TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES IN ATTAINMENT OF GLOBAL COMPETENCIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

The attainment of global competencies education (GCE) is increasingly being recognized as essential for preparing students to navigate the complexities of the 21st century. However, the realization of this goal is largely dependent on teacher quality, which encompasses both professional expertise and personal attributes. This paper used a literature review method to examine the role of teachers in fostering global competencies, the significance of sustainable development goal 4 (SDG 4) in education, the concept of quality teaching, and the challenges inhibiting the effective implementation of global competencies education. The discussion highlighted that high-quality teachers possess subject mastery, pedagogical competence, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and ethical conduct—all of which are crucial in shaping globally competent learners. Additionally, SDG 4 underscores the need for inclusive and equitable quality education, which can only be achieved through sustained investment in teacher training and professional development. However, teacher shortages, resistance to change, lack of professional development opportunities, and inadequate resources continue to pose challenges to the realization of global competencies education. This paper was theoretically anchored on Charles Darwin's Evolutionary Theory (1859), which emphasizes adaptation as a key survival strategy. In the educational context, teachers must continuously adapt to emerging pedagogical trends, technological advancements, and global challenges to remain effective. The Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) framework was also examined as a model for enhancing teacher preparedness and professional competence, particularly in developing climes. The study concluded that teacher quality is a fundamental determinant of the successful attainment of global competencies education. Without well-trained, innovative, and adaptable teachers, educational policies aimed at fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, cross-cultural collaboration, and other 21st century skills, will remain ineffective. Therefore, governments and educational institutions must prioritize teacher education, professional development, and capacity building as key strategies for improving global education standards.

Keywords: Teacher quality, global competencies education, sustainable development goal 4, 21^{st} -century skills, effective education, teacher professional development.



Introduction

The growing interconnection of economies, cultures, and technologies is fast transforming the educational landscape globally. Teachers are central to this transformation as they play a key role in preparing students for the challenges of a globalized, technology-driven world. As the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) calls for inclusive and equitable quality education by 2030, it becomes essential for education systems worldwide and Nigeria's in particular to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet these ambitious goals. However, the achievement of global competencies is not without its challenges, particularly in the context of teacher training, policy implementation, and infrastructure limitations (UN, 2015). This paper examined the professional and personal qualities of teachers and how they contribute to achieving global competencies education. It is important at this stage to examine the meaning of education and qualities expected of a good teacher in achieving the global competencies education.

What is Education?

Education has long been associated with the process of acquiring and transmitting from generation to generation, knowledge, skills, values, orientations, attitudes and cultures necessary for the growth and development of individuals and the society at large (Idika, 2023). Through the process of education, an individual develops intellectually, socially and emotionally. The process of education offers the individual an opportunity to go through trainings and instructions that equip him with the knowledge, skills and all it takes to be empowered with the ability to contribute significantly his full potentials to the necessities and aspirations of his society. It serves therefore, as a foundation for personal growth and development, economic empowerment and a tool for societal progress (John Dewey, 1938), and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2014). Ezenwa (2012) noted the system of education in Nigeria to be full of flaws being managed in an environment that is bedeviled by negative vices; quality education according to the author however, remains a tool with which the system can be rebranded and made to address the need of the Nigerian society.

According to Idika and Otu (2023), education has become an instrument for excellently achieving sustainable national development and global competitiveness. Accordingly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) defined education as a human right and a tool for sustainable development, emphasizing its role in fostering equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning. It emphasized the stand of the global education policies, such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which should focus on the need for inclusive and equitable quality education address social to inequalities and promote lifelong learning opportunities. This in essence underscores the call for all education types or levels to emerge in their role of preparing and empowering individuals for life and effective performance in the competitive global economy.

Education can be categorized into three main types: i). Formal Education -Structured learning that occurs in schools, colleges, and universities, following a defined curriculum (Schunk, 2020; Idika and Otu, 2023). ii). Non-formal Education - Organized learning outside the formal system, such as vocational training and adult literacy programs (Coombs and Ahmed, 1974; Idika and Otu, 2023). iii). Informal Education -Learning acquired through life experiences, interactions, and self-directed exploration (Rogers, 2004). Each type of education plays a critical role in equipping learners with the skills and knowledge needed for active participation in the global arena. And in all of these, the quality teacher still has a pivotal role to play in achieving the competencies education, ultimately leading an individual towards social and economic development. To this end, education serves as a driver of economic mobility and social transformation. Research shows that higher levels of education can lead to increased income, health greater improved and civic engagement (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2012).

In the global context, education goes beyond rote learning to emphasize creativity, problem-solving, collaboration. critical thinking, adaptability (Idika, Ovat, Achigbe and Udumo, 2015). A good teacher in this context is one who not only excels in the knowledge of the subject matter but also possesses qualities that allow him to be effective in 21st century classrooms. These qualities are essential for fostering the above desired skills of problem-solving and critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity-skills needed for students to succeed in a rapidly changing world (Idika, et al, 2015). These key attributes include; i). Pedagogical expertise: teachers must be equipped with sound pedagogical strategies that prioritize studentcentered learning, allowing students to become active participants in their education; create adequate exposure and experience in principles and practice of education and in the art of teaching as an aid to meaningful learning (Shulman, 1987; Idika et al., 2015:68). ii). Technological proficiency: given the rise of digital learning tools and online education, teachers must be proficient in integrating technology into their teaching practice to enhance student engagement and collaboration (Mishra and Koehler, 2006; Idika, Orji, Bichene and Oke, 2022). iii). Cultural competence: teachers should possess the ability to foster an inclusive environment that respects diverse cultural backgrounds and encourages global citizenship (Banks, 2009; Idika, 2023). iv). Emotional intelligence: effective classroom management, student support, and creating a positive learning atmosphere depend on the teacher's ability to recognize and manage their emotions and those of their students (Goleman, 1995; Ajake, Anakwue and Okon, 2025). v). Commitment to lifelong learning: teachers should continuously engage in professional development to adapt to new pedagogical approaches and meet the evolving needs of diverse students (Guskey, 2002; Idika and Orji, 2017).

Idika et al (2015) noted other qualities on which the competency of a teacher in terms of professional capacity are anchored to include; skill possession: teachers should possess skills for facilitating the development manipulative of skills. laboratory management techniques and workshop practices in areas where these are applicable in their students: Behaviour motivation: teachers should model appropriate behaviour in terms of dressing, and reaction to stimuli in the normal course of interaction with the students with a view to stimulating interest in them; Resourcefulness: Resourcefulness is part of teachers' personal qualities, should facilitate in the students the improvision of relevant teaching materials (aids), some measure of discovery. maintenance or repairs of minor faults in the equipment provided for teaching and learning. With these skills, students can expectedly make smooth transition to the society to handle similar tasks requiring same or even higher order skills.

Teachers' personal qualities hugely complement their professional competencies in ensuring that they are not just subject matter experts but also mentors who inspire their students to thrive in the globalized world. Summarily, Idika et al (2015) noted that the ability of a teacher to think beyond local perspectives (global mindset), maintain respect for deep different cultural backgrounds (intercultural sensitivity and inclusivity), show willingness to think and experiment with new innovatively pedagogies in order to make education relevant, exhibit technological agility, empathy and emotional intelligence, resilience and growth mindset, ethical and moral integrity, ability to connect and work with others to bring diverse perspectives into the classroom (collaboration and global networking), adaptability and flexibility, and critical reflection, including regular selfevaluation and commitment to professional self-improvement in a bid to ensure that teaching practices and student learning remain both relevant and effective, are what constitute teacher personal qualities that must combine with his profession as the custodian of knowledge of his subject matter for attainment of global competencies education.

Exploring the concept of sustainable development goal 4 (SDG4) and its educational implications have become necessary in this paper which aimed to establish the need for quality teaching in the context of global competencies education. SDG 4 aims to ensure that everyone has access to inclusive and equitable quality education. This goal is central to achieving the global competencies required for success in the 21st century. The key educational targets of SDG4 include: i). Universal and equitable access to education: ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to primary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2020). ii). Promoting lifelong learning: encouraging students to engage in continuous learning throughout their lives to relevant in a knowledge-based remain (OECD. 2021). iii). Global economy citizenship: incorporating values of sustainability, peace, and ethical leadership into school curricula to foster students' understanding of their role as global citizens (UNESCO, 2014; 2020). iv). Quality teacher education: enhancing teacher training programs to equip them with the skills to global competencies implement and contribute to sustainable educational practices (OECD, 2021). It is important to emphasize that teachers undoubtedly are at the core of achieving SDG4, as their competence directly impacts educational quality and students' ability to contribute meaningfully to the various communities where they find themselves and the society at large. There is therefore, need for this paper to also highlight what quality teaching entails having explored the attributes of quality/effective teacher in global competencies education.

What is quality teaching?

Quality teaching refers to the ability of teachers to facilitate engaged learning that results in positive student outcomes. It is synonymous with effectiveness in teaching in this paper. Teachers here, are not only subject matter experts as established earlier on in the paper, but also skilled in fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, adaptability, and other 21st century skills in their students. Effective teaching involves: i) Differentiated instruction: tailoring lessons to meet the diverse learning needs of students (Hattie, 2009; Idika, 2021). ii) Formative assessment: regular feedback on students' progress to adjust instruction and support individualized learning (Darling-Hammond, 2021; Idika, 2021). iii) Student-centered pedagogy: engaging students in learning that is relevant, experiential, and hands-on (Idika and Orji, 2017). A quality teacher is very apt in implementing educational policies such as; Universal Basic Education (UBE), SDG4, Education for All (EFA) by UNESCO, National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria, Teacher Education Policy (TESSA), No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, USA), Education 2030, and Inclusive OECD Education Policy, among others.

The teacher as a critical resource for implementing educational policies cannot be over emphasized. The quality teacher is the critical resource in translating most educational policies into effective classroom practices. An effective translation undoubtedly yields a positive outcome of learning. Research has consistently shown that: Teachers' professional development directly correlates with improved student (Darling-Hammond, outcomes 2021). Effective implementation of educational reforms relies heavily on how teachers understand, adopt, and apply new policies within their classroom settings (Fullan, 2007). So much can be said about a quality teacher in enhancing the outcome of learning among students in global competencies education. However, it is important to fully understand the concept of global competencies education at this point of the paper being a critical concept.

The concept of global competencies education and 21st-century learning:

Global competencies education (GCE) refers to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students need to thrive in a globalized world. This includes the ability to: collaborate across cultures and work in international teams, communicate effectively in different languages and formats, solve complex, realworld problems through critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability (Idika et al., 21st-century 2015). In а learning environment, education systems must prioritize skills development over traditional rote memorization, as these skills are what students need to navigate an increasingly interconnected and competitive world (OECD, 2018). Additionally, the rationale behind teacher quality in global competencies needs to be explored.

It has been made clear from earlier discussion in the paper that teacher quality is a cornerstone of quality education in any nation. This is equally true of global competencies education because teachers are the ones directly responsible for developing students' competencies. A teacher's ability to foster a learning environment where students can practice and acquire the skills necessary for success in the 21st century is essential to ensuring the attainment of global competencies. By improving teacher quality therefore, educational systems can: i) Enhance the teaching of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, communication skills, digital global emotional literacy, awareness, intelligence, adaptability and resilience. leadership and initiative, and ethical reasoning and citizenship. ii) Align curricular with global educational demands, preparing students for international challenges, by practically integrating the above 21st-century skills into lessons and encourage more problem solving activities, real-world project and technology-driven learning; by infusing global competencies education through teaching cross cultural communication, global citizenship and sustainability as part of curriculum content; by adopting flexible and inclusive teaching strategies as a shift from traditional rote learning to student-centered, inquiry-based and competency-based education; by leveraging technology and digital learning through the use of e-learning platforms, virtual classrooms and AI-powered educational tools; and by aligning teaching sustainable goal 4 (SDG4); with bv encouraging inter-disciplinary, collaborative, and project-based learning activities; by updating assessment methods through going beyond traditional exams to performancebased assessments, portfolio evaluations, real world problem-solving tasks, self-assessment and peer evaluation in order to develop selfdirected learning among students. Finally global competencies education involves strengthening professional development by encouraging teachers to engage in continuous learning, workshops, exchange programs and collaboration with global networks to share best practices. However, preparing teachers and hence. the students for global competencies education is faced with challenges which are within the scope of this paper to explore.

Challenges to attaining global competencies education:

Challenges faced in achieving global competencies education are; i). Teacher preparation: Many teachers are undertrained in global competencies, technology integration, and innovative pedagogical (Darling-Hammond, 2021). ii). practices Resistant educational systems: The persistence of traditional educational practices and rigid curricula that emphasize rote learning rather than the development of skills hampers the adoption of new approaches (Fullan, 2007). iii). Resource constraints: Many schools, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, lack the necessary technological infrastructure and learning materials to implement innovative teaching practices (Moon, 2019; Idika et al., 2022). Moreso, it is important to note that government and political considerations fundamentally and significantly influence the attainment of global competencies education especially as teachers cannot be isolated from the policies that influence both their professional practices and the students. Effective policy-making, adequate funding, and a commitment to progressive educational reforms would facilitate teachers' role and these have been strongly advocated as necessary for equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in a globally interconnected world (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2017; Schleicher, 2018).

Theoretical framework

Evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin (1859) and TESSA framework (2005)

Darwin's theory of evolution suggests that species must adapt to survive. This concept is analogous to the need for educational systems to evolve in response to global challenges. Significantly, teachers must be adaptable, constantly refining their methods and embracing new technologies and pedagogical trends to ensure students' success in a changing world (Schleicher, 2018). The curriculum basically too, needs constant revisions to embrace the changing realities of the dynamic society (Idika et al., 2022).

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) framework (2005) by the Open University, UK in collaboration with a consortium of African and international institutions, provided another basis for this research. The TESSA is an educational initiative that provides open educational resources (OERs) to support the training and professional development of teachers across sub-Saharan Africa. It focuses on improving teacher quality, pedagogy, and studentcentered learning. The TESSA framework therefore, advocates for active learning strategies, collaborative teacher training, and contextualized teaching methods to prepare teachers for effective global competencies implementation. education (GCE) Its

emphasis on the need for teacher professional development through locally relevant, scalable models that align with global standards according to Moon (2019), makes it relevant to this paper.

Empirical review

This empirical review focused on research studies and findings related to teacher professional and personal qualities, global competencies education (GCE), and the challenges surrounding the attainment of SDG 4 (quality education). The studies provided insight into the role of teachers in fostering 21st-century skills (which align with global competencies), the impact of teacher quality, and the challenges faced in achieving global competencies education particularly in the developing nations.

Teacher quality and student outcomes

Several studies have highlighted the significant relationship between teacher quality and student outcomes in both developed and developing countries. Research by Darling-Hammond (1997; 2021) emphasized that teachers who possess strong pedagogical skills, deep subject matter knowledge, and the ability to engage students meaningfully lead to higher student achievement. Similarly, recent researches have continued to affirm the positive relationship between teacher quality and student learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Klassen and Klim (2024) found that students with access to highly qualified teachers tend to achieve at higher rates, irrespective of other factors. The study also highlighted three lines of teaching quality research as professional standards, valueadded measures, and student evaluation. Also. A study by Hamzah, Hamzah and Zulkifli (2023) emphasized that teachers' abilities as self-regulated learners and the capacity for promoting self-regulated learning which they also possess are crucial for effective nurturing of metacognitive skills in students. In their concept paper, Hamzah et al (2023) suggested that incorporating metacognitive elements in self-regulated learning can enhance students'

cognitive abilities, improve pedagogical knowledge and teaching efficiency.

In the same vein, a study in large scale assessments in education which was carried out by Gorges and Klieme (2022) established both a theoretical and empirical support for the impact of teacher and instructional quality on student achievement. The study made use of path analytical technique to demonstrate that higher teacher quality positively influences students' reading achievement, confidence in reading, and enjoyment of reading.

In their separate studies, Hattie (2009) and Okri and Idika (2017) identified teacher effectiveness as a significant factor in realizing educational goals. Hattie found this to be the most significant in-school factor influencing student learning outcomes. surpassing other variables such as class size and school resources. Okri and Idika found particularly true that higher teacher effectiveness in the strategies for handling Mathematics is a fundamental tool with which educational policies and programs of SDGs in Nigeria and Calabar Education Zone in particular can be achieved. Jennings and Greenberg (2009), Ajake, Anakwue and Okon (2025) reinforced the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence in creating positive classroom environments, which directly impacts student behavior and learning engagement.

Teacher training and global competencies

The role of teacher training programs in promoting global competencies has been a central focus of recent studies. Research by Idika et al (2015), Schleicher (2018), Orji, Idika and Ekwukoma (2022) have suggested that educational systems particularly higher education, worldwide must move beyond traditional approaches and focus on preparing teachers to teach 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy and adaptability etc.

Studies by OECD (2021), Darling-Hammond (2021), Orji et al (2022) and Ndem, Idika, Ategwu and Kenn-Aklah (2023) indicated too, that high-quality teacher preparation, including professional development programs, is crucial for teachers effectively incorporate global to competencies into their teaching practices. In their empirical study, Ndem et al (2023) found a high positive correlation between teachers' capacity building and their teaching effectiveness in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State. The study recommended among others that teachers should avail themselves the opportunity to attend seminars, workshops government conferences. and and commitment to ensure support and create adequate opportunities for teachers to undertake these quality training programmes.

Challenges to achieving global competencies education

Several challenges hinder the widespread implementation of global competencies education (GCE), especially in developing countries. Moon's (2012;2019) comprehensive analysis of the global challenges in teacher education centered on innovative approaches to improve educational outcomes to global standard. This followed from Moon's earlier identification of key challenges in teacher education which include; a critical shortage of well-qualified teachers, hindering the delivery of quality education. He also highlighted the disconnect between policy structures and the realities of global pressures, making effective teacher training difficult. Additionally, he pointed to between theoretical the persistent gap knowledge and practical teaching skills, which weakens teacher preparedness. Lastly, Moon emphasized the difficulty of scaling teacher education in densely populated nations like Nigerian, India, where rapid student population growth outpaces training capacity.

Idika, Oyong, Asor and Kebbi (2012), Orji et al (2022) identified the lack of adequate resources, such as technology, learning materials, and qualified trainers, as a significant barrier. Aware that the major challenge of the 21st century globalization would be the inability by many developing nations' higher educational institutions to meet up with the knowledge-driven world, Idika et al (2012), had long emphasized elearning innovation as a means of enhancing and extending the educational experiences of many Nigerian learners particularly through the medium of ICT which can sufficiently position the nation for sustainable development and global competitiveness. Fullan (2007) further noted that the resistance change within educational systems, to particularly those with long-standing traditional approaches, can make it difficult to implement innovative educational reforms. Furthermore, UNESCO (2020) pointed out that many teachers struggle with the digital where disparities in access divide, to technology limit the capacity to teach digital skills effectively. This reaffirms the need for emphasis on a discussion of this nature which can hasten the facilitating of provision of relevant technology for training and development of teachers in order to achieve teacher quality and educational objectives in Nigeria.

Another major challenge is the alignment of national curricula with the demands of global competencies education. OECD (2018) stressed the need for curricula to include competencies related to global citizenship and sustainability, which are often underrepresented in traditional school systems. Guskey (2002), Odigwe and Owan (2019) noted that policy gaps and bureaucratic hurdles often slow down the process of education reforms, especially in underdeveloped countries and those with limited resources, lack of access and exclusion. Idika (2023) noted that research literatures have substantially revealed the nature of the prevailing poor learning environment in Nigeria as a hindrance to achieving the educational policies particularly the SDG4's vision of equality, access and inclusion as vital components of quality education. Hence, the reverse has remained the feature of education in Nigeria as exemplified by the many challenges facing the system, with recent search still showing much gap in the area of implementation of recommended research studies. For instance, some recent studies have reported the inability of the system to encourage quality teaching and learning by financing education in general and study facilities in particular. Ekaette, Owan, and Agbor (2019), Odigwe Owan (2019)reported and of the government's allocations of funds to the education sector which have been grossly insufficient over the years. This lack has led to a shortage of resources, limited access to quality education, and inadequate salaries for teachers. Quality education depends on quality teachers.

Undoubtedly, teachers are key to the realization of educational aims and objectives irrespective of the name they are called, teacher, instructor, whether. lecturer. facilitator, professor, supervisor, inspector, coach, among other suitable names, and in whatever educational level they may exist. The position of the teacher is vital in the 21st century where globalization has influenced what is to be taught and how it should be presented to the learners. This again underscores the need to improve on teacher quality to what the global competent teacher has today. This is where innovative pedagogies become the way forward to attaining desired global competencies education. Vygotsky's (1978) perspective greatly supported the idea that teacher quality, both professional and personal is crucial in helping students acquire global competencies through guided learning experiences.

Impact of cultural competence in teacher education

An increasing body of literature importance of cultural emphasizes the competence in teaching, particularly in competencies. promoting global Banks (2009), Idika (2023) argued that teachers must recognize the diversity of their students' cultural backgrounds and create inclusive environments that respect these differences. Empirical studies by OECD (2018)highlighted that teachers who integrate diverse perspectives and encourage global

citizenship in their teaching practices are more likely to produce students who are wellequipped to navigate a globalized world. Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2021) advocated for professional development programs that focus on culturally responsive teaching, ensuring that teachers are prepared to engage with students from diverse backgrounds.

Technological integration in teacher training

The integration of technology into teacher training programs has become essential for preparing them to teach in the 21st century. Over two decades ago, Mishra and Koehler (2006) emphasized that teachers must be skilled in technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) to effectively incorporate digital tools into their teaching. Recent studies by Hattie (2009), OECD (2021), and Idika et al (2025) still show that technology, when used appropriately, can enhance student engagement, support personalized learning, and facilitate collaboration across cultures. However, as Moon (2019), Orji et al (2022), and Idika et al (2022; 2025) note, many developing countries still face challenges in integrating technology due majorly to a lack of infrastructure, teacher training, and resources. For Idika et al (2022), as far as technological integration to instruction is concerned, many institutions and countries in LDCs are still afar of. A lot therefore, needs to be done to improve the present position of underachieving nations to realistically attain global standards in education.

Summary

This research has used literature review method to systematically highlight key studies and findings as well as theoretical supports that underline the importance of teacher quality and the challenges in achieving global competencies education. It has outlined the various skills which are inherent in quality global teacher, and emphasized how the qualities both personal and professional can be complemented towards the attainment of global competencies education. The meaning of major concepts including education, SDG4, and its connection as symbolic of quality education have also been highlighted. The reviews underscore the need for systemic changes in teacher education, curricular reform, and policy implementation to address the challenges found and ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to foster global competencies in their students particularly in the developing countries.

Conclusion

Teachers play a pivotal role in the attainment of global competencies education especially quality teachers. Their professional expertise personal attributes determine and the effectiveness of education in preparing students for a dynamic, interconnected world. However, challenges such as inadequate training and resources, resistance to change, and policy gaps must be addressed. A strategic focus by the education systems on teacher quality, professional development, technological tools provision, curricular reforms, and policy alignment is essential for achieving SDG 4 and fostering globally competent learners.

Recommendations

- Strengthening teacher training programs to equip them with the skills needed for 21st-century classroom.
- Effective and continuous curricula reformation to prioritize 21st-century skills.
- Investing in educational technology to enhance student engagement and facilitate global learning experiences.
- By addressing these recommendations, education systems will be better positioned to prepare students for global challenges and enable teachers to foster the skills necessary for 21st-century success.

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