.

A student who was set to graduate on March 28, 2013 was shot dead inside a classroom at Rizal National High School in Barangay Rizal, Claveria town in Misamis Oriental Monday afternoon.

In another case thatthirty elementary school children died of food poisoning after eating a native delicacy made from cassava flour at San Jose Elementary School in Mabini town, Bohol.

A fire also razed the north wing of Misamis Oriental General Comprehensive High School (MOGHS) that is connected to the left wing of the Pelaez Sports Center's grandstand in April 2011. The fire had eaten up at least 22 classrooms of MOGCHS, including the automotive shop. Fire investigators placed the damage at P1 million.

Intruders might physically harm a pupil or damages pupil's property. All these, have the effect of substantial interfering in pupil's education.

It is necessary to have safety school environments with the assistance of security measures thus, the overall aim of this study was to determine the school safety and security measures among elementary schools in town of Libertad, Division of Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The areas of concern were school site safety, school ground safety, food safety, water safety, fire safety, and campus security, building safety and sanitary facilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to determine the school safety and security measures among eight (8) elementary schools in town of Libertad, division of Misamis Oriental, Philippines. This study focused on this research questions: to what extent have the schools provided for the safety and security of the pupils in terms of school site, school playground, school canteen services, water safety, fire safety, campus security, building security, and sanitary facilities?

Hypothesis

The schools provided the standard requirements for safety and security of the pupils in terms of school site, school playground, school canteen services, water safety, fire safety, campus security, building security, sanitary facilities.

METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive survey method was used in the study. The researcher would like to find out the existing status of school safety and security among eight (8) elementary schools in town of Libertad, Misamis Oriental, Philippines.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in the eight (8) elementary schools in town of Libertad, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The following were the participating schools: Dulong Elementary School, Gimaylan Elementary School, Kimalok Elementary School, Libertad Central School, Lubluban Elementary School, Retablo Elementary School, Tangkub Elementary School, and Taytayan Elementary School. The study was conducted during the school year 2014-2015.

The Research Instrument

The researcher-made checklist was utilized to gather the data on the schools safety and security implemented in the Division of Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The checklist determined whether the schools have met or complied with the standards of safety and security. Interview was also conducted to obtain more reliable data. The instrument was based on the standards of 2010 DepEd Facilities Manual.

Validation of the Instrument

Before the instrument was administered it was first validated. The instrument was subjected to content validity by three professors in Mindanao University of Science and Technology.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the conduct of the study, permission was sought from the Division Office of the Department of Education of Misamis Oriental, Philippines . After the permission was granted by the superintendent, the researchers then proceeded to the eight (8) elementary schools and sought the supervisor's approval and interviewed the administrators and teachers. The researchers then went to the schools and inspected the schools. The researchers measured the dimensions of grounds, looked into the physical aspects of the buildings and classrooms. The researchers also determined whether the schools have met the standards.

Statistical Treatment

After the researchers had collected the data, he tallied them. The percentage was used to obtain the level of compliance of the standards.

To determine the status of safety and security the researchers determined the number of schools who have met the standards.

RESULTS

Table 1. Status of Safety and Security of Elementary Schools by School Site (N=8)

Indicator	f	%
1. Distance from bodies of water		
a. More than 1,000 m (standard)	6	75.0
b. Less than 50 m	2	25.0
2. Land Contour		
a. Flat (standard)	2	25.0
b. Both flat and sloping	6	75.0
3. Site Elevation		
a. More than 10 m but not less than 15 m (standard)	3	37.5
b. 10 m and below	3	37.5
c. Flat school site	2	25.0
4. Distance from ill- repute establishment		
a. 200 m or more (standard)	7	87.5
b. Less than 200 m away	1	12.5
c. No establishment	0	0
5. Distance from street		
a. 5 m or more (standard)	3	37.5
b.Less than 5 m	5	62.5
6. Road Safety		
6. a. 1. Pedestrian crossing in front of the school gate (standard)	2	25.0
6. a. 2. No pedestrian crossing	6	75.0
6. b. 1. Presence of traffic aides (standard)	3	37.5
6. b. 2. No traffic aide	5	62.5

Table 1 presents the status of safety and security of elementary schools by school site. The data show, that in terms of school site 75% of the schools have more than 100 meters away from bodies of water (river or sea). This implies that the schools children are safe from the danger of flooding during heavy rains. There is also no danger of pupils going out and taking a bath in the sea and or in the river during class hours especially, that the children are closely supervised by the teacher.

In addition, 6 or 75 % of the schools have not met the standards on land contour. Some schools are not flat. This means that school children may not be safe and in danger because of elevation or sloping area of the school. Such condition may cause the school children to stumble, and have accidents. The area may be such, because these are donated lands only and the school officials have no choice but to accept whatever the land contour is.

With regards to site elevation, it reveals that there are 3 or 37.5 % of schools are elevated. This implies that in some schools the drainage is poor and the ground tends to be muddy. This will affect the health of the pupils and teachers. Schools should be situated in the site where the ground is slightly elevated and the rainwater can be drained easily and the ground will be kept dry.

There is 87.5 percent of the schools met the standard on distance from an establishment of ill-repute. Only one school is near the cock fighting arena and computer game establishment. However, 62.5 % of the schools did not met the standard on school distance from the street because some schools are located near the street; But the pupils are still safe because the street is not along the highway.

With regards to road safety it can be noted that two (2) schools have pedestrian crossings. Most schools however, do not have pedestrian crossing because these are located away from the highway and less vehicle are passing by near the school. Similarly, there are no traffic aides. In other words, school children are safe from vehicles if they are within the vicinity of the school.

Table 2. The Status of Safety and Security of Elementary Schools in Terms of Playground

Indicator	f	%
Playground Area		
a. Standard (6 sq. m. per pupil)	2	25.0
b. Below Standard	6	75.0
Physical Ground appearance		
a. Sodded with creeping grass (standard)	2	25.0
b. 50% are sodded with creeping grass	6	75.0
c. c. Free from broken glasses, stones, wires and nails	8	100.0

Table 2 presents the safety and security of the elementary schools in relation to playground and physical appearance ground. It can be noted that school children may not be fully safe and secured. The playground areas are limited. This also means that the school children are not safe because they may not be able to move around well when playing, having

physical activities and doing school related programs. It may also be dangerous for the pupils to play in the playground because it is not fully sodded with creeping grass. This implies that the children may get bruised, or wounded if they stumble because the area is not fully sodded with creeping grass

The front area on the school site was not totally developed and improved. The type of soil is not ideal for growing plants. Some of school playgrounds were not graded, landscaped and drained. They were not sodded with a low creeping border plants and ornamental shrubs to give maximum visual effects. There were fruit bearing trees in front and back of the school which can endanger the school children. Pupils might be hit by the falling branches or twigs.

Table 3.The School Canteen Services

Indicator	f	%
1. School with Canteen	2	25.0
2. School allows food on consignment basis	2	25.0
3. School requires food handlers to present sanitary and business permit	1	12.5
4. Street Food		
a. Children were allowed to buy	6	75.0
b. Children were not allowed to buy	2	25.0

Table 3 shows the profile of elementary school in terms of school canteen services. The results reveal that only two (2) out of eight (8) schools have a school canteen and the food were sold on a consignment basis. However, only one (1) school has complied with sanitary and business permits. Some vendors were not able to complied with the requirements because according to them it is expensive to get the business and sanitary permits. They have only very small stall and sold a very few items and the profits are very minimal.

The data also shows that children were not safe especially in schools where there is no canteen. School children buy street foods which are not controlled by the schools. Food sold outside the school might be unsanitary. Street vendors also sold all types of foods like candies, chocolate and soft drinks which are not healthy and can increase the chance of illness among school children. School canteen which also sold unhealthy foods such as candies, chocolates and soft drinks may cause illness to school children. The sanitary inspector cannot control the display and selling of junk foods in the school canteen because according to him the school canteen personnel has complied all the requirements to operate.

Table 4. The Status of the Water System in the Elementary Schools in Libertad Town

Indicators	f	%
1. Check of water facilities of wear and tear if there was a complaint	8	100.0
2. Faucet		
a. Own	5	62.5
b. Shared	2	25.0
c. None	1	12.5
3. Source of Water		
a. Municipal/ Barangay	7	87.5
b. Deep well	0	0
c. Hand pump	1	12.5
4. Potability of Water		
a. Potable	8	100.0
b. Limited Supply	1	12.5
c. Potable but not certified	0	0
5. Checking of water (sanitary inspector)	8	100.0
6. Availability of Water Supply		
a. All classroom provided	2	25.0
b. No adequate water Supply	4	50.0
c. 50% of the classroom	1	12.5
d. Less than 50%	1	12.5
7. Adequacy of Water per Building		
a. Abundant Water	2	25.0
b. Limited supply	2	25.0
c. No water supply	4	50.0

Table 4. Indicates that in terms of water and potable drinking water facilities, no schools has met the required standards because the checking of water and wear and tear of water system is conducted only when there is a complaint.

In terms of sources of water there are seven (7) out of eight (8) schools whose source of water was provided by the barangay or by the municipality.

Only 5 or 62.5% of schools have their own faucet. In some schools, children have to fetch water outside in the community, which can be risky.

With regards to water potability, the sanitary inspector has applied chlorine hence the water supply is considered safe for drinking.

In terms of availability and adequacy of water supply two (2) schools have abundant water supply in all of the classrooms and buildings. However six (6) schools have an inadequate water supply in the

classroom. There is also one school without faucet. This implies that the school children may suffer from poor sanitation. They had to fetch water outside the classroom.

Table 5. Electrical System Sources

Indicator	f	%
1. Source of Electricity (own connection)	8	100.0
2. Fire extinguishers	5	62.5
3. Fire hydrant and fixtures (covered)	0	0
4. Wirings	8	100.0
5. Installation of fire alarm System	0	0
6. Curtains (hung away from wall mounted fans)	8	100.0
7. Flammable Materials (stored properly)	8	100.0
8. Stock of sand and gravel	0	0
9. Drills conducted	0	0

Table 5 presents the sources of electrical system in elementary schools in town of Libertad, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The table shows that eight (8) schools have met the standards for source of electricity, proper wirings and fixtures and proper storage of flammable materials. This implies that the pupils are safe and secured. Although the electrical standards are being met, there was a need to improve the fire safety. In terms of availability of fire extinguishers and fire hydrants the schools need more on this facilities because the school children are not safe and secured when fire broke out. Fire can lead to loss of lives and damage to properties.

Most of the schools do not have alarm system and a conduct of drills in different calamities. The pupils may not be safe and secured when natural and man-made calamities strike because children may not know where to go, what to do, before, during and after the calamities. They may not even know where to evacuate.

Most schools do not have stock of sand and gravel. This implies that the school property, school personnel and the school children are endangered when fire occurs.

Table 6. Campus Security and Safety Program

Indicator	f	%
1. Evacuation Area	7	87.5
2.Security Guard	0	0
3. Hours Rendered (24 hrs.)	0	0
4. Pupils uniform & ID	8	100.0
5. Logbook for Visitors	8	100.0
6. Walls (Smooth)	8	100.0

Table 6 presents the campus security and safety programs. The table shows that the pupils are safe and secured in terms of evacuation area especially when calamities strike. The school has enough space for the pupils to stay temporarily, for safety and security purposes during calamities. The schools have provisions for open space big enough to accommodate the total population of the school. The open space can be used as short term (hours in duration) and temporary evacuation area of the pupils, teachers and school staff in case of emergency such as after strong earthquake and occurrence of fire. Pupils can stay in this open space until parents are able to pick them up. School evacuation areas have direct access to an existing emergency exit.

Most of the schools have logbooks. Pupils wear school ID. However the school children are still unsafe from intruders and angry parents because the school does not have a security guard. The presence of security guard would be an additional safety measure for the pupils.

The walls of the schools are smooth. These smooth walls were safe from injuries of school children during indoor and outdoor activities.

Table 7. Profile of Buildings (N=41)

Indicator	f	%
1. Distance between buildings		
a. Below 8 m	23	56.1
b. 8 m-10 m (standard)	1	2.4
c. More than 10 m	11	26.8
2. Doors		
a. 1 door/ classroom	27	65.9
b. 2 doors/classroom (standard)	10	24.4
c. Swings in door	16	39.0
d. Swings out (standard)	20	48.8
3. Lighting (63.sq.room)		
a. 1 forty –watt lamp	13	31.7
b. 2 forty-watts lamp (standard)	9	22.0
c. Below standard	7	17.1
4. Door (height)		
a. Less than 2.10 m	19	46.3
b. 2.10 m (standard)	0	0
c. More than 2.10 m	5	12.2
5. Door (Width)		
a. Less than 900 m	29	70.7
b. 900 m wide (standard)	3	7.3
c. More than 900 m	8	19.5
6. Door Knobs		
a. Door knob lock from inside and outside (standard)	o	0

Table 7 indicates the profile of buildings in relation of distance in the in between of buildings, doors, lighting and door height and width. It is noted that only 12 or 29.2 % of the schools have met the required distance in between buildings. This implies that most pupils were not able to move well when playing and other school related activities. In addition, it could also restrict the penetration of sunlight into the classrooms. Lighting and ventilation became a problem. Wider distance in the in between of buildings allows adequate free spaces to be utilized for the school related activities.

With regards to the number of doors per classroom 10 or 24.4 % of the total classroom have met the standard while 27 or 65.9% did not met the standard specification. This means that school children may be at risk when calamities strike, because there is no other door for exit. It could also be dangerous for school children since there are some doors that do not swings out. This could trap possibly the school children in case of emergency.

Only 20 or 48.8 % met the standard on outward swinging doors. This shows that in times of emergency evacuation procedures will be difficult.

Only 9 buildings or 22% met the standard on lighting facilities. Thirteen 13 or 31.7 % have partially installed the required lighting while, 7 or 17.1% of the buildings are below standard. This implies that the eyesight of pupils, might be affected due to poor lighting.

In terms of height and width of doors there are no problems. However, no schools met the standard specification on the door knobs that locked from inside and outside. Some schools cannot locked out or locked in intruders. This implies that school children are not safe from intruders, unwelcome visitors and even during calamities. School properties are not safe from theft because intruders can easily enter the classroom and school building due to improper locks in the doors.

Table 8 presents the profile of school building in relation to corridors and window grills specification. The table shows that in terms of the width of corridors there are 19 or 46.4 % which have met the standard specification while 4 or 9.8% have less than the required specification. This implies that pupils can't easily pass in the corridor because some corridors are too narrow and some have obstructions such as potted plants. This may also cause unsafe conditions during safety drills or when actual calamities happened.

Table 8. State of Corridors and Windows in the Schools

Indicator	f	%
1. Width of Corridor		
a. 1.10 m (standard)	2	4.9
b. Less than 1.10 m	4	9.8
c. More than 1.10 m	17	41.5
2. Windows with grills		
a. All	20	48.8
b. Not all	4	9.8
c. Have no grills	14	14.1
d. Grills only	1	2.4
3. Window grills with exit		
a. Not available	35	85.4
4. Ceiling		
a. 2.70 m (standard)	13	31.7
b. Less than 2.70 m.	3	7.3
c. More than 2.70 m.	23	56.1

In terms of window grills 20 classrooms or 48.8 % have met the standard while 14 or 14.1% of the buildings have no grills. This implies that pupils may not be protected from flying objects or falling debris in case there is a typhoon or strong winds. Pupils are not also safe when calamity strikes because there is no exit in the window grill. School children may be trapped when fire occurs.

In relation to ceiling 39 or 87.8 % of the schools have met the standard. This implies that school children are comfortable because air can circulate well and temperature in the classroom was normal.

Table 9. Condition of Stairs and Handrails in the Schools

Indicators	f	%
1. No stairs	35	85.4
2. Ramps are provided	6	19.5
3. No ramps	32	78.0
4. Stairs	4	9.8
5. No handrails	4	9.8
6. Stairways (N=)		
a. 1.10 m wide (standard)	1	2.4

Table 9 presents the profile of schools in terms of stairs and handrails. The table shows that 35 or 85.4% of schools don't have stairs, because it was only a one

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storey building. Thirty two 32 or seventy-eight percent (78%)of the classrooms have no ramps and 6 or 19.5% of the schools provide ramps. This means that school children are safe and secured in terms of going up and down. Some classrooms have stairs because it was elevated but the stairs do not meet the standard this can also cause accidents to the school children.

Ramps will enable the handicap pupil(s) who are in wheel chairs to enter the classroom easily. Bringing a wheel chair up and down steps could also lead to an accident.

In relation to stairways it is not safe for the pupils because it did not meet the standard specification. Pupils are not able to move well because it is below standard. This could also lead to accidents for the pupils.

Table 10 The Status of Safety and Security of Elementary Schools In Terms of School Gate

Indicators	f	%
1. Gate		
a. Main gate and service		
a. 1. Gate (standard)	4	50.0
a. 2. No gate	4	50.0
b. Gate swings outside (standard)	4	50.0
c. Gate tops		
c. 1. No tops (standard)	1	12.5
d. 2. Sharp or spiked	3	37.5
2. Emergency Access		
a. No obstruction (standard)	4	50
b. Some obstruction	5	62.5
3. School Fence		
a. Full (standard)	1	12.5
b. Concrete and bamboo	5	62.5
c. Concrete and wires	2	25.0

Table 10 presents the status of safety and security of elementary schools in terms of school gate. The data reveal that children are not secured and safe in relation to service gate and main gate. Fifty percent (50%) of the schools have an outward swinging gate and only one has a gate with no tops. In some schools the gate is not functional and not in good condition, and can't be locked effectively. Some school gates are not designed to ensure safety. Only one school has standard fence while some of the schools have half concrete and half bamboo and wire fences. Four (4) or 50 % of the schools have no obstruction in the emergency access.

As a whole, the pupils in the schools may not be safe when it comes to fencing and emergency access. Therefore the lives of school children may be endangered. Intruders, squatters and stray animals may enter easily.

If mitigation about natural and man-made calamities are not applied to save lives and school building and properties of the schools which are also used as evacuation center during disasters may be jeopardized.

Table 11.The Status of Safety and Security of Elementary Schools in Terms of Sanitary Facilities.

Indicator	f	%
1. Rest Rooms		
a. 1 CR/ classroom	4	50.0
b. 1 toilet set/ 25 pupils	2	25.0
c. 2 toilet sets / 25 pupils (standard)	0	0
2. Distance from septic tank to the building it served		
a. Less than 2 m	8	100.0
b. 2 m	0	0
c. More than 2 m	0	0
3. Distance from septic tank to water source supply		
a. Less than 25 m	4	50.0
b. 25 m	0	0
c. More than 25 m	4	50.0
4. Hand washing facilities/classroom		
a. Available	8	100.0
b. Not available	0	0
c. Not functional	5	62.5

Table 11 presents the status of safety and security of elementary schools in terms of facilities. The table shows that in relation to rest rooms 4 or 50% of the schools have a comfort room in every classroom of 25 or more pupils. However school children have no privacy, since girls and boys use the same comfort room. Pupils may have to wait for their turn after the others are done and this may also affect their health.

In terms of the distance from the septic tank to the building, eight (8) or 100% of the schools did not meet the standard specification. This means that it can be a harmful situation if septic tanks are damaged due to typhoons or destroyed by man, so the school children may also suffer through exposure to the viruses or microbes from the destroyed septic tank which could be hazardous to their health.

In terms of distance in between the septic tank and to the water supply, four (4) schools did not meet the

standard specification. This means that the school children in those particular schools may suffer from diseases due to exposure to virus and microbes from the septic tank.

In terms of hand washing facilities per classroom, the children need adequate water supply for drinking and sanitation purposes. The pupil's lives are not safe when they drink from a shallow well and this could also lead to accident and physical harm.

Table 12.Summary of Status of School Safety and Security

Name of Schoo	Rating	Verbal Description
1. A	54.2	Below Standard
2. B	52.5	Below Standard
3. C	38.9	Below Standard
4. D	59.6	Below Standard
5. E	40.3	Below Standard
6. F	45.7	Below Standard
7. G	37.2	Below Standard
8. H	33.8	Below Standard

Legend: 75-100 –Standard; Below 75- Below Standard

The table shows that based on the data the elementary schools in Libertad were described as below standard and based on the guidelines or standard set in the 2010 Educational Facilities Manual.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The hypothesis which states that the schools provided the standard requirements for safety and security of the pupils in terms of school site, school playground, school canteen services, water safety, fire safety, campus security, building security and sanitary facilities was not accepted. School children are considered less safe and secured in terms of land contour, site elevation, distance from ill-repute establishment, distance from street, road safety, with traffic aides, emergency access, playground, school canteen, street food, availability and adequacy of water supply, school with fire alarm, doors that swing outward, width of corridors, ceiling, hand washing facilities and toilet for every 25 pupils. Most of the schools have not met the standards as stipulated on the Guidelines of 2010 DepEd Facilities Manual. Thus, the school children are not 100% safe and secured in the schools.

It is recommended further that school authorities may review the standards in the 2010 Educational Facilities Manual. Schools may try to meet the standard to ensure safety and security of the pupils. An action plan may be prepared to ensure safety and security in schools. Project management, architects and contractors should follow thoroughly the guidelines set by the 2010 DepEd Facilities Manual especially in using the standard measurement and the standard materials in constructing the facilities. The national and local government units should allocate appropriations that ensure the overall safety and security of every pupils, students and teachers while in school. They should also monitor the materials and building's damages and reinforcement, as well as the durability of the facilities. The school management and teachers should undergone series of training in natural calamities such as earthquake, fire and other calamities that might happened. They should conduct symposium about this natural calamities and post information in the safety measure and risk reduction procedures that should be done in case this natural calamities might occur. Finally, for future researchers, a similar study is recommended to include more factors, which are believed to improve the status of School Safety and Security in different levels of education.

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