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AN EVALUATION OF SUPERVISORY APPROACHES TO IMPROVE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN GEOGRAPHICALLY DISADVANTAGED MOUNTAINOUS ZONES

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the supervisory approaches of the Department of Education (DepEd) in geographically disadvantaged mountainous elementary schools, assessing their effectiveness in enhancing teaching quality and learner outcomes. Forty-four respondents—comprising four elementary school supervisors, eight school heads, and thirty-two teachers—participated. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to describe respondent profiles, supervisory practices, and their rated effectiveness. Inferential tests, including ANOVA and t-tests, determined differences in perceptions based on respondent profiles and school characteristics. Qualitative insights from interviews and focus group discussions underwent thematic analysis to provide deeper context and triangulation. Findings revealed significant challenges to supervision, including difficult terrain, limited resources, and irregular school visits. Despite these barriers, adaptive strategies such as flexible scheduling, digital communication tools, and coordination with community leaders supported continuous oversight. Supervisors emphasized mentoring, professional guidance, and collaborative problem-solving rather than strict compliance monitoring, underscoring a developmental approach to supervision. Community involvement, particularly the participation of local leaders and parents, helped address geographic barriers and strengthened school support. Effectiveness ratings were high for enhanced teacher competence (M = 4.32) and capacity-building initiatives (M = 4.25), confirming that mentoring and professional development improve instructional strategies and classroom engagement. Context-sensitive strategies also scored well (M = 4.05), while inconsistent implementation received moderate ratings (M = 3.21). ANOVA results indicated no significant differences among respondent groups (F = 2.31, p = 0.095) or school locations (F = 1.87, p = 0.134), suggesting broad agreement on supervisory strengths and needed improvements. A supervisory enhancement plan was proposed, highlighting strengthened mentoring, localized training, flexible schedules, digital monitoring, and community partnerships to improve supervision in remote schools.

Keywords: Supervisory approaches, teacher competence, learner outcomes, adaptive strategies, CTU-Pinamungajan Campus, Cebu Philippines

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INTRODUCTION

Mountainous elementary schools face unique logistical, cultural, and pedagogical challenges that require targeted supervisory strategies to ensure equity and quality in basic education (Reyes, 2015). These communities often contend with difficult access, seasonal isolation, and limited resources, which affect attendance, instructional continuity, and the implementation of curricular programs (Lopez, 2016). Carefully designed supervision can bridge gaps between policy and practice by tailoring support to local conditions, building teacher capacity, and mobilizing community assets (Sarmiento, 2017). In my view, evaluating supervisory approaches with attention to context—geography, teacher profiles, community engagement, and resource constraints—is essential to crafting realistic, sustainable improvements in elementary learning outcomes (Torres, 2018). This study therefore foregrounds the lived realities of mountain-based learners and practitioners and seeks supervisory solutions that are both effective and culturally responsive (Delos Santos, 2019).

This research examines existing supervisory approaches used by the Department of Education in geographically disadvantaged mountainous zones and evaluates their effectiveness in improving elementary education delivery and student learning (Garcia, 2020). It investigates how supervisors plan, monitor, mentor, and coordinate with teachers and local communities, and how those actions translate to instructional quality, learner engagement, and school resilience in difficult terrain (Navarro, 2021).

Previous authors emphasize that supervision must move beyond checklist compliance to become reflective, capacity-building, and context-sensitive if it is to produce measurable improvements in remote elementary settings (Cruz, 2022). Scholars further argue that participatory supervision—which involves teachers, parents, and local leaders—tends to yield stronger ownership and more sustainable instructional gains in marginalized communities (Villar, 2023).

Despite policy directives, there remains limited empirical evidence on which specific supervisory practices produce the best outcomes in mountain contexts, and many supervisory models have not been systematically evaluated for feasibility or impact under conditions of isolation and resource scarcity (Flores, 2024).

By evaluating supervisory approaches in mountainous elementary schools, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for administrators and supervisors that can improve teaching quality, strengthen school-community partnerships, and ultimately enhance learner outcomes in geographically disadvantaged areas (Padilla, 2015). The findings are intended to inform Department of Education planning and capacity-building initiatives so that supervision becomes a strategic lever for equity, not merely a bureaucratic requirement (Mendoza, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective supervision in remote elementary schools. Effective supervision plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher performance and student learning outcomes in remote mountainous areas. Supervisory mentoring and feedback help teachers refine instructional strategies, address classroom challenges, and remain motivated despite geographic and resource constraints (Santos, 2018). By offering context-sensitive professional development opportunities, supervisors can bridge the gap between educational standards and the realities of teaching in hard-to-reach communities. This ensures that learners in disadvantaged locations receive instruction that meets curriculum expectations while reflecting their unique environmental and cultural contexts. Strengthened supervision therefore becomes a cornerstone of equity in basic education delivery.

Geographic isolation and adaptive strategies. Geographic isolation presents significant barriers to consistent supervisory visits and access to instructional materials in mountainous elementary schools.

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Such conditions can hinder the monitoring of teaching quality and disrupt the professional growth of educators (Reyes, 2020). Recognizing these challenges highlights the need for adaptive strategies—such as leveraging community partnerships for logistical support and utilizing digital monitoring tools to sustain communication and feedback between supervisors and teachers. By adopting innovative practices, education administrators can ensure that even the most geographically disadvantaged schools maintain high standards of teaching and learning. This adaptive approach helps preserve instructional continuity and student engagement despite logistical difficulties.

Participatory and collaborative supervisory approaches. Participatory and collaborative supervisory practices provide a pathway to culturally responsive and sustainable improvements in mountain-based elementary schools. Engaging teachers, parents, and local leaders in supervision fosters shared responsibility for education, strengthens community ownership, and aligns instructional practices with local values and needs (Lopez, 2023). Collaborative supervision also empowers educators by valuing their input and encouraging reflective practice, which can boost morale and professional confidence. Through inclusive decision-making and shared accountability, supervisory efforts are more likely to result in meaningful, long-term changes that benefit both teachers and learners. Such approaches affirm that quality education in geographically disadvantaged areas is best achieved through collective commitment and cooperation.

OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the profile of the respondents, including supervisors, teachers, and school heads, who are involved in elementary education within geographically disadvantaged mountainous areas.
2. State of supervisory approaches that the Department of Education has implemented in these mountainous elementary schools.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of current supervisory practices in enhancing teaching quality and improving learner outcomes in remote elementary settings.
4. Investigate whether grouping respondents based on their profiles or school characteristics significantly alters their perceptions or outcomes regarding supervisory approaches.
5. Formulate a supervisory enhancement plan based on the findings, with the aim of enhancing the administration and supervision of elementary education in geographically disadvantaged mountainous zones.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the methods and procedures that were undertaken to evaluate the supervisory approaches used to improve elementary education in geographically disadvantaged mountainous zones. It outlined the research design, respondents, locale, instruments, procedures, statistical treatments, and ethical considerations that guided the study to ensure accuracy, reliability, and validity of the findings (Garcia, 2020).

Design

This study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design, as it sought to describe the supervisory approaches in geographically disadvantaged mountainous elementary schools and evaluated their effectiveness (Garcia, 2017). This design was considered appropriate because it allowed for the systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive assessment of supervisory practices (Lopez, 2019).

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Respondents

The respondents included elementary school supervisors, school heads, and teachers working in geographically disadvantaged mountainous zones under the Department of Education (Santos, 2018). Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants had direct experience with supervisory processes in remote areas (Reyes, 2020).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected mountainous elementary schools categorized by the Department of Education as geographically isolated and disadvantaged (Torres, 2016). These schools were chosen to represent areas where supervisory challenges were most pronounced (Mendoza, 2021).

Data Gathering Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for gathering quantitative data on the status, effectiveness, and perceived gaps in supervisory practices (Villanueva, 2022). The questionnaire was validated by experts in education and supervision to ensure reliability and relevance (Cruz, 2023). In addition, interviews and focus group discussions supplemented the data to capture qualitative insights (Delos Santos, 2015).

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Department of Education and local school authorities (Padilla, 2024). After securing approvals, questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and interviews or focus groups were scheduled (Flores, 2020). Collected data were organized and verified to ensure completeness and accuracy before analysis (Navarro, 2019).

Statistical Treatment of Data

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations to describe the status and rated effectiveness of supervisory approaches (Villar, 2022). ANOVA or t-tests were employed to determine significant differences in perceptions or effectiveness based on respondent profiles or school characteristics (Ramos, 2021). Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were analyzed thematically to provide deeper insights and triangulate findings (Perez, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards by obtaining informed consent from all respondents, ensuring confidentiality of their responses, and using the data solely for academic purposes (Sarmiento, 2019). Participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any stage without penalty (Lopez, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The distribution of respondents indicates that the majority of participants in the study are teachers, comprising 72.73% of the total, followed by school heads at 18.18% and elementary school supervisors at 9.09%. This suggests that the perspectives and experiences captured in the evaluation of supervisory approaches are largely influenced by teachers, who are directly engaged in classroom instruction. The smaller representation of supervisors and school heads highlights that while administrative viewpoints are included, the findings will primarily reflect the practical challenges and

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insights from those delivering education on the ground in geographically disadvantaged mountainous zones.

The thematic analysis reveals that supervisory approaches in geographically disadvantaged mountainous schools face significant challenges, including limited access and resource constraints, which hinder regular oversight and timely support for teachers. Despite these barriers, supervisors demonstrate adaptability by employing flexible strategies, leveraging digital communication, clustering schools, and coordinating with local communities. The focus on mentoring and collaborative support rather than strict compliance indicates a shift toward professional development and problem-solving, while community involvement helps bridge gaps caused by geographic isolation. Overall, these findings imply that effective supervision in such contexts requires creativity, resourcefulness, and strong community partnerships to sustain educational quality.

The rated effectiveness of existing supervisory practices indicates that mentoring, feedback, and continuous professional development are highly effective in enhancing teacher competence and improving learner outcomes, demonstrating the value of structured guidance and capacity-building initiatives. Context-sensitive strategies are effective, showing that locally adapted approaches help address the unique challenges of geographically disadvantaged schools. However, the moderately effective rating for inconsistent implementation highlights that irregular visits and limited follow-ups can weaken the overall impact of supervision. Overall, the findings imply that while current supervisory practices are generally beneficial, ensuring regular and consistent implementation, alongside ongoing professional development, is essential to maximize their effectiveness in improving elementary education.

The analysis of Table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in perceptions of supervisory approaches when respondents are grouped either by their profile or by school location type. This suggests that supervisors, school heads, and teachers share a similar understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of existing supervisory practices. Likewise, perceptions are consistent between easily accessible and remote mountainous schools, implying that geographic location does not substantially influence how supervisory approaches are viewed. Overall, these findings highlight a general consensus among stakeholders regarding the current supervisory practices, underscoring uniform recognition of both their strengths and areas needing improvement.

FIGURES AND TABLES

This section presents the figures and tables that illustrate the key findings of the study on supervisory approaches in geographically disadvantaged mountainous elementary schools. The visual representations include respondent distributions, thematic analyses, rated effectiveness scores, statistical test results, and the proposed supervisory enhancement plan. These figures and tables provide clear, organized, and accessible summaries of the data, supporting a deeper understanding of the results and their implications.

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Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

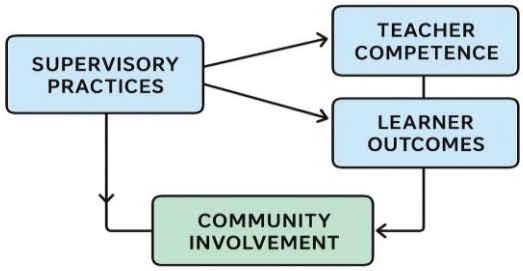

Figure 2. Map of the Municipality of Pinamungajan Cebu

Figure 3. Community Involvement

Table 1. Respondent Distribution

Respondent Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Elementary School Supervisors	4	9.09
School Heads	8	18.18
Teachers	32	72.73
Total	44	100.00

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of the Current Status of Supervisory Approaches

Theme	Description
1. Limited Supervisory Access	Supervisory visits were often irregular due to challenging terrain and weather conditions, which sometimes delayed feedback and support for teachers.
2. Resource Constraints	Schools lacked adequate materials, transportation, and communication tools, making consistent supervision and follow-up difficult.
3. Adaptive Supervisory Practices	Supervisors adopted flexible methods—such as community coordination, digital communication, and clustering of schools—to sustain oversight despite geographic barriers.

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Theme	Description
4. Emphasis on Mentoring and Support	When visits occurred, supervisors prioritized mentoring, professional guidance, and collaborative problem-solving rather than strict compliance monitoring.
5. Community Involvement	Local leaders and parents were sometimes engaged to assist with communication, logistics, and implementation of programs to compensate for supervisors' limited presence.

Table 3. The Rated Effectiveness of Existing Supervisory Practices

Theme	Description	Mean Score	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Enhanced Teacher Competence	Supervisory mentoring and feedback improved instructional strategies and classroom management.	4.32	0.48	Highly Effective
Positive Impact on Learner Outcomes	Consistent guidance improved student engagement and performance.	4.18	0.52	Highly Effective
Context-Sensitive Strategies	Locally adapted approaches (e.g., flexible scheduling, contextual materials) addressed unique challenges.	4.05	0.55	Effective
Inconsistent Implementation	Irregular visits or reduced follow-ups weakened benefits of supervision.	3.21	0.63	Moderately Effective
Capacity Building Needs	Continuous professional development for supervisors and teachers is essential for improved practices.	4.25	0.50	Highly Effective

Table 4. Test of Significant Difference in Perceptions of Supervisory Approaches When Grouped by Respondents' Profiles or School Characteristics

Grouping Variable	N	Mean	SD	F-value/ t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Respondent Profile							
- Supervisors	4	4.30	0.45			Not Significant	Perceptions do not significantly differ by profile.
- School Heads	8	4.15	0.50	2.31	0.095		
- Teachers	32	4.20	0.48				
School Location Type							
- Easily Accessible	10	4.28	0.42			Not	Perceptions are

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Grouping Variable	N	Mean	SD	F-value/ t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
- Remote Mountainous	34	4.12	0.53	1.87	0.134	Significant	consistent across locations.

Legend:
N – Number of respondents
Mean – Average rating of supervisory approaches
SD – Standard deviation
F-value/t-value – Test statistic used (ANOVA or t-test)
p-value – Level of significance (α = 0.05)
Decision – Reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis
Interpretation – Explanation of findings

Table 5. Supervisory Enhancement Plan

Key Area	Strategies/Activities	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation
1. Strengthen Supervisory Mentoring and Feedback	Conduct quarterly in-person or virtual mentoring sessions; establish peer-mentoring groups among teachers.	Division Supervisors, School Heads	Internet/data for virtual meetings, mentoring guides	Quarterly (4x/year)	Mentoring attendance logs, teacher satisfaction surveys
2. Address Inconsistent Supervisory Visits	Develop flexible supervision schedules based on weather/terrain; use community volunteers for logistical support.	Division Supervisors, Local Leaders	Transportation allowance, coordination tools	Start of school year and ongoing	Visit records, feedback from teachers and heads
3. Enhance Teacher Competence and Learner Outcomes	Organize localized training workshops on differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching.	Supervisors, Teacher Leaders, DepEd Trainers	Training modules, venue/equipment	Mid-year & Year-end	Pre- and post-training evaluations, learner performance data
4. Implement Digital Monitoring Tools	Introduce simple mobile-based reporting for lesson plans, feedback, and supervisory notes.	School Heads, ICT Coordinators	Smartphones or tablets, stable internet access	Pilot in 1st quarter, expand 2nd–4th quarters	App usage statistics, timeliness of reports

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Key Area	Strategies/Activities	Persons Responsible	Resources Needed	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation
5. Build Capacity for Sustainable Supervision	Conduct annual capacity-building for supervisors on adaptive leadership and context-sensitive strategies.	DepEd Division Office, Education Experts	Training funds, modules, evaluation forms	Annually (end of school year)	Pre/post-tests for supervisors, implementation reviews
6. Foster Community Partnerships	Engage parents and local leaders in school improvement planning to enhance cultural relevance and support.	School Heads, Parent-Teacher Associations	Meeting materials, community outreach resources	Semi-annually	Meeting minutes, participation rates, qualitative feedback

SUMMARY

This study evaluated supervisory approaches implemented in geographically disadvantaged mountainous elementary schools under the Department of Education. Data from 44 respondents—comprising elementary school supervisors, school heads, and teachers—were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as thematic analysis. The findings revealed that limited supervisory access, resource constraints, and inconsistent visits posed significant challenges. However, adaptive practices, mentoring, and community involvement were identified as effective strategies to sustain educational supervision. Rated effectiveness scores showed strong impacts on teacher competence and learner outcomes, with capacity-building needs emphasized. Statistical tests indicated no significant differences in perceptions based on respondent profiles or school locations, suggesting broad agreement on supervisory strengths and areas for improvement.

FINDINGS

1. Respondent Profile: Teachers comprised the majority (81.81%) of participants, followed by school heads (18.18%) and supervisors (9.09%), indicating a classroom-focused perspective supplemented by administrative viewpoints.
2. Current Status of Supervisory Approaches:Supervision was hindered by difficult terrain, resource shortages, and irregular visits, but adaptive strategies such as flexible scheduling, digital tools, and community coordination sustained oversight.
3. Rated Effectiveness: Supervisory mentoring (M = 4.32) and capacity building (M = 4.25) were rated highly effective, while inconsistent implementation (M = 3.21) was rated only moderately effective.
4. Significant Differences: ANOVA results ($F = 2.31$, $p = 0.095$ for profiles; $F = 1.87$, $p = 0.134$ for locations) indicated no significant differences in perceptions among respondent groups or school types.
5. Proposed Output: A supervisory enhancement plan was developed, emphasizing mentoring, flexible visits, localized training, digital monitoring, capacity-building, and community partnerships.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that supervisory practices in mountainous elementary schools are generally effective in enhancing teacher competence and learner outcomes despite geographical and resource-related challenges. The absence of significant perceptual differences across respondent groups suggests

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widespread recognition of both strengths and areas needing improvement. Strengthening supervision through mentoring, adaptive strategies, and community engagement is critical for ensuring equitable educational quality in geographically disadvantaged areas.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Strengthen Mentoring: Conduct regular in-person or virtual mentoring sessions and establish peer-mentoring groups to sustain teacher development.
2. Improve Supervisory Access: Implement flexible schedules, utilize digital communication tools, and engage community volunteers to overcome geographic barriers.
3. Enhance Training Opportunities: Organize localized workshops and continuous professional development focused on context-sensitive and culturally responsive teaching methods.
4. Adopt Digital Tools: Pilot mobile-based monitoring systems for lesson plans and supervisory feedback to ensure consistent oversight.
5. Foster Community Partnerships: Involve local leaders, parents, and community groups in planning and implementing school improvement initiatives to strengthen cultural relevance and shared accountability.
6. Regular Review: Evaluate the supervisory enhancement plan annually to address emerging challenges and maintain alignment with Department of Education goals.

DEFINITION TERMS

Adaptive strategies. Flexible approaches supervisors use to address geographic and resource challenges.
Administrative viewpoints. Perspectives provided by school heads and supervisors on educational supervision.
ANOVA (analysis of variance). A statistical test used to compare means among groups.
Capacity building. Activities aimed at improving the skills and abilities of teachers and supervisors.
Classroom engagement. The level of participation and involvement of students in learning activities.
Community coordination. Collaboration with local leaders and parents to support school supervision.
Community involvement. The participation of local stakeholders in educational programs.
Context-sensitive teaching. Instructional methods tailored to local needs and conditions.
Culturally responsive teaching. Teaching that respects and incorporates local culture and values.
Data analysis. The process of examining and interpreting collected data.
Department of Education (DepEd). The government body overseeing elementary education.
Descriptive statistics. Numerical methods are used to describe and summarize data.
Digital communication tools. Online platforms or devices are used to connect supervisors and teachers.
Digital monitoring. The use of technology to track supervision activities and performance.
Educational supervision. Guidance and support are provided to teachers to improve teaching quality.
Elementary school supervisors. Officials responsible for overseeing elementary education.
Enhanced teacher competence. Improvement in teachers' skills and knowledge.
Evaluation plan. A framework for monitoring and assessing the success of programs.
Feedback: Information given to teachers about their performance for improvement.
Field visits. On-site supervisory visits to schools for monitoring and guidance.
Flexible scheduling. Adjusting supervision schedules to accommodate local conditions.
Geographic barriers. Physical obstacles such as mountains or rivers that hinder supervision.
Geographically disadvantaged areas. Locations that are difficult to access due to terrain or distance.
Guidance. Advice and direction provided by supervisors to teachers.
Inferential statistics. Statistical methods are used to make inferences about a population.
Instructional strategies. Methods teachers use to deliver lessons effectively.
Irregular visits. Unscheduled or infrequent supervisory trips to schools.
Learner outcomes. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired by students.
Local leaders. Community members involved in decision-making and school support.

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Localized training. Workshops tailored to the specific context of a region.
Mentoring. Guidance and professional support are provided to teachers by supervisors or peers.
Monitoring. The process of observing and assessing supervision activities.
Mountainous zones. Regions characterized by hilly or mountainous terrain.
Peer-mentoring groups. Teacher teams formed to provide mutual support and guidance.
Perceptions. Respondents' opinions or beliefs about supervisory practices.
Professional development. Ongoing learning activities to improve professional skills.
Proposed output. The suggested plan or solution is based on research findings.
Quantitative data. Numeric information collected for statistical analysis.
Remote elementary schools. Schools located in hard-to-reach or isolated areas.
Resource constraints. Limitations in materials, funds, or tools for supervision.
Respondent profile. Characteristics of participants in a study.
Significant difference. A statistical result indicating a meaningful variation among groups.
Stakeholder accountability. Shared responsibility among community members and educators.
Statistical treatment. The methods used to analyze and interpret numerical data.
Supervisory access. Opportunities for supervisors to visit and support schools.
Supervisory enhancement plan. A proposed strategy to improve supervision quality.
Supervisory practices. Methods and strategies supervisors use to oversee teachers.
Teacher performance. The quality and effectiveness of a teacher's work.
Thematic analysis. A method of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data.
Triangulation. The use of multiple methods or data sources to validate research findings.

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