

Effects of Armed Robbery on Heads of Institutions' Administrative Responsibilities in Public Comprehensive Schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings on the first objective of a wider study on insecurity practices and school administration, focusing specifically on the effects of armed robbery on the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions in public comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Conflict Theory and adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. A sample of 68 heads of institutions and 215 teachers was selected using stratified, simple random and systematic sampling techniques, while 19 chiefs and 5 Curriculum Support Officers were included through a census approach. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and the chi-square test of independence, while qualitative data from in-depth interviews were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that 44.1% of teachers and 46.3% of heads of institutions reported that armed robbery incidents occurred often around their schools, and that armed robbery disrupted teaching and learning, staff attendance, and school planning and daily operations. The chi-square test of independence revealed a statistically significant relationship between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities, $\chi^2(16) = 41.763$, $p = .001$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Qualitative accounts from Curriculum Support Officers and chiefs corroborated the quantitative findings, showing that armed robbery forced changes in school calendars, examination administration, resource transportation, and security coordination. The study concludes that armed robbery significantly increases the administrative burden of heads of institutions, particularly in crisis management, staff coordination, and institutional planning, and recommends the strengthening of school security systems, inter-agency collaboration, and leadership training in crisis management for heads of institutions operating in insecurity-prone areas.

Keywords: *Armed robbery; Administrative responsibilities; Heads of institutions; Insecurity practices; Comprehensive schools; Marakwet East; Kenya*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Insecurity practices refer to recurrent acts such as armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, extortion, and violent attacks that destabilize communities and institutions (Musau, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). Among these, armed robbery has emerged as one of the most disruptive forms of insecurity confronting public comprehensive schools in Kenya's North Rift region, where organized raids by armed groups directly threaten schools, staff, and learners and frequently result in theft of institutional property and resources. Administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions encompass planning, staffing, budgeting, supervision, and community engagement, all of which the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2023) identifies as core mandates for ensuring smooth school operations. Where armed robbery is prevalent, heads of institutions are compelled to balance these routine administrative duties with continuous crisis management, including safeguarding learners and staff and reallocating scarce resources to security.

Globally, education systems in conflict-affected settings have documented similar disruptions from armed violence. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2025), in its Education Under

Attack report, found that armed raids on schools led to closures, destruction of infrastructure, and diversion of funds to security measures, forcing school leaders to prioritize safety over academic planning. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2022) similarly reported that targeted violence against schools disrupts governance and continuity of learning in numerous conflict-affected countries, while Save the Children (2023) and Verjee and Kwaja (2021) observed that insecurity in fragile states undermines both access to education and the internal administrative systems that sustain it.

In Kenya, insecurity linked to armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, extortion, and violent inter-community attacks has evolved into a complex security challenge, particularly in the North Rift and northern frontier regions (Musau, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). Marakwet East Sub-County, located along the Kerio Valley, has been identified as one of the most affected areas, historically associated with cattle rustling but increasingly exposed to militarized and economically driven armed robbery involving organized raids (Musau, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). Jerono (2021) reports that by 2023, at least five schools along the Elgeyo Marakwet–West Pokot border had been closed indefinitely due to insecurity, preventing learners from sitting national examinations, while government interventions such as Operation Maliza Uhalifu North Rift have reopened and rehabilitated dozens of schools, though recurrent incidents of armed robbery continue to threaten sustainable school administration (Kilimo & Hamasi, 2024).

Although global and regional studies document the educational consequences of conflict and armed violence, there has been limited localized empirical research examining how armed robbery specifically affects heads of institutions' administrative roles within conflict-prone sub-counties such as Marakwet East. Existing scholarship tends to emphasize school closures and student displacement, with less attention to how armed robbery disrupts curriculum supervision, staff management, financial and resource management, and student welfare at the administrative level. This gap necessitated a focused investigation into how armed robbery influences heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, in order to provide context-specific evidence to inform policy and institutional resilience strategies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public schools in Marakwet East Sub-County are expected to operate within a safe and stable environment that supports effective teaching and learning, enabling heads of institutions to fulfil administrative responsibilities including long-term planning, staff deployment, budgeting, supervision, and community engagement. However, persistent armed robbery along the Kerio belt has caused

destruction of infrastructure, displacement of teachers and learners, and disruption of transport and daily operations, severely straining the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions (Musau, Ichani, & Mulu, 2023). Stakeholders, including parents, teachers' unions, and local administrators, have raised concerns over the resulting frequent teacher transfers, declining enrolment, and weakened community participation. While prior studies in Kenya and other conflict-prone regions have examined the general impact of insecurity on education (Verjee & Kwaja, 2021; Save the Children, 2023), they have largely focused on enrolment, displacement, or policy responses, with limited attention to how armed robbery specifically affects heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities. This study therefore assessed the effects of armed robbery on the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions in public comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Objective, Research Question, and Hypothesis

This paper addresses the first objective of a broader study on the effects of insecurity practices on heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in public comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya. The specific objective addressed here was to determine the extent to which armed robbery affects heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya. The objective was guided by the research question: To what extent does armed robbery affect heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya? The corresponding null hypothesis tested was: Ho1: There is no significant effect between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may benefit educational policymakers and planners by showing specifically how administrative functions such as curriculum supervision, staff deployment, supervision, budgeting, and infrastructure maintenance are disrupted by armed robbery, thereby guiding the development of conflict-sensitive education policies and more resilient school administrative systems in fragile regions. School administrators and teachers may benefit directly, as the study highlights practical challenges they face, including staff shortages, interrupted calendars, reduced community participation, and resource diversion to emergency needs. Security agencies, local administrators, and community leaders may also draw on the findings to shape joint strategies for school safety, while the study contributes academically

to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection between insecurity and education administration in Kenya and comparable conflict-prone contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Conflict Theory

This study was anchored on Conflict Theory, originally developed by Karl Marx and later extended by Max Weber and C. Wright Mills, which conceptualizes society as shaped by ongoing struggles between groups competing for scarce resources, power, and authority. In examining the effects of armed robbery on school administration in Marakwet East Sub-County, Conflict Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how struggles over scarce resources such as land, water, and livestock, compounded by ethnic rivalries, generate structural inequalities that spill over into education and governance (Jerono, 2021). The theory helps explain how power struggles within local communities extend into the education system, where schools become contested spaces affected by disputes over resources and authority, resulting in chronic underfunding, staff shortages, and destruction of physical infrastructure. It is also useful for analysing the disruption of school management roles, since persistent armed robbery displaces teachers and learners, erodes administrative structures, and undermines the ability of heads of institutions to plan, organize, and supervise effectively, thereby illustrating how systemic inequalities manifest as practical governance challenges at the school level.

2.2 Empirical Review: Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities

Armed robbery has been identified in prior research as a major insecurity practice that undermines the administrative responsibilities of school heads. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2025), using systematic incident monitoring, documented that armed raids on schools in conflict-affected countries led to closures, destruction of infrastructure, and diversion of funds to security measures, forcing school leaders to prioritize safety over academic planning; however, the report did not disaggregate findings to show how heads of institutions specifically adjusted budgeting, staffing, or supervision practices, leaving a gap in understanding administrative-level impacts.

Ahmadi (2022), analysing the impact of extremist attacks on school administration in Afghanistan through interviews with education officials, found that robberies and raids displaced teachers, destroyed school records, and created long-term instability in staffing and resource management, forcing heads of

institutions to deal with the immediate consequences of insecurity such as replacing lost records and finding temporary staff. However, the study did not quantify changes in staffing policies or budget allocations. Similarly, Akame, Crockett, and Anoma (2021), studying Cameroon's Anglophone crisis, reported teacher abductions, school closures, and governance breakdowns that forced administrators to focus on crisis management rather than instructional leadership, though the study emphasized displacement and broader governance issues rather than the specific administrative responsibilities of school heads.

In a case study in northern Ethiopia employing triangulation of interviews, observations, and document analysis, Assefa and Moges (2023) found that armed robbery caused schools to lose critical infrastructure, forcing management to divert resources to reconstruction rather than academic planning, and that governance structures broke down as heads of institutions struggled to enforce policies in insecure environments; the study, however, lacked quantified indicators of administrative adjustments. Musau, Ichani, and Mulu (2023), examining raids in Kerio Valley using qualitative interviews with heads of institutions, found destruction of records, budget reallocations, and disruptions in daily school management, with funds meant for academic programmes diverted to replace stolen resources and enhance security measures, but did not analyse strategic planning frameworks or supervision systems in depth.

Jerono (2021) reported that armed raids forced indefinite school closures along the Elgeyo Marakwet–West Pokot border, preventing learners from sitting national examinations and leaving heads of institutions unable to fulfil their responsibilities while schools remained closed, though the study focused primarily on closures rather than administrative adjustments. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2023) highlighted increased teacher attrition due to insecurity, noting that heads of institutions struggled with staffing continuity and were forced to reassign duties, combine classes, and seek temporary staff, without providing detailed analysis of how administrators restructured responsibilities. Kilimo and Hamasi (2024), studying government interventions in Chesongoch, found that reopened schools still faced recurrent robberies that strained administrative planning, with heads of institutions repeatedly adjusting budgets and reallocating resources to security measures despite government rehabilitation efforts, though the study emphasized infrastructure rehabilitation rather than administrative functions specifically. Osegbue (2025), examining global patterns of insecurity in education through secondary data analysis, found that armed robbery diverted administrators' attention from academic planning to crisis management, compelling them to spend more time coordinating emergency responses and managing

community fears, but the study lacked primary evidence on how heads of institutions' responsibilities were restructured at the school level.

2.3 Summary and Knowledge Gap

The reviewed literature consistently shows that armed robbery disrupts school infrastructure, staffing, records, and financial planning, and forces heads of institutions to devote increasing attention to crisis management, security coordination, and resource reallocation. However, most existing studies either focus on broad governance and displacement outcomes (Akame, Crockett, & Anoma, 2021; GCPEA, 2025) or on infrastructural and financial disruption without quantifying how discrete administrative functions, such as planning, staffing, supervision, and budgeting, are specifically reshaped (Assefa & Moges, 2023; Kilimo & Hamasi, 2024). Few studies provide localized, mixed-methods evidence combining the perceptions of heads of institutions, teachers, chiefs, and Curriculum Support Officers on how armed robbery reshapes administrative responsibilities within a single conflict-prone sub-county. This study addressed this gap by empirically assessing, through both quantitative and qualitative evidence, the extent to which armed robbery affects heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Study Area

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously during the same phase of the research process and later integrated during interpretation. The quantitative strand adopted a cross-sectional survey design to analyse patterns and relationships between armed robbery and school administrative practices, while the qualitative strand employed a phenomenological design to explore the experiences and perceptions of key informants regarding armed robbery and its effects on school administration. The study was conducted in Marakwet East Sub-County, Elgeyo-Marakwet County, in the North Rift region of Kenya, an area characterized by highlands, escarpments, and the lowlands of the Kerio Valley, and which is prone to recurrent insecurity that affects the stability of communities and institutions, including approximately 81 public comprehensive schools.

3.2 Target Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures

The target population comprised 81 heads of institutions, 1,238 teachers, 19 chiefs, and 5 Curriculum Support Officers in Marakwet East Sub-County. Using Slovin's formula with a margin of error of 0.05, a sample of 68 comprehensive schools was drawn through stratified sampling by ward followed by simple random sampling, and all 68 heads of institutions in the sampled schools were included through a census approach. A sample of 215 teachers was drawn from the target population of 1,238 using systematic sampling, with a sampling interval of approximately six. All 19 chiefs and all 5 Curriculum Support Officers in the sub-county were included through a census approach, given their small numbers and their strategic knowledge of insecurity incidents and their implications for school operation and administration.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using structured questionnaires for teachers and heads of institutions, and in-depth interview guides for Curriculum Support Officers and chiefs. The questionnaire for heads of institutions gathered quantitative data on how armed robbery, among other insecurity practices, influences administrative functions including planning, staffing, supervision, and budgeting, using both closed-ended and open-ended items, while the teachers' questionnaire captured perceptions and experiences regarding the effects of armed robbery on learner attendance, teacher retention, and the overall functioning of schools. Semi-structured interview guides were used with Curriculum Support Officers and chiefs to explore how armed robbery affects administrative effectiveness, instructional management, and human resource and student management, complementing the quantitative findings.

3.4 Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

The validity of the quantitative instruments was established through content validity checks by experts in school administration, whose feedback was used to refine the questionnaires, while reliability was established using the split-half method, yielding a reliability index of 0.8. The instruments were also piloted in two schools not included in the main study sample. Credibility and dependability of the qualitative data were enhanced through triangulation of data sources, thick description of the research context, and maintenance of an audit trail of research procedures. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Department of Postgraduate Studies in Education at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa and a research permit was secured from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

(NACOSTI). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout, and participation was voluntary.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to summarise responses and the chi-square test of independence, at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, to test the null hypothesis on the relationship between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities. Qualitative data from interviews with Curriculum Support Officers and chiefs were analysed thematically by identifying recurring patterns and organizing them into categories relevant to armed robbery and administrative responsibilities, which were then used to support, explain, and enrich the quantitative findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

Out of 283 questionnaires administered to heads of institutions and teachers, 278 were successfully completed and returned, representing an overall response rate of 98.2% (98.5% for heads of institutions and 98.1% for teachers), which was considered adequate for reliable analysis and minimized the risk of non-response bias.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Among teachers, 56.7% were male and 43.3% were female; 34.2% had served in their current school for six to ten years, and 78.3% reported having personally experienced insecurity incidents in the study area. Among heads of institutions, 64.2% were male and 35.8% were female; 37.3% had 11 to 20 years of teaching experience, and 85.1% reported having experienced insecurity incidents in the study area. The high proportion of respondents reporting direct experience of insecurity, particularly among heads of institutions, underscores the relevance of their responses to the study's focus on armed robbery and administrative responsibilities.

4.3 Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities: Teachers' Responses

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities

Statement	Response Category	F	%
Armed robbery incidents occur around this school	Never	22	10.4
	Rarely	37	17.6
	Sometimes	48	22.7
	Often	93	44.1
	Always	11	5.2
Armed robbery disrupts teaching and learning in this school	Never	9	4.3
	Rarely	21	10.0
	Sometimes	58	27.5
	Often	77	36.5
	Always	46	21.7
Fear of robbery affects teacher attendance	Strongly Disagree	6	2.8
	Disagree	18	8.5
	Neutral	25	11.9
	Agree	105	49.8
	Strongly Agree	57	27.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, 44.1% of teachers indicated that armed robbery incidents often occur around their schools, suggesting that the strategic direction of school leadership is affected not only by frequent incidents but even by occasional ones, requiring heads of institutions to ensure that institutional planning, stakeholder involvement, and resource allocation reflect safety concerns. This finding is consistent with Wanjara and Ogembo (2024), who found that insecurity introduces a new dimension to educational leadership, requiring higher standards of preparedness, greater inter-agency cooperation, and adaptive strategic decision-making. On the disruption of teaching and learning, 36.5% of teachers reported that armed robbery often hampers these processes, forcing heads of institutions to restructure school processes and coordinate recovery efforts, a finding consistent with Kiprop and Chepkemai (2023), who noted that insecurity compels school leaders to remain flexible in their governance to ensure continuity of operations. Regarding staff attendance, 49.8% of teachers agreed that fear of armed robbery affects teacher attendance, indicating that heads of institutions must devote additional effort to motivating staff and preserving institutional cohesion, consistent with Oduor and Mwangi (2024), who found that perceptions of insecurity add to the managerial responsibilities of maintaining educational institutions.

4.4 Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities: Heads of Institutions' Responses

Table 2: Heads of Institutions' Responses on Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities

Statement	Response Category	F	%
Armed robbery incidents occur around this school	Never	6	9.0
	Rarely	12	17.9
	Sometimes	14	20.9
	Often	31	46.3
	Always	4	6.0
Armed robbery affects school planning and daily operations	Never	3	4.5
	Rarely	7	10.4
	Sometimes	16	23.9
	Often	27	40.3
	Always	14	20.9
Armed robbery affects staff attendance and coordination	Strongly Disagree	2	3.0
	Disagree	5	7.5
	Neutral	8	11.9

Statement	Response Category	F	%
	Agree	33	49.3
	Strongly Agree	19	28.3

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 2, 46.3% of heads of institutions indicated that armed robbery incidents occurred often around their schools, implying that administrative roles are significantly affected even by occasional security incidents and that heads of institutions must embed security considerations into governance, strategic planning, policy-making, and institutional oversight. This is consistent with Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2021), who found that frequent security incidents necessitate the institutionalization of preparedness strategies and the integration of risk-responsive approaches into educational governance. On school planning and daily operations, 40.3% of heads of institutions reported that armed robbery often affects these functions, requiring them to adapt operational priorities and restructure implementation frameworks, a finding corroborated by Adewale and Olubiyi (2022), who reported that insecurity raises the administrative burden of maintaining institutional coordination and continuity of educational programmes. Regarding staff attendance and coordination, 49.3% of heads of institutions agreed that armed robbery affects these functions, requiring enhanced supervisory systems and responsive leadership interventions to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.

4.5 Qualitative Perspectives from Curriculum Support Officers and Chiefs

Curriculum Support Officers interviewed on how armed robbery had affected school activities in Marakwet East Sub-County reported that many schools had to change their normal operations, including postponing opening dates, altering the timing of learning activities, and increasing attention to the security of school property, with administrators spending more time on security issues than previously. This indicates that heads of institutions now bear extra administrative duties related to institutional continuity and crisis management, requiring new planning protocols and reviewed institutional procedures to sustain school operations amid uncertainty, consistent with Abdullahi and Hassan (2021), who found that educational systems in insecure environments increasingly rely on collaborative leadership structures and multi-stakeholder security coordination.

Another Curriculum Support Officer noted that armed robbery had also affected the administration of examinations and the transport of education materials, with some schools forced to arrange alternative examination sittings or resource transportation during periods of heightened insecurity to avoid disrupting academic programmes. This confirms that armed robbery significantly shapes decision-making and planning, requiring heads of institutions to make strategic choices on resource allocation and to implement emergency interventions on an ongoing basis. Chiefs interviewed on the biggest security challenges they faced in supporting school safety noted that armed robbery necessitated increased patrols, coordination meetings, and continuous monitoring around schools to safeguard teachers and learners, underscoring the centrality of institutional security governance and inter-agency administrative coordination to effective school leadership in insecure contexts.

4.6 Test of the Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis (Ho1: There is no significant effect between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya) was tested using the chi-square test of independence at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Independence between Armed Robbery and Administrative Responsibilities

Variables				χ^2	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Armed	Robbery	and	Administrative	41.763	16	.001
Responsibilities						

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 3, the results revealed a statistically significant relationship between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities, $\chi^2(16) = 41.763$, $p = .001$. Since the p-value of .001 is less than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis, that a significant relationship exists between armed robbery and heads of institutions' administrative responsibilities, was supported. This indicates that the distribution of administrative responsibilities varies significantly according to the prevalence of armed robbery, confirming that armed

robbery is an important contextual factor affecting educational administration, institutional management, crisis management, and the leadership responsibilities of heads of institutions. This finding is consistent with Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2021), whose inferential analysis established a statistically significant relationship between school insecurity and the effectiveness of educational leadership, influencing administrative workload, organizational needs, crisis management, and leadership performance.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Although the reported frequency of armed robbery varied across schools, the practice was found to have a significant effect on the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions in public comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County. Heads of institutions were required to improve the security governance of their institutions, prepare security-related policies, engage with security agencies, allocate resources for emergency preparedness, and institute crisis management strategies. Armed robbery was also found to disrupt teaching programmes, staff coordination, and school planning, increasing the demand for institutional resilience and educational continuity. The study concludes that armed robbery has a statistically significant effect on the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions in comprehensive schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

- i. The Ministry of Education, in partnership with security agencies and county governments, should enhance the security regimes of public comprehensive schools by adopting comprehensive school safety policies, emergency preparedness programmes, and institutional risk management strategies specifically targeting armed robbery.
- ii. Heads of institutions should build closer ties with local communities, security agencies, chiefs, and education stakeholders to improve institutional security coordination, support community security mechanisms, and maintain continuity of education during periods of armed robbery-related insecurity.

- iii. The Ministry of Education should provide regular training programmes for heads of institutions on crisis leadership, institutional resilience, and risk management to build their capacity to effectively manage the administrative challenges posed by armed robbery.
- iv. County and national governments should develop and implement targeted security intervention programmes in insecurity-prone areas to reduce the occurrence of armed robbery, thereby creating safer educational environments that support effective educational leadership and institutional development.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The study suggests that future research should undertake comparative studies exploring how armed robbery affects the administrative responsibilities of heads of institutions in public and private schools in insecurity-prone areas of Kenya, as well as longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of armed robbery on educational leadership, institutional resilience, and educational outcomes in public comprehensive schools. Further studies should also assess the effectiveness of crisis management strategies implemented by heads of institutions in reducing the administrative impact of armed robbery, and examine how armed robbery affects teacher retention and learner outcomes in insecurity- and poverty-affected areas of Kenya.

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