



Problem and Challenges Faced by Students, Parents, and Teachers in Google Classes & Television Lessons

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ABSTRACT

The qualitative study was carried out under Thimphu Thromde, Bhutan, to assess the use of Google class and Television lessons during the emergence of COVID-19 in the 2020 academic year. The study used Google class & Television lesson observations to gain the first-hand experience and face-to-face interviews with students, parents, and teachers to get in-depth views. The Google class and television lesson observation and interview data were analyzed using emerging themes. The findings revealed that Google class and Television lessons played an essential role in making up lessons lost during schools' closure. However, the study further revealed some pertinent issues related to the Google class and Television lessons, including students resorting to copying assignments and homework directly from friends or copying directly from textbooks and the internet. Students were overburden by the heavy load of assignments assigned by different subject teachers, among many others. More preparedness and training for teachers in ICT based pedagogy was required. The study might draw policy attention to consider the problem and challenges before implementing Google class and Television lessons shortly to avoid pitfalls. The study was limited to the Thimphu Thromde, Bhutan, using a small sample size of students, parents, and teachers. A future mixed-method research approach uses surveys with students, parents, and teachers; focus group discussions with students, parents, and teachers; and policymakers' interviews are recommended.

INTRODUCTION

Novel Coronavirus is a contagious disease that first emerged in Wuhan, China, in 2019. The World Health Organization later coded Coronavirus as COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 in Bhutan was confirmed on March 6, 2020. Upon confirmation, schools and institutes were closed in Thimphu, Paro, and Punakha and later followed to all other Bhutan districts as a precautionary measure. The government advised all parents to monitor their children and imposed restrictions, and banned inflow into Bhutan. The Ministry of Health provided a regular update on the COVID-19 situation worldwide and within the country periodically. The Ministry of Health carried out an advocacy and awareness program and reminded people to maintain good hygiene, avoid public gatherings and comply with devised protocol ([Pokhrel et al., 2021](#)).

According to the [United Nations \(2020\)](#), the COVID-19 has caused the world's largest disruptions'

education system. More than 190 countries with nearly 1.6 billion students were affected. Around 430 million students in South Asia were affected by school closure due to Covid-19. The school closure has affected more than 170,000 students in Bhutan from Pre-Primary (PP)-XII and caused rapid changes than any other profession. The closure of schools and institutes has forced the education system to change dramatically. As a result, many schools worldwide are continuing their education online such as Moodle, Cloud system, and more. (UNICEF, 2020a) to compensate for lost classes. The Royal Education Council (REC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Bhutan Council for School Examinations & Assessment, Bhutan Broadcasting Service Limited (BBS), Bhutan Telecom Limited, and Volunteer Teacher of Bhutan, started delivering lessons via Television & Radio. Self Instructional Materials for students were being issued (UNICEF, 2020). According to MoE (MoE, 2020b).

The Ministry, in collaboration with REC and volunteer teachers, has developed and recorded 440 video lessons. The first 293 lessons were developed and recorded free of cost with the support from BBS-1, BBS-2, Loden Foundation, Film Association of Bhutan, iBEST Studio, and Royal Tutorial Project. All the lessons delivered in EiE through BBS have also been uploaded in education's e-library and Sherig-YouTube, and Sherig Facebook page for the students' easy access. REC's online textbooks are also made available through REC's website and MoE's eLibrary. The delivery of curriculum through broadcast media BBS is supplemented by social media platforms (WeChat, WhatsApp, Telegram, and more applications.) and Google Classrooms' introduction. The Ministry developed 673 Self Instructional Materials (SIMs) and distributed them to 32,135 students who do not have access to the internet, BBS, and e-learning facilities. Also, a total of 198 radio lessons were developed.

Some schools under Thimphu Thromde initiated and used Google Class, WeChat, Messenger, and Facebook based on the REC's prioritized curriculum or Education in Emergencies. Many parents came forward and took the initiative for online resources such as smartphones, television, the internet, and computers. The "Digital Drukyl" is one of the Twelve Five-Year Plan's unique flagship programs (2018-2023). Through the "Digital Drugyul" flagship program, the MoE is looking forward to introducing ICT education as a compulsory subject from grades PP to XII, with a focus on developing ICT infrastructure in the schools, integrate ICT in STEM, on coding, and as well as the day-to-day teaching-learning process (MoE, 2014). According to Dawadi et al. (2020), online teaching requires skillful and trained teachers. The United Nations (2020) argue that technology alone cannot guarantee good learning. The MoE should strengthen teachers' and students' capacity to run online classes and e-pedagogy as an alternative teaching strategy and develop ICT infrastructure in schools.

The poor infrastructure is another barrier to online teaching-learning. In Nepal, Tribhuvan University has recently conducted a week-long virtual training on online teaching to empower their staff (Dawadi et al., 2020). Sixty-four percent of primary teachers and 50 percent of secondary teachers had minimum training on online teaching in sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations, 2020). In Bhutan, a handful of teachers were trained by the REC and MoE in Google class.

Although many Bhutanese believe that online teaching-learning such as delivering lessons via television and radio, and Google Class, WeChat, Messenger, and Facebook played an important role during the pandemic, no study has been carried out so far to determine the impact of online teaching on student learning. The education system in Bhutan is structured with the prescribed and centralized syllabus and curriculum. The closure of schools disrupted syllabus coverage and might take longer for schools to recover. It was foreseen that Bhutan's education system would be affected due to poor economic and technical backwardness. It was not sure how well the schools and teachers were equipped for online teaching-learning besides students' preparedness for online engagement. Quality of education is the biggest concern in Bhutan (MoE, 2020a).

Many scholars have mixed feelings about COVID-19. The pandemic might provide more significant opportunities for experimentation, greater autonomy to own learning, self-direction, and collaboration between students, parents, and teachers. China and India have established a national e-learning portal with a national repository of learning resources to students, parents, and teachers. Malaysia and Indonesia mobilized resources and provide live education programs for students and teachers. Malaysia

also launched a new TV channel for educational purposes for those students without having access to digital technology and the Internet ([Dawadi et al., 2020](#)). Similarly, the outbreak of COVID-19 has pushed all teachers and students in Bhutan to adopt an online teaching-learning strategy.

According to many scholars and academicians, technology and the online teaching-learning process played a crucial role in education ([Hrastinski, 2019](#)). Technology created new avenues for learning. However, in Bhutan, teachers still use traditional teaching approaches such as the lecture method, including textbooks, chalk and chalkboard, group work, and discussions. Usually, teachers stand in front of the class and explain concepts and ask questions. Teachers also assign group works, group discussions, and group presentation during the lessons. Face-to-face instruction is all about teaching-learning instruction in Bhutan ([Dorji, 2020](#); [Yuden et al., 2020](#)). The outbreak of COVID-19 shifted the educational paradigm from traditional teaching strategy to technology-based online teaching-learning.

Factors such as limited access to technology-Television, smartphones, and computers at home, in addition to the expensive Internet data package and limited Internet access, can limit student's access to teaching-learning. Teachers and students need useful workshop or training on Google class before implementing online learning as a teaching-learning strategy ([Ngogi Emmanuel, 2020](#)). According to [Dorji \(2020\)](#), in Bhutan, "many schools are inadequately equipped with computers and Internet facilities. Just over one-third of schools have computers, and only 13 percent have Internet facilities". Access to television, smartphones, and computer are limited in rural parts of Bhutan. Parents without television, computer, and smartphone with only one computer or phone force their older children over younger children ([UNICEF, 2020a](#)) for learning. In addition to the resources, a quiet and safe place to study and a device to work is necessary for conducive teaching-learning. According to the [United Nations \(2020\)](#).

Many learners in developing countries, especially the youngest and minority groups, are not fluent in the language of instruction. Even when they could access the content they could understand, living conditions, economic stress, and low education levels of parents, including digital skills, meant that many children did not benefit from the stable environment and the learning support needed to adapt to these new modes of instruction. In most European countries, children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to lack reading opportunities, a quiet room, and parental support during school closure.

According to [The Bhutanese, n.d.](#), 210 students dropped out of school during the pandemic. There were 96 and 114 students, respectively, from grades XII and X who dropped out. The dropout rate for grades VII & VIII is unknown as schools are yet to reopen. Around 23.8 million students might drop out in the coming year due to the pandemic's economic impact and lack of proper support. A study in Germany, France, Italy, the USA, and the UK found around 60 percent of parents could not find alternative solutions during the pandemic ([United Nations, 2020](#)).

Similarly, in Bhutan, parents were unprepared for homeschooling and online teaching-learning. The closure of schools and educational institutes have forced parents to facilitate and guide their children at home. However, in many families, both parents were found working at the office in urban areas. Single parents were burdened heavily with online teaching-learning and leave children with others or alone at home ([UNICEF, 2020b](#)). The pandemic has increased pressure on students, parents, and teachers to cover several topics. Students were pressured to learn many different subjects within a short period ([Dawadi et al., 2020](#)). Policymakers assume that all urban dwellers have technology and access to the internet. In reality, there is the limited technological transformation in society. Lately, ICT has been offered as a compulsory subject in grade IX & XI with a 50 min time slot in a week. Therefore, little progress has been made in the implementation of ICT education in particular. The inherited project under the MoE shows the roadmap to integrate ICT in schools ([T Dorji, 2020b](#)).

While the MoE has taken commendable measures to continue online teaching-learning despite schools' closure, it has been foreseen that students would be vulnerable to Internet addictions. Schools and institutes are the hubs of interaction and social development ([Unicef, 2020](#)). With the closure of the school, students were deprived of opportunities for growth and development. According to ([Dawadi et al., 2020b](#)), several issues need to be considered for online teaching-learning as students need

adjustment for the change. Some students, in the absence of elders, look after siblings and household chores.

Although many scholars believe that online learnings are useful, merely posting questions, notes, videos, assignments online are not conducive for teaching-learning. Online teaching-learning requires notes, questions, and teaching-learning materials prepared by qualified teachers or facilitators. The unplanned and unprepared online notes and learning materials would cater to the lower quality of student intake as students would be working alone at home or with parents. Thus, the quality of education might deteriorate in the process ([Mohamedbhai, 2020](#)).

The digital infrastructure is not advanced in developing countries, especially in Asia and Africa. In virtual learning, teachers and students use online tools for teaching-learning. However, teachers and students need workshops and training on computer-based instruction before implementing online learning as a teaching strategy. Appropriate online teaching-learning needs the right technology, access to the internet, skills to use technology, and watching television. So far, no country has a universal digital curriculum for the teaching-learning process ([Mohamedbhai, 2020](#)).

Giving equitable access to e-learning is a challenge in South Asia. E-learning might further widen the learning inequality gaps. The introduction of e-learning might leave many students behind if all measures were not taken into considerations. The SDG 4: access to inclusive, equitable quality education for all and SDG 10: reduce inequalities by 2030 ([UNESCO, 2020](#)) cannot be assured.

The objective of the Study

COVID-19 caused the most severe disruption to educational opportunities worldwide. World leaders and policymakers are trying hard to prevent the learning crisis via online teaching-learning. Since no study was carried out in Bhutan on the problem and challenge of Google class and Television lessons on student learning, this study aims to examine the problem and challenge of Google class and Television lessons on student learning.

Research Question

What are the problems and challenges students, parents, and teachers face with Google class and Television lessons?

Significance of the Study

It was felt that there was a need to examine the problems and challenges of using Google class and Television lessons on student learning during the COVID-19. Relatively few countries have monitored the effectiveness of Google class and Television lessons. The study might draw policy implications to consider the problem and challenges before implementing online teaching-learning shortly to avoid pitfalls.

METHODS

The study was qualitative. The Google class and Television lesson observations were carried out to gain first-hand experience. The semi-structured face-to-face interview was carried with students, parents, and teachers to use Google class and Television lessons to get in-depth information ([Yuden et al., 2020](#)). The parents were involved in the study because students' success depends on parents' involvement in education. Parents play a crucial role in educating their children.

Population and Sample

This study was done in one higher secondary school under Thimphu Thromde, Bhutan, with PP - XII grades. The study targeted grades IX and XI since they have been temporarily closed from March 6, 2020. There were 123 students (58 boys and 65 girls) in grade IX and 84 students (31 boys and 53 girls) in grade XI. A sample was selected through non-probability convenient sampling techniques. Twenty students comprising ten boys and ten girls of grades IX and XI participated in the semi-structured face-to-face interview. Ten teachers (5 males and five females) and ten parents (5 males and five females) participated in the interview. 10 Google classes and five Television lessons were observed randomly before the interviews.

Data Analysis

The observation of Google class and Television lessons were analyzed for emerging themes. The face-to-face interview of students, parents, and teachers was recorded and transcribed. The transcribed data were coded and analyzed for emerging themes.

Ethical Consideration

The study proposal was submitted to the school management for approval of the study. After obtaining approval from the school management, consent was obtained from all the participants of the study. Confidentiality was assured, and the name of the school and participants were not revealed at any cost. The interviews' time and date were fixed based on the student's convenience, parent and teacher participants.

RESULTS

Upon analyzing the Google class and Television lesson observations (using the content or thematic analysis), the researcher found that all teachers have started posting assignments and notes through Google class. A few students had not submitted assignments through Google class despite the class teacher and subject teachers' reminder. However, the use of Google class does not ensure that every teacher offers quality education or quality teaching. The start of the online teaching-learning comes as a mandate in which principals, teachers, parents, and students have to collaboratively use it to ensure continuous teaching-learning during the school closure.

However, without proper training, many teachers did not understand how to manage and teach students in the first place and forgo quality in the process. Some pertinent issues related to the Google class and Television lessons include students resorting to copying assignments and homework directly from their friends or the textbooks or the internet. Students were overburden by the assignments assigned by different subject teachers. All submitted assignments were found in hard copy (i.e., uploaded JPEG copy from students notebook). High-quality education is an investment where children can contribute to national development in due process. Since teachers in Bhutan have just begun to integrate online teaching-learning, there was a vast potential and opportunity to do it right. Online lesson through Google class was not planned well as long-term closures of school was on Adhoc. However, the Google class has helped to continue student engagement during the closure of schools.

The objective of the lessons delivered via television was long. There was an absence of activity and break between the lessons. There was a lack of continuity between the first lesson and the second lesson delivered via television. The Television lessons were not found regularly and sometimes the gap between the first lesson and the second lesson was too long. As a result, students lost track in between. The social and academic features of the school are not transferred at home easily. However, the lessons delivered through Google class and television were useful and informative in the COVID-19 crises.

DISCUSSION

Upon analyzing the face to face interviews with the students, parents, and teachers (using the content or thematic analysis) on using Google class and Television lessons, students, parents, and teachers viewed Google class and Television lessons positively and negatively. Fourteen themes were drawn, which are discussed below:

Cover loss lessons

Google class and Television lessons played an essential role in making up lesson loss during the schools' closure and had helped many students continue learning. All students, parents, and teachers agreed that Google class and Television lessons helped cover the lesson loss during the pandemic. It also helped to engaged students, parents, and teachers meaningfully.

Less preparedness

Making an immediate shift from traditional teaching-learning to Google class and television was difficult as many teachers and students are not used to ICT and e-learning platforms as a part of their regular teaching-learning. Students and teachers had no or little experience using Google class, and parents had been suddenly required to mentor their children when they had virtually no experience of

teaching-learning, let alone using ICT as a learning tool. All students and teachers said, "*more preparedness, training for teachers and students in ICT skills, pedagogical skills to meet the standard is required.*"

Limited skills to run Google class

During the interview, all teacher and student participants had no adequate or sound skills to run Google class nor have been involved in Google class before, although a few teachers facilitated few hours of the workshop on Google class. The participant teachers shared that the workshop facilitators lacked content knowledge, delivery skills, and expertise to use Google class to teach-learning. They were forced to take such initiatives due to the pandemic. All participants said they had created Google class after receiving the MoE and school management notification to start online classes. All students, parents, and teachers said there was no virtual learning such as a webinar between students and teachers.

Limited access to technology

Student participants shared that many students had limited access to the computer, smartphones, and the internet at home. On the other hand, teachers were unaware of such issues and remained focused on Google class and expecting students to complete tasks on time. Fifty percent of students said that they used parent's laptops and smartphone after their office hours. All student participants shared that they found Google class unfriendly. They struggled to understand and complete the assignments on time. They preferred face to face teaching and learning. Fifteen percent of students said, "*I have become a victim of domestic violence. Teachers started calling parents when I fail to do or submit an assignment late through Google class*". Sixty percent of students said, "*as a student, I feel teachers should focus more on students' physical and mental well-being than on learning during COVID-19*".

All student, parent, and teacher participants supported the Television lessons. All students said they had access to Television lessons. However, the lessons broadcast on television were long and covered topics that were not from their textbooks. It was also shared that many students could not get enough help from parents as most of the parents were either illiterate or busy with office works. Thus, students and parents felt teachers need to visit students and provide timely support and follow up to the assigned assignments. The lessons delivered via television were a handful and could not cover all essential topics and lessons. Students and parents shared that getting excess to technology or the internet was too expensive during the interview. Many parent participants said that they are computer illiterate and could not monitor their children's online behavior. Fifty percent of parents said that they had access to both digital devices and the internet at home. Sixty percent of parents shared, "*teachers should be flexible in terms of the learning approach and submission of assignment.*" There was high pressure from teachers to submit an assignment through Google class on time.

No separate study room

Seventy-five percent of parents said that they had no conducive place for children to study at home. Some students were going through family difficulties as most parents lost jobs due to the pandemic. Seventy percent of students mentioned that "*I have no separate room to study. All family has to live in two common rooms with kitchen and toilet attached outside*". All teachers agree that students' family status has not been monitored as the COVID-19 pandemic was ad hoc. During the interview, it was learned that many students come from families who could afford only apartments with two rooms with toilets and washrooms attached outside. Three percent of students said they come from large families.

Unaware of assessment

During the interview, IX and XI students were not aware of assessment through regular examinations as the pandemic was likely to continue. The school informed students of their assessments being based on their assignments submitted through Google class. All participating students and parents expressed concern that their grades would be inaccurate. Most of the assignments were reported to have been either done by parents, siblings, or copied from friends. Therefore, proper measures are needed to be introduced to assess the validity and reliability of the assessment.

Lack of proper timing for Television lessons

Seventy-five percent of students, 70 percent of parents, and 20 percent of teachers remarked that it was difficult to know the time and program list of Television lessons. The delivery of some lessons through Television program was not up to a satisfactory level, due to the mismatch of lesson covered to the topic contents given in the respective textbooks. It rendered some topics difficult to students from lower grade levels when attending to higher grade levels. For example, grades IX and X and XI & XII were clubbed as one key stage. The topic coverage was too broad, and there was a lack of activity during the Television lessons. Students, parents, and teachers shared no separate TV channel to deliver educational programs in Bhutan.

Lack of developmental skills

The student participants shared that schools' closure due to COVID-19 had negatively impacted knowledge acquisition, skills development, and social skills development. A school is a place of fun, play, and socialization. Sixty-five percent of students said that *"I miss school than anyone."* Students also believed that through face to face teaching, students could score more marks on tests. Ten percent of student participants mentioned that *"I prefer interacting with my teachers in person."* The further closure of schools could bring limited growth of subject knowledge and skills for higher classes. Fifteen percent of students said, *"To be honest, while many teachers cannot teach well in the class, it is ridiculous to hear too much to hear about online from them."* All student and parent participants shared that students needed psychological support over academic development from class teachers and subject teachers in such a crisis.

Addiction to digital devices

Fifty percent of students said they were becoming addicted to the internet and online games. All parent participants, irrespective of economic status and education levels, put their best to support children learning at home. All parents said, *"due to online teaching-learning, children were getting addicted to online games and social media such as WeChat, Facebook, and YouTube."* Such addiction to digital devices may affect learning. Parents were thankful for conducting Parent Teacher Meeting to propel requisite support for students during the pandemic.

Limited physical contact between student and teacher

All students shared that assignments were posted in the Google class, and some teachers hardly bothered to monitor. All parents and students shared that there should be frequent contact between students, parents, and teachers through a telephone call, social media, and home visits. During the interview, 10 percent of parents shared, *"In addition to Parent Teacher Meeting, the school needs to conduct a workshop to disseminate information on teaching practices, assignment, and health advisory protocol during the pandemic."* During the interview, all parents shared that they used smartphones or the internet for social media such as WeChat for personal communication. There was a lack of awareness programs and training on the use of digital resources to support education. The Google class learning and Television lessons have no or limited impact on students with special needs. They were not equally benefiting from this strategy. Thus, there was a need for a comprehensive framework to address special student needs. All parents remarked that they were pleased to see that the government recently launched low data charges for teachers and students for online classes.

Heavy assignment for students

Students were overburden by loads of assignments by different subject teachers. All student and parent participants remarked that children felt stressed with continuous assignments. Working parents mentioned their limited time to monitor their children and helplessness to support with challenging assignments. During the interview, 80 percent of parents mentioned that they were illiterate to provide their children's necessary support. Both literate and illiterate parents depended significantly on the school for children's education. Thus, it was tough to find solutions for helping their children at home.

Widen learning gap

All parent and teacher participants expect a large learning gap due to COVID-19. Fifty percent of

teachers said, "I think the schools' closure has widened the gap due to inaccessibility to quality classroom teaching-learning resources." All teachers have no catch-up lessons or additional resources, or extra classes for disadvantaged students due to school closure. There was uneven access to e-learning and e-resources between advantaged and disadvantaged students in the existing education system.

Copy assignment and homework

The interview also revealed some pertinent issues related to the Google class and Television lessons, including students resorting to copying assignments and homework directly from their friends, the textbook, or the internet. Ninety-five percent of students agreed that they had copied their assignments either from their friends, textbook, or the internet. Sixty percent of teachers were found unaware due to a lack of software to detect plagiarism. Ninety-nine percent of the assignments submitted in the Google class were in JPEG format and 1 percent in doc. format

No proper plan

Although Google classes were based on the respective school's Google class timetable, Google class was operating without a proper plan in many cases. Not all teachers had personal laptops to work, and the Internet data charge in Bhutan is absorbent. During the interview, teacher participants argued that they could not afford to spend a significant amount on internet data packages. The higher living expenses in Thimphu Thromde and the pandemic's uncertainty were a burden for a family to combat. Google class cannot become effective by merely posting notes or video recording or by Television lessons. Unfortunately, many teacher participants believe that Google class effectively posted online notes, recorded videos, YouTube videos, images, and assignments. For a successful Google class, teaching-learning materials will have to be prepared well; teachers need pedagogical training to deliver the lesson on Google class. Besides, students should be equally exposed to online learning pedagogy. The study's results and discussion were consistent with the study done on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Nepal-Challenges and Coping ([Dawadi et al., 2020b](#)).

CONCLUSION

Going by the study's evidence, Google class and television lessons played a vital alternative teaching-learning strategy to teach students at home during the school closure. The Google class and Television lessons helped to cover lesson loss during COVID-19. However, there are some pertinent issues related to the Google class and Television lessons such as un-preparedness for the students, parents, and teachers, limited access to technology, limited space for students to study, unaware of assessment, lack of proper timing, lack of developmental skills for students, addiction to online games, limited physical contact between student and teacher, heavy assignment for students, learning gap amongst students, copying assignments from different sources and no proper plan for Google class.

Recommendation

The students and teachers need proper training on Google class by experts and a sustained support mechanism. It should also be ensured that teachers have a proper assessment and pedagogical skills to meet student needs and teach to achieve learning outcomes set for the grade levels. Google class and Television lessons need a supportive learning environment, relevant content, effective teaching practice, and adequate instructional models to stand as alternative teaching and learning strategies. Teacher development should be critical to ensure teachers are prepared, qualified, and remunerated as deemed appropriate. Both teachers & students should have access to ICT. Bhutan should launch a new TV channel to provide live educational programs to enrich teaching-learning.

Limitation of the Study

The study was carried out in one higher secondary school under Thimphu Thromde, Bhutan. It used a small sample size of students, parents, and teachers. The views of students from other grades, policymakers could not be collected. Larger-scale studies at the national level need to be carried out in the country to assess (i) the impact of COVID-19 on education, (ii) the effectiveness of Google class, Television lessons, and Self-Instructional Materials (iii) the learning gaps caused due to lack of face to

face teaching, (iv) explore possibilities for digital education in Bhutan, and (v) determine the way forward for a smooth educational experience for schools in Bhutan at the national level. For better findings, future researchers are recommended to adopt a mixed-method approach comprising a survey questionnaire for students, parents, and teachers; focus group discussions with the same groups of participants and policymakers are recommended. The study sample should be equally distributed among the four regions of the country for better representation.

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