
APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN PRE-TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM APPRAISEES.

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ABSTRACT: *Performance appraisal is regarded as an important tool that enhances improvement in staff performance and institutional efficiency and productivity. It has consequently become a routine practice for administrators and authorities of institutions. The study set out to examine teachers' knowledge on rationales for performance appraisal, their perception of the practice, their attitude towards its implementation and their concerns about it. The descriptive study employed a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The data was analysed descriptively and the results are presented in means and standard deviations. The results showed that the teachers had little knowledge on the objectives for conducting performance appraisal. Again, they held a negative perception about it and also had an unfavourable attitude towards it. The study also unveiled concerns that the participants had about performance appraisal, which need to be addressed to enhance its implementation. Recommendations have been proffered for policy and practice.*

KEYWORDS: Performance Appraisal, Objectives, Perception, Attitude, Challenges, Performance Appraisal, Appraisal Results.

INTRODUCTION

The immense roles of education in the socio-economic and political development of countries have been reckoned since ages. There is no debate whatsoever about the potency of education in transforming economies. Schools are thus established to train human resource to fill various sectors of the economy for economic transformation. Hence, schools are considered the power house of human resource development. As it produces different types and levels of human resource to perform diverse roles in the productive and service sectors of nations.

Education, which has been unequivocally accepted as a major driver to development of economies is championed by teachers. This category of human resource in the school system is expected to provide quality educational experience for students who in turn make use of the knowledge and skills for development of the society. Teachers are the main implementers of the school curriculum which equips students with requisite competencies and values to help achieve societal goals. The teacher is a prominent and crucial member of the school organizational team (Joshua & Basse, 2004). Nacino-Brown, Oke & Brown (1990) thus regard teachers as the king-pin in the implementation of educational programmes. This is because their roles in the curriculum implementation process are considered as make or break. Evidence abounds to prove that teacher quality is the single most important factor which influences student success (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2005).

The indescribable roles of teachers in ensuring quality delivery of education make it essential for proper management of teachers as human resource. As part of the process of ensuring improvement in their competence, teachers are made to go through various continuous

professional development programmes (Kuranchie, 2015). One of the triggers of the need for continuous professional development programmes is performance appraisal. Performance appraisal is a process of gauging staff efficiency in the performance of their responsibilities in relation to the set standards and then communicating that information to the employees (Ruddin, 2005). KEMI (2010) also posits that performance appraisal is a systematic and a continuous review of staff performance and working potential with a goal of informing and designing programmes that can bring about improvement in their performance.

Performance appraisal has become an important policy for organisations, be it profit and not-for profit oriented. According to Kressler (2003), performance appraisal is a vital requirement for successful institutional and human resource policy. Among others, good performance appraisal system helps to hold employees accountable to their performance, address underperformance and improve performance and practice (Zbar, Marshall, & Power, 2007). Performance appraisal process and standards also provide scope for teachers and school authorities to make informed decisions about teachers' performance, which may help to identify areas for growth and development. The essential contributions of performance appraisal in improving the quality of teachers underscore educational authorities and school leaders' insistence on appraisal practices in schools. Literature evinces that performance appraisal practices have been undertaken in the various levels of education for a very long time. Although there could be variation in the way and manner they are carried out due to differences in the level of autonomy of the various levels of education.

Justification of the Research

One of the major duties of school leaders is to measure performance of their staff (Larson, 1984). Wendy and Bondreau (2000) opine that performance appraisal either aims for accountability or professional development of the teacher. Performance appraisal is executed to gauge the extent to which teachers have lived up to expectation during the period under review. The exercise seeks to ascertain the developmental and professional needs of the teacher. Namaghi (2010) postulates that one of the main rationales of appraising teachers is to unearth their needs for professional development. Performance appraisal involves assessment of the individual staff's competencies, performance and professional needs by either the principal, the deputy principal or the senior teacher (Nyatera, 2011). When this function is effectively and exquisitely executed, it has the capacity to directly shape the teachers' performance as well as students' academic achievement (Muli, 2010).

The senior high school is the second strand of the education echelon, which is managed and controlled by the education service. Unlike tertiary educational institutions, secondary schools are not autonomous so teacher performance management is not solely handled and the results used by heads of schools. School leaders, educational authorities and other stakeholders of education utilize performance appraisal results for varied purposes. As the outcomes of performance appraisal are used by both heads of schools and education officers at the district, regional and national directorates, the way and manner it is executed in schools need sinterrogation. Research efforts to extensively examine the practices of performance appraisal at the secondary school level would aid in drawing authorities' attention to the need to improving teachers' capacity to efficiently and effectively deliver their services to achieve the service's goals and objectives to the benefits of students, families, schools and the society.

Literature is replete with plethora of studies on performance appraisal in secondary schools. Odhiambo (2005) conducted a study to examine Kenya secondary school teachers' experience

with performance appraisal while Datche (2007) studied factors affecting the teacher performance appraisal system in public secondary schools in Kenya. Isaacs (2003) also studied the evolution of teacher evaluation process and professional development after the adoption of 4*4 models of block scheduling in public secondary schools in Virginia. On his part, Sackey-Adofo (2011) evaluated the performance appraisal and its effectiveness on employee performance in Kwahu south district of Ghana. Again, Wanyiku (2013) investigated teachers' perceptions of the role of performance appraisal in enhancing teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Kiambu county. Similarly, Gichuki (2015) examined the influence of performance appraisal on teacher performance in Gilgal districts while Karugaba (2015) assessed effectiveness of teacher performance appraisal feedback in secondary education in Bukoba municipal council.

The array of studies on performance appraisal in the secondary sub-sector of education have tended to be on effectiveness of the system, factors affecting the appraisal system and the influence of appraisal results on teacher performance. It is therefore clear that teachers' knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results, teachers' attitude towards it and their concerns about performance appraisal implementation had not garnered much research attention. There was paucity of data on those issues on performance appraisal practices in secondary level of education. Consequently, the current study sought to bridge the gap in knowledge on human resource management in the middle level of the education system. The study focused on teachers' knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results, teachers' perception of effectiveness of performance appraisal practices, teachers' attitude towards implementation of performance appraisal and teachers' concerns about performance appraisal implementation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to reflect the research problem:

- 1) What is teachers' knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results?
- 2) What is the perception of teachers on performance appraisal practices?
- 3) What is the attitude of teachers towards performance appraisal implementation?
- 4) What concerns do teachers have with implementation of performance appraisal?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a process of generating, analyzing and recording data about the relative worth of an employee (Shelley, 1999). The employees' work performance over a period of time is examined to ascertain its quality. Fletcher (2001) defines performance appraisal as the activities undertaken by organizations to assess employees and develop their competence to improve performance and allocate rewards. Ali (2012) contends that performance appraisal is the process of evaluating the performance and assessing the development or training needs of employees. De Nissi and Prichard, (2006) provide a definition of performance appraisal which corroborates that of Coens and Jenkins (2000) which describes performance appraisal as a systematic, organized and formalized process of

evaluating individual employee's job related to their strengths and weaknesses with the view to providing feedback on which performance adjustment can be made.

Objectives of Performance Appraisal

The purposes for conducting performance appraisal of teachers vary widely. Many authors have postulated purposes for which performance appraisal is executed by institutions. McNamara (2000) posits that performance appraisal is conducted to achieve the following objectives: a) To maintain records in order to determine compensation packages, wage structure and salaries increases, among others. b) To identify the strengths and weaknesses of employees to place them on the right job. c) To maintain and assess the potentials in a person for further growth and development. d) To provide a feedback to employees regarding their performance and related status. e) To serve as the basis to influence working habits of the employees. f) To review and retain the promotional and other training programmes.

To Addison-Wesley (2001), performance appraisal serves as an administrative role by facilitating an orderly means of determining salary increases and other rewards, and by delegating authority and responsibility to the most capable individuals. Roberts (2003) also contends that performance appraisal is performed to identify and recompense employees' efforts and performance, spot key barriers and facilitation to work practice and identify professional development needs and opportunities.

Wesley (2004) also provides a litany of objectives that performance appraisal seeks to achieve: a) To review the performance of the employees over a given period of time. b) To judge the gap between the actual and the desired performance of an employee. c) To help the management in exercising organizational control. d) To help strengthen the relationship and communication between superior-subordinates and management-employees. e) To diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals so as to identify the training and development needs of the future. f) To provide feedback to the employees regarding their past performance. g) To provide information to assist in the other personal decisions in the organization. h) To provide clarity of the expectations and responsibilities of the functions to be performed by the employees. i) To judge the effectiveness of the other human resource functions of the organization such as recruitment, selection, training and development. k) To reduce the grievances of the employees.

To Khan (2007), the fundamental objective of performance appraisal is to facilitate management in carrying out its administrative decisions relating to promotions, firings, layoffs and pay increases. It is apparent from the above that performance appraisal has very vital intent and purposes for which teachers need to be aware of. Educational institutions need to carry out performance appraisal to unravel how well staff are performing in their roles and if they are fulfilling their obligations for which they were employed.

Perceptions of Performance Appraisal

In view of the vital roles of performance evaluation in employees and organisational improvement, this all-important function needs to be implemented effectively as poorly implemented system can have dire consequences for organisations, stakeholders, managers and employees (Pulakos, 2009). Employees may perceive the efficiency of performance appraisal differently which needs to be unearthed. Employee perceptions of the fairness or otherwise of their performance appraisals are useful in deciding the success of performance appraisal

systems (Erdogan, Kraimer & Liden, 2001). A study conducted by Monyatsi, Steyn and Kamper (2006) disclosed that perception is one of the major factors which influence outcomes of performance appraisal. Mullins (2007) contends that employees are more likely to be receptive and supportive of performance appraisal programme if they perceive the process as a useful source of feedback which helps to improve their performance.

Guest (1999) cited in Selden & Sowa (2011) argues that the impact of performance management depends upon the employees' perception of it. Empirical evidence shows that participation by employees in the performance management process was associated with higher perceived fairness, satisfaction and motivation to perform better (Aguinis, 2005). Employees react more favourably to performance appraisal when it satisfies their needs and includes an opportunity to state their position, when factors on which they are being evaluated are job related and the objectives and plans of the evaluation are discussed openly (Malongwe, 2005). In support of this, Boachie-Mensah and Siedu (2012) concluded that the success or otherwise of appraisal system is heavily dependent on the perception of employees about targets, outcomes and significance of performance appraisal results. The foregoing prompts the need for educational authorities to recognise the crucial role of teachers' perceptions on performance appraisal and to incorporate them into the analysis and construction of performance management in the educational system. The perception of secondary school teachers most of whom are graduates needed to be unearthed.

Attitude towards Performance Appraisal

The attitude that employees have towards performance appraisal is also an important issue in performance management and employee productivity. Thornton (1980) concluded after a scientific investigation that teachers' attitude needs to be considered when undertaking performance appraisal exercises. This is because employees with the same levels of competencies are probable to be many times more productive if they exhibit a positive attitude toward work and its evaluation (Chen & Francesco, 2003). Tornero and Tant (2010) also discovered that teachers with very poor attitude towards performance appraisal were willing to exit the service than to undergo evaluation exercise. Also, Ghamari, et al, (2012) found a significant relationship between staff attitude and performance evaluation. Employees really differ in attitude towards such an important exercise as performance appraisal. While some employees have positive attitude toward performance appraisal implementation, others may have negative attitudes. Cederblom and Pemerl (2002) found that supervisors and employees generally have ambivalent attitudes toward performance appraisal. It is worthwhile therefore for educational authorities to examine the sort of attitude that teachers have toward performance appraisal to help manage that human resource in the teaching service.

Concerns about Performance Appraisal Implementation

In undertaking performance appraisal, the parties involved may have some issues and concerns that need to be recognised and acted upon to make the system work well. Especially, employees may have concerns with the administration and use of the performance appraisal results. Raters' problems like leniency or harshness error, central tendency error, personal bias error and contrast error have been found to affect performance appraisal of employees. Leaders commit mistakes while evaluating employees and their performance. Some of these biases are perceived by employees as ways of unfairly interpreting their performances (Rasch, 2004). McNamara (2000) identifies eight common forms of biases, which are primacy effect, halo effect, horn effect, excessive stiffness or lenience, central tendency, personal biases, spillover

effect and recency effect. These lapses in the administration of performance appraisal could be concerns of staff.

Gabris and Mitchell (2000) have reported a disruptive bias in performance appraisal known as the Matthew effect. Studies have found that different administrators can give quite different ratings when rating the same issues (Gates Foundation, 2012). The recency effect is an outcome of the natural tendency for raters to judge an employee's performance based largely on his most recent actions rather than taking into account long-term patterns (McNamara, 2000). Compare InfoBase limited (2007) identified identification of evaluation criteria, creating evaluation instruments, lack of competence, errors in rating and evaluation such as stereotyping, bias, halo effects and resistance as challenges of performance appraisal. Watkins and Leigh (2012) contend that the weaknesses in a performance management system arise mainly because the performance management system is poorly designed. When appraisers are deemed as not having the right knowledge and skills to conduct performance appraisal, it may be a concern to appraisees. Basically, the challenges associated with the administration of performance appraisal in schools are concerns that appraisees may have about the exercise which worth research attention.

Appraisal results are to be given to appraisees to enhance their performance at work. Abbot (1976) contends that performance appraisal needs to be made available to appraisees for them to use to achieve personal and professional growth and development. So if the opposite happens it would be a concern to employees.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Sample

The research adopted descriptive survey design. The design was used as the research sought to ascertain what persists with respect to performance appraisal practices in senior high schools. The research gathered data from serving teachers of senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. They are teachers who have undergone appraisal system for a number of times. Having undergone performance appraisal before was a selection criterion as such teachers would be in a better position to provide credible data to answers the research questions.

Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the 480 teachers who partook in the research. The teachers were selected from 20 out of the 76 senior high schools in the region. In each of the selected school, half of the teachers on roll who met the inclusion criteria were randomly sampled to participate in the research. Out of the 480 cases, 456 turned out to be useable for analysis. This number constituted a high return rate of 95%.

Instrumentation

The research tool employed to gather data from the respondents was a questionnaire. The items on it were mainly close-ended. The items were organised under demographics, knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results, perception of performance appraisal, attitude towards performance appraisal and concerns about performance appraisal. The research tool was evaluated by two educational administration experts and a researcher. When we were satisfied with the face and content validity, the instrument was pre-tested. The Cronbach alpha reliability test yielded $r=0.83$. The data was analysed using Statistical Product and Service Solution v20.

RESULTS

The results presentation is in two parts. The first part of this section presents profile of the participants. The profile data of the participants that were considered in the research are sex, age and number of years of teaching. These demographics provide important background of the teachers who participated in the exercise. The profile data was analysed using frequencies and percentages and the results are presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Study Participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex		
Male	301	66
Female	155	34
Total	456	100
Age bracket		
20-29 years	119	26.1
30-39 years	258	56.6
Above 40 years	79	17.3
Total	456	100
Number of years of teaching		
Less than 10 years	193	42.4
Between 11-20 years	173	37.9
Above 20 years	90	19.7
Total	456	100

Table 1 shows that out of the 456 teachers who participated in the study, a whopping 301 representing 66% are males while only about a third (34%) are females. This implies that there is some degree of gender imbalance at the staffing of the secondary schools. There is a very high representation of males in the staff at the secondary level of education in the region.

Table 1 also portrays that the majority of the teachers were between 30 and 39 years followed by those between 20 and 39 years. The results imply that the teachers at that level of education in the region are relatively young and with the right performance appraisal practices, their potentials could be unearthed and developed for the progress of the teaching service.

Table 1 further depicts that most of the teachers (173 and 90) representing 57/6% have had more than a decade experience in teaching. This implies that most of the teachers have been in the service for long to have a good understanding of performance appraisal and might be capable of providing requisite information about their experience with the exercise.

The second part of this section presents outcomes of the analysis of the data which answered the research questions namely knowledge on uses of performance appraisal, perception of performance appraisal, attitude towards performance appraisal and concerns about performance appraisal. The items which measured the constructs were analysed using descriptive statistics. The scale ranged 1 – 4 with 1 representing Strongly Disagree, 2 denoting Disagree, 3 for Agree and 4 representing Strongly Agree. The mid-point of the scale is a score of 2.5, which is the mean of determination. Any score below 2.5 denotes participants' disagreement with the statement while scores above 2.5 signifies participants' agreement with the statement. The mean scores and standard deviations obtained about the statements on the various research questions are presented consecutively in Tables 2 to 5.

The study sought to ascertain participants' knowledge on objectives for conducting performance appraisal in the education service. The outcome of the analysis of items on the uses of performance appraisal results is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' Knowledge on Uses of Performance Appraisal Results

Statement	Mean	S D
Authorities rely on performance appraisal for rewards and punishment	2.2171	.70712
Performance appraisal is used to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses	2.0680	.73064
Performance appraisal results are used for professional development of teachers	2.1776	.66731
Performance appraisal is used for administrative purposes	2.1360	.59590
Performance appraisal results are used for promotions	2.4386	.83900
Mean of means	2.2746	

The results in table 2 show that the mean scores on teachers' knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal ranged from 2.2 to 2.4, which fall below the mean of determination. The high mean scores are on the following: performance appraisal results are used for promotion purposes (2.4), performance appraisal is used for rewards and punishment (2.2) and performance appraisal results are used for professional development of teachers. The results therefore mean that the participants did not have good knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results in the teaching service. This stems from the fact that the mean of means (2.2) is less than the mean of determination (2.5). The participants seemed to know that performance appraisal is used only for promotion purposes. Of all the items on uses of performance appraisal, that is the only one which had a mean very close to the mean of determination.

The study also sought to examine teachers' perception of performance appraisal which has been undertaken periodically in the educational system. The result of the analysis is shown table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' Perception of Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal System

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance appraisal measures what it intends to	2.0241	.54819
Performance appraisal process relates teachers' performance	2.2193	.75603
Performance appraisal process is fair to all teachers	2.1382	.70211
Feedback of performance appraisal reflects teachers' performance	2.0329	.61930
Feedback of performance appraisal is always constructive	2.0022	.74273
Mean of means	2.0833	

The results in table 3 show that the participants did not agree that performance appraisal measures what it intends to (2.02), performance appraisal process relates teachers' performance (2.2), performance appraisal process is fair to all teachers (2.1), feedback of performance appraisal reflects teachers' performance (2.03) and feedback of performance appraisal is always constructive (2.00). The mean scores of all the items fall below 2.5, which demonstrate that the teachers did not have a good perception about performance appraisal. The finding is consistent with that of Odhaimbo (2005) and Riches (2007) whose studies found that teachers had a negative perception of performance appraisal.

Attitude of teachers toward performance appraisal was also measured in the study. The outcome of the analysis is displayed in table 3.

Table 4: Teachers' Attitude towards Performance Appraisal Implementation

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I subject myself to appraisal willingly	2.0526	.58692
I provide relevant information during performance appraisal	2.0789	.75179
I do return filled appraisal forms to authorities	1.9803	.70605
I respect performance appraisal decisions by authorities	2.0154	.56431
I take part in discussion of appraisal feedback	2.0702	.73193
Mean of means	2.0394	

The results in the table 3 depict that the mean scores of teachers' attitude towards performance appraisal range between 1.9 and 2.07. The mean scores of all the items fall below the mean of determination (2.6), which mean that the teachers did not agree to any of the positive statements on attitude towards performance appraisal. This insinuates that the teachers did not have favourable attitude towards performance appraisal. The findings confirm that of Saljooghi and Saleli (2016). which showed that the employees had a negative attitude towards performance appraisal conducted in their institution.

The study further sought to ascertain concerns that the teachers have about performance appraisal in the teaching service. As teachers who had gone through the exercise severally, it was deemed appropriate to ascertain concerns they may have which have the potency to contribute to improving the system if addressed. The result of the analysis of participants' concerns about performance appraisal is shown the table 4.

Table 5: Teachers' Concerns about PA Implementation

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of a clear policy on performance appraisal by GES	2.6513	.67541
Lack of commitment by leaders in handling performance appraisal	2.8070	.81067
Inadequate knowledge to perform performance appraisal by appraisers	2.7654	.72913
Inadequate resources to carry out performance appraisal	2.8618	.66016
Non-accountability of performance appraisal by authorities	2.9232	.69585
Mean of means	2.8017	

The results presented in the table 4 demonstrate that the mean scores of teachers' concerns about performance appraisal ranged from 2.6 to 2.9. The results imply that all the items had scores above 2.5, which is the mean of determination. The participants overwhelmingly agreed to all the concerns about performance appraisal stated. The teachers had concerns that there is lack of a clear policy on performance appraisal by GES (2.6), lack of commitment by leaders in handling performance appraisal (2.8), inadequate knowledge to perform appraisal by appraisers (2.7), lack of commitment by leaders in handling performance appraisal (2.8) and non-accountability of performance appraisal by authorities (2.9). As the mean scores for all the items are above 2.5, the teachers had concerns about performance appraisal practices in the education service.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The keen interest in performance appraisal practices in educational systems of nations has precipitated studies into various aspects of it. In the secondary sub-sector of the education, much had been done and much more needed to be done to engender a comprehensive understanding of it. This study was conducted on some aspects of performance appraisal which had received little attention. The study disclosed that the teachers had little knowledge on the uses of performance appraisal results. They also did not have a good perception of it and had unfavourable attitude towards its implementation. The study also unveiled concerns that the participants had about performance appraisal, which may have accounted for their negative perception of performance appraisal and unfavourable attitude towards its implementation.

The results of the study portray a worrying situation which needs to be addressed by the education authority in the country. The situation calls for a relook and re-engineering of the appraisal system in order to serve its purpose. It needs to be emphasised that to have a good performance appraisal to elicit positive perception and favourable attitude, the concerns of the teachers need to be addressed by authorities of GES. Particularly, there should be regular feedback of performance appraisal to teachers to enable them know their strengths and weaknesses. Again, performance appraisal results need to be discussed with appraisees for them to know more about their performance. This would make them seek for continuous improvement in the delivery of their responsibilities. It would also motivate them to give off their best. Not all, training needs to be organised for head masters and officials involved in performance appraisal to improve on their competence in the conduct of the exercise. Finally, GES needs to enunciate a policy, which should be made known to all staff of the service. Such a policy would guide the conduct of performance appraisal in the service. It would also help to improve appraisal practices to achieve the objectives.

The study has contributed to broadening understanding on performance appraisal practices by ascertaining teachers' knowledge on uses of performance results, attitude towards performance appraisal and concerns that when addressed would help to improve the effectiveness and vibrancy of this all-important human resource activity in the teaching service. The study has also added to literature on human resource management.

Besides, the study has provided basis for further research in the following areas:

- i) Since the study gathered data on performance appraisal through a questionnaire, the participants did not have the opportunity to provide additional data beyond what was provided on the instrument. Future research could use semi-structured and/or unstructured interview to elicit for both anticipated and unanticipated data from participants. Open ended data collection methods would generate comprehensive data on performance appraisal practices in the second cycle educational institutions.
- ii) The study was conducted in one out of the existing ten regions of Ghana. So the study could be replicated in all the regions to have a broader picture on the issues studied. Such a study would help stakeholders in education to know the concerns of teachers in the entire country to inform policy and practice. For an effective performance appraisal to be experienced, there is the need to know how appraisees perceive the appraisal process, their attitude towards it and the concerns they have about the practice.

iii) The study solicited perspectives of only appraisees on the research problem. The appraisers, on the other hand, may have concerns patterning to performance appraisal process in the education service. It is, therefore, imperative for further studies to be conducted to solicit the concerns of appraisers to help improve performance appraisal administration in the service.

It is hoped that if the afore mentioned suggestions are addressed, there will be an effective and vibrant performance appraisal in the education system, which can help to improve the human resource capacity of the schools.

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