

# Effectiveness on the Marketing Strategies for Higher Education Institutions in Mindanao

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This study aims to identify the most suitable marketing strategies utilized by higher education institutions. Specifically, it seeks to: (a) Analyze the marketing system of Initao College based on market segmentation, enrollment trends, current student population, institutional vision, mission, goals, and academic programs. (b) Examine the college's organizational environment, focusing on administrative practices, institutional characteristics, and sociopsychological factors. (c) Assess the effectiveness of the college's educational marketing strategies in terms of the marketing mix, brand perception, and market positioning. (d) Determine the correlation between marketing practices and key institutional factors, including the college's profile, mission, vision, goals, academic programs, and organizational environment. (e) Identify specific variables, individually or in combination, that influence the marketing strategies of Initao College. (f) Identify challenges encountered by the institution in implementing its marketing strategies. This study employs a descriptive-correlational and causal research design, utilizing purposive sampling. Findings reveal that outdoor advertising is the most commonly used marketing practice, contributing significantly to various institutional aspects. The overall institutional profile is well-established, supporting student attraction and retention efforts. The college demonstrates a dynamic organizational environment through its administrative practices. Additionally, while the local government consistently supports the institution, its marketing strategies appear to have no significant impact on the college's autonomy in attracting students.



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### INTRODUCTION

Modern higher education institutions must understand market conditions to align their offerings with current demands and develop effective marketing strategies. This involves evaluating existing services, identifying opportunities, analyzing competitors, and positioning themselves strategically. Market restructuring in higher education is a natural response to economic shifts and competitive pressures, requiring continuous monitoring and adaptation to enhance service quality and user satisfaction. Institutions must integrate marketing into governance processes, aligning curriculum with industry needs and leveraging the marketing mix to gain a competitive edge (Chan, 2016; Gajic, 2019). In this regard, Initao College's marketing goals: (1) Provide high-quality education and competency-based training. Strengthen partnerships with academic institutions, businesses, and the tourism sector; (2) Promote entrepreneurship in agricultural products and services; (3) Produce skilled, responsible professionals contributing to economic growth; (4) Develop proactive leaders and environmental advocates; and (5) Uphold gender-responsive curriculum, research, and community programs.

Higher education institutions exist in various forms, including four-year and two-year programs, offering students multiple options. To attract students, institutions must effectively communicate their mission and values through marketing, especially as declining enrollments and reduced government funding necessitate active recruitment efforts. Despite skepticism from administrators and faculty, marketing helps institutions navigate change, complexity, and competition. Although extensive research exists on marketing strategies for four-year institutions, studies on marketing implementation and effectiveness in other higher education settings remain limited. This study examines the marketing system of Initao College, analyzing its profile, organizational environment, and educational marketing strategies. It also explores correlations between marketing practices and institutional factors, identifies key influences on marketing strategies, and assesses challenges faced by the college in its marketing efforts. Findings highlight the significant role of outdoor advertising in attracting students and strengthening institutional presence.

Marketing has historically developed sporadically rather than systematically, with limited academic focus until the early 20th century (Hartley, 1985). Early works on marketing evolution, such as Bartel's *History of Marketing Thought* (1979), primarily examined market-driven philosophies and key figures. Specialized studies on retailing and advertising, like Mahoney's *The Great Merchants* (1959) and Presbrey's *History and Development of Advertising* (1929), provided insights into industry growth but lacked theoretical depth. Strategic thinking traces back to ancient figures like Sun Tzu (*The Art of War*, 400 BC) and Machiavelli (*The Prince*, 1513). In the 20th century, marketing strategy became more structured through influential works such as Chandler's *Strategy and Structure* (1962), Ansoff's *Corporate Strategy* (1965), and Porter's *Competitive Strategy* (1980). Later contributions, including Mintzberg's *Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (1994) and De Geus's *The Living Company* (1997), further refined strategic thought, with recent developments adapting to technology and modern business environments (Young, 2015). Some of the challenges could be related to environmental education and literacy (Magdugo et al., 2016; Baroro et al., 206), waste management, (Balaba et al., 2024) and even drop-out rates and children in conflict with the laws (Fabre et al., 2015; Fabre et al., 2016).

In higher education, services marketing has been emphasized (Mazzarol, 1998; Nicholls et al., 1995; Enache, 2011; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Education services are characterized as perishable, heterogeneous, inseparable, and intangible, posing challenges for standardization, storage, and quality control. Effective marketing strategies must address these issues while maintaining institutional credibility and student engagement. The study draws on Kotler's (1989) *Marketing Mix* theory, defining the four key variables—product, price, place, and promotion—essential for influencing consumer demand. McCarthy (1960) further refined this framework, making it a foundational model for both business-to-consumer and business-to-business marketing. While primarily used for tangible goods, the marketing mix also applies to service-oriented sectors, including higher education.

Additionally, Relationship Marketing (RM) theory emphasizes emotional and strategic exchanges between institutions and their stakeholders (Gupta & Sahu, 2012; Østergaard & Fitchett, 2012). RM theory helps businesses foster customer loyalty and competitive advantages through sustained relationships

(Catoiu & Tichindelean, 2012). Within higher education, these marketing approaches guide institutions in addressing market demands, enhancing student satisfaction, and positioning themselves effectively in a competitive academic landscape.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive correlational and causal research design to analyze the marketing strategies of Initao College. Descriptive correlational research was used to gather observations through questionnaires, while causal research helped investigate the factors influencing the college's marketing approach. The research was conducted at Initao College, located in the municipality of Initao, Misamis Oriental, a third-class municipality with a population of 32,370. Participants included all Initao College leaders, 76 fourth-year BSBA students, and 24 faculty and staff, selected through purposive random sampling.

A Likert-scale-based questionnaire (adapted from Stewart, 2007) was developed to collect data on: (1) Initao College's profile (market segmentation, enrollment history, population, vision, mission, goals, and programs). (2) Organizational environment (administrative practices, socio-psychological aspects). (3) Marketing efforts (marketing mix and institutional image).

The study combined quantitative (numerical data) and qualitative (descriptive information) approaches to identify marketing patterns and success factors. Research processes involved: (1) Approval & Permissions: The proposal was approved by Liceo de Cagayan University and Initao College authorities. (2) Data Collection: Participants completed questionnaires assessing Initao College's marketing practices and effectiveness. (3) Data Processing: Responses were encoded and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation), Pearson-Moment Correlation to determine relationships between variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis to identify key predictors of effective marketing strategies.

The study also assessed six major institutional goals of Initao College, including quality-driven learning, industry partnerships, entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, leadership development, and gender-responsive programs. Limitations included potential inaccuracies in self-reported data and external influences on marketing operations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Profile of Initao College:** Market segmentation and target market; enrolment history; current population; vision, mission and goals; and institutional programs

**Table 1.** Profile of Initao College in terms of market segmentation and target market, vision, mission and goals and institutional programs.

|        | Indicators                                                        | Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Descriptive<br>Rating | Qualitative<br>Inter-<br>pretation |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Marke  | et Segmentation and target market                                 |      |                       |                       |                                    |
| 1.     | IC's target markets are met                                       | 3.68 | 0.67                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 2.     | IC's constituents are segmented based on admission criteria       | 3.56 | 0.65                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 3.     | A relatively increasing pattern of enrolment is observed per year | 3.72 | 0.64                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 4.     | Student population is currently increasing from previous years    | 3.76 | 0.66                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| Vision | n, Mission and Goals                                              |      |                       |                       |                                    |
| 5.     | IC's faculty and staff are increasing and academically uplifted   | 3.89 | 0.68                  | Agree                 | High                               |
|        |                                                                   | 3.91 | 0.67                  | Agree                 | High                               |

| 6. Vision of IC is clearly observed by the staff and students           |      |       |          |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|----------|---------|
| 7. IC's mission is competently followed                                 | 3.98 | 0.71  | Agree    | High    |
| by all constituents 8. IC's goals are relatively met in a timely manner | 4.19 | 0.74  | Agree    | High    |
| Institutional Program                                                   | ,    | 0., . | 115100   | 111511  |
| 9. Programs of the College are regularly enhanced                       | 3.84 | 0.68  | Agree    | High    |
| 10. Programs are frequently presented and discussed among               | 4.44 | 0.78  | Agree    | High    |
| the students, faculty and administration.                               |      |       |          |         |
| OVEDALLMEAN                                                             | 2.00 | 0.69  | <b>A</b> | II: -1. |
| OVERALL MEAN                                                            | 3.89 | 0.68  | Agree    | High    |

Table 1 presents Initao College's profile in terms of market segmentation, target market, vision, mission, goals (VMGO), and institutional programs. The highest-rated indicator is institutional programs (mean = 4.44), followed by VMGO (mean = 3.98), while market segmentation and target market received the lowest mean (3.56).

The high rating for institutional programs (4.44) indicates that discussions about these programs are well-communicated within the college. Similarly, the VMGO rating (3.98) suggests that students, faculty, and staff actively uphold the college's mission and goals. Vision and mission statements are essential, as they provide clarity and direction, ensuring alignment between institutional objectives and stakeholders' expectations (Kishore, 2006; Labaree, 1997).

However, market segmentation (3.56)—which is crucial for determining student placement in specific programs—scored the lowest. Despite this, respondents agreed on the importance of student profiling and specialization, as the college continues to expand and improve over time. Higher education institutions are often challenged in defining their role in society, leading to debates about the value and purpose of college degrees in a globalized world (Kennedy, 2014).

Initao College has offered various courses since 2009, with steady enrollment growth over the years. In 2019, BS Criminology was introduced to cater to students aspiring to careers in law enforcement and public safety. This trend aligns with global higher education growth, where tertiary enrollment has significantly increased across multiple regions (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009; Scott-Clayton & Sacerdote, 2016).

# Level of organizational environment at Initao College in terms of: Administrative practices and characteristics; and Socio-psychological environment

**Table 2.** Level of organizational environment at Initao College in terms of administrative practices and characteristics and socio-psychological environment.

| INDICA | ATORS                                                                                                     | Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Descriptive<br>Rating | Qualitative<br>Inter-<br>pretation |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.     | Dynamism in the practices of the administrators are observed geared to achieving its VGMO                 | 3.98 | 0.88                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 2.     | Admin characteristics have rooted to uplift the academic needs of poor but deserving students             | 3.97 | 0.84                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 3.     | Full- support to all institutional programs of IC is ensured by the administrators                        | 3.75 | 1.08                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 4.     | The Initao constituents are responsive to the call of admin in maintaining the college academic integrity | 3.77 | 1.05                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 5.     | The constituents are in constant support for all institutional programs of IC.                            | 3.85 | 0.97                  | Agree                 | High                               |

OVERALL MEAN 3.86 0.96 Agree High

Table 2 presents the organizational environment of Initao College, focusing on administrative practices, characteristics, and the socio-psychological environment. The overall mean score is 3.86, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents. Key findings involved: The highest-rated item (3.98) reflects that administrators demonstrate dynamism in achieving VMGO. The second-highest (3.97) highlights the administration's role in uplifting students' academic needs. The third-highest (3.85) indicates strong support from the college community for institutional programs. The lowest-rated item (3.75) pertains to administrators' full support for institutional programs, though it is still rated high.

These findings align with higher education governance theories, which suggest that colleges and universities are adaptive organizations responding to external changes (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009). Leadership plays a crucial role in policy reforms and institutional autonomy (Teichler et al., 2013).

Higher education institutions must continuously redefine their mission to stay relevant in an evolving socioeconomic, political, and technological landscape (Teichler, 2000). Policies and practices should align with societal expectations (WCHE, 1998). Additionally, student academic performance is a critical factor in producing skilled graduates who contribute to national economic and social development (Ali et al., 2009). Various factors—including social, psychological, economic, and environmental influences—affect student success, making academic performance a complex yet vital aspect of higher education research. Extent of educational marketing strategies in Initao College in terms of Marketing mix; and Image impression

**Table 3.** Extent of educational marketing strategies in Initao College in terms of marketing mix.

| INDICATORS                                                                                                              | Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Descriptive<br>Rating | Qualitative<br>Inter-<br>pretation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Initao College conducted Outdoor advertising – (banners, bus ads, billboards)                                        | 4.20 | 0.44                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 2. The institution is promoting if there are special events such as Schools Alumni and Founding Anniversary             | 3.99 | 0.91                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 3. Initao College conducted High School Visitation                                                                      | 3.97 | 0.60                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 4. Initao College conducted Retention program                                                                           | 3.94 | 0.94                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 5. Initao College conducted surveys through asking and giving of questionnaires to its target market                    | 3.86 | 0.99                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 6. Initao College is promoting the institution through electronic and social media advertising (TV, Radio and Facebook) | 3.83 | 0.98                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 7. Initao College is Advertising through written ads and flyers                                                         | 3.73 | 0.91                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 8. Initao College is indulging themselves in community partnering and linkages                                          | 3.79 | 0.96                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| OVERALL MEAN                                                                                                            | 3.91 | 0.84                  | Agree                 | High                               |

Table 3 presents the extent of educational marketing strategies at Initao College, focusing on the Marketing Mix. The most utilized strategy is outdoor advertising, followed by institutional promotion (mean: 3.99) and high school visitations. Conversely, the least used marketing approach is advertising through written ads and flyers.

These findings suggest that the identified marketing strategies significantly contribute to the college's overall educational marketing efforts. As Ac-ac (2014) emphasized, marketing plays a crucial role in institutions by delivering superior value and maintaining customer satisfaction. Therefore, integrating various marketing elements is essential to ensuring the college's programs and services remain accessible and appealing to its target audience.

**Table 4.** Extent of educational marketing strategies in Initao College in terms of image impression.

| INDICA | ATORS                                                                                                                                                                                        | Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Descriptive<br>Rating | Qualitative<br>Inter-<br>pretation |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.     | IC's marketing strategies include all forms to capture students in particular to enroll the offered curricular programs.                                                                     | 4.20 | 0.44                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 2.     | Admission did not limit to test given but rely also to the capacity of the incoming students to finish his/her desired degree course.                                                        | 3.99 | 0.91                  | Agree                 | High                               |
|        | IC maintains to be responsive to the call of a college degree to students deprived from other Higher                                                                                         | 3.97 | 0.60                  | Agree                 | High                               |
|        | Education Institution.  IC responses to uplift the graduates work performance in the future.                                                                                                 | 3.94 | 0.94                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 5.     | IC maintains its strategic locations and its position as a Higher Education Institution of the locality.                                                                                     | 3.86 | 0.99                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 6.     | Initao College attract students who wants to become value-laden individual and professional                                                                                                  | 3.83 | 0.98                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 7.     | Initao College Administration hired fully competent teachers                                                                                                                                 | 3.73 | 0.91                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 8.     | Initao College had its conceptualize vision that will<br>support its fulfillment by setting long and short term<br>goals                                                                     | 3.79 | 0.96                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 9.     | Initao College involve the students in building the school culture through discussion, involvement in a variety of activities and leadership responsibilities                                | 3.83 | 0.98                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 10.    | The school integrate faith and learning in every discipline                                                                                                                                  | 3.73 | 0.91                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| 11.    | Initao College has the curricula that take a holistic approach to education that incorporates the intellectual, emotional, physical, relational, and spiritual aspects of human development. | 3.79 | 0.96                  | Agree                 | High                               |
| OVER.  | ALL MEAN                                                                                                                                                                                     | 3.87 | 0.87                  | Agree                 | High                               |

Table 4 presents the extent of educational marketing strategies at Initao College, focusing on image impression. The overall mean score is 3.87, interpreted as "high", indicating strong agreement among respondents. The highest-rated item is Initao College's use of outdoor advertising (e.g., banners, bus ads, billboards) with a mean of 4.20. This is followed by the recognition that admission is not solely based on

test results but also considers students' capacity to complete their chosen degree. Conversely, the lowest-rated item pertains to hiring fully competent teachers and integrating faith into learning across disciplines.

These findings highlight the importance of creating a strong institutional image, engaging prospective students, keeping the campus community informed, and fostering positive relationships among students, educators, and stakeholders. As Brown et al. (2006) emphasized, an institution's external perception significantly influences public impressions and must align with stakeholders' expectations, beliefs, and overall sentiment at any given time.

## Profile Characteristics: Mission, vision, and goals; Institutional programs; and Organizational Environment

 Table 5. Relationship between the extent of marketing practices to profile characteristics, mission, vision,

and goals; institutional programs; and organizational environment.

| VARIABLES                  | Correlation Coefficient | p-value | Interpretation  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Marketing practices        |                         |         |                 |
| Marketing mix              | 0.041                   | 0.697   | not significant |
| Image impression           | 0.003                   | 0.978   | not significant |
| College general profile    |                         |         |                 |
| Profile characteristics    | 0.086                   | 0.411   | not significant |
| Mission, vision, goals     | 0.033                   | 0.751   | not significant |
| Institutional programs     | 0.092                   | 0.377   | not significant |
| Organizational environment | 0.035                   | 0.735   | not significant |

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the extent of marketing practices and various factors, including the college's profile characteristics, mission, vision, goals, institutional programs, and organizational environment. Table 5 indicates that there is no significant relationship between the college's general profile and its marketing practices (p-value > 0.05). This suggests that the marketing strategies implemented to attract students and stakeholders have no substantial impact on enrollment or engagement. The primary reason for this is that Initao College was established to serve individuals with limited financial means who may not have access to other higher education institutions. As a result, students and parents opt to enroll at the college regardless of marketing efforts.

This can be attributed to the college's strategic positioning, where its accessibility and affordability outweigh marketing influences. Iacobucci (2019) emphasizes that positioning involves designing a product or service to meet the target segment's needs, setting a price that balances profitability and value, and effectively communicating these aspects through promotions.

Furthermore, in the competitive educational market, multiple universities offer similar academic programs, all striving to highlight their quality and uniqueness to attract students. Bialon (2015) notes that universities must differentiate themselves by emphasizing the quality of education and the ability of graduates to contribute effectively to their future workplaces, improving efficiency and innovation in their respective industries.

## Marketing strategies and influences of Initao College

**Table 6.** Multiple regression analysis of the independent and dependent variables

| 01.01111.01  | ARDIZED                                        | STANDARDIZED                                                               |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COEFFICIENTS |                                                | COEFFICIENTS                                                               | t                                                                                                             | Sig.                                                                                                                                        |
| В            | Std. Error                                     | Beta                                                                       |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
|              |                                                |                                                                            |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| 1.295        | 0.673                                          | 0.072                                                                      | 0.925                                                                                                         | 0.741                                                                                                                                       |
| 0.034        | 0.109                                          | 0.051                                                                      | 0.309                                                                                                         | 0.758                                                                                                                                       |
|              |                                                |                                                                            |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                             |
| 0.176        | 0.119                                          | 0.244                                                                      | 1.483                                                                                                         | 0.142                                                                                                                                       |
| 0.175        | 0.182                                          | 0.166                                                                      | 0.964                                                                                                         | 0.338                                                                                                                                       |
| 0.042        | 0.072                                          | 0.065                                                                      | 0.576                                                                                                         | 0.566                                                                                                                                       |
| 0.022        | 0.066                                          | 0.037                                                                      | 0.325                                                                                                         | 0.746                                                                                                                                       |
|              | B<br>1.295<br>0.034<br>0.176<br>0.175<br>0.042 | B Std. Error  1.295 0.673 0.034 0.109  0.176 0.119 0.175 0.182 0.042 0.072 | B Std. Error Beta  1.295 0.673 0.072 0.034 0.109 0.051  0.176 0.119 0.244 0.175 0.182 0.166 0.042 0.072 0.065 | B Std. Error Beta  1.295 0.673 0.072 0.925 0.034 0.109 0.051 0.309  0.176 0.119 0.244 1.483 0.175 0.182 0.166 0.964 0.042 0.072 0.065 0.576 |

Note:  $R^2 = 0.034$ , R = 0.185, F-ratio = 0.460, P-value=0.137

The multiple regression analysis indicates that marketing practices do not have a significant impact (p-value > 0.05) on the general profile of Initao College. This confirms that enrollment decisions are not influenced by marketing strategies—students and parents are already aware of the college and choose to enroll based on factors other than promotional efforts.

The effectiveness of marketing strategies depends on correctly identifying the target market within the education sector. Best (2009) suggests that marketing strategies should focus on factors such as market demand, revenue per customer, and marketing expenses to maximize profitability. Young (2015) describes strategy as a plan, approach, or tactic aimed at achieving specific goals.

Target marketing—dividing a market into segments and focusing on specific groups—is key to business success. Ward (2019) highlights that targeting the right audience makes marketing efforts more efficient, cost-effective, and impactful by streamlining promotion, pricing, and distribution strategies.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the marketing system of Initao College, focusing on market segmentation, organizational environment, educational marketing strategies, and the relationship between marketing practices and institutional characteristics. It also identified key challenges faced by the college:

- 1. College Profile & Market Segmentation The institution's vision, mission, goals, and enrollment trends were actively discussed, with adaptability to emerging trends suggested for improvement.
- 2. Organizational Environment Policy reforms have led to organizational changes, particularly in administrative practices and socio-psychological aspects.
- 3. Educational Marketing Strategies The college employed various marketing strategies, with outdoor advertising being the most utilized, while flyers and written ads were less effective.
- 4. Marketing Practices vs. College Profile Marketing strategies did not significantly influence student enrollment, as the college primarily serves students with limited access to higher education in nearby areas.
- 5. Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies No single or combined marketing strategy significantly affected student enrollment since the institution was already well-known in the community.
- 6. Challenges Faced by the College Issues were identified in physical infrastructure, finances, library resources, faculty publications, and recruitment.

This study underscores the importance of **strategic marketing**, **institutional support**, and **infrastructure development** in enhancing the **educational experience** at Initao College, as such the following are recommended:

- 1. The college should enhance its profiling and adapt to current trends to improve student engagement and enrollment.
- 2. The Board of Trustees should continuously update administrative policies to align with institutional goals.
- 3. The local government should support marketing efforts and expansion to attract students from neighboring towns.
- 4. Initiatives should be spearheaded to address educational accessibility issues in the community.
- 5. The college administration should prioritize improvements in physical facilities and overall student services.
- 6. Future research should further explore higher education marketing strategies and their impact on community development.

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## **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors have disclosed no conflicts of interest.

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