PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN BARANGAY MICRO BUSINESS ENTERPRISES: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN VICTORIA, LAGUNA

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ABSTRACT

In light of evolving economic conditions, fostering sustainable growth in micro-business enterprises (MBEs) is essential for strengthening community-level economic empowerment. This study develops an evidence-based framework that integrates sustainability principles with capacity-building strategies to enhance the long-term resilience and prosperity of MBEs. Using a quantitative approach and a descriptive-evaluative research design, it examines the current status of MBEs and evaluates the effectiveness of strategies supporting their growth and sustainability. A survey of 50 micro-business owners in Victoria, Laguna, revealed that most respondents are women aged 28–37, with over half holding a college degree and managing businesses for more than seven years. While they demonstrate basic entrepreneurial competencies, significant challenges persist in financial management, technology adoption, and strategic decision-making. Limited access to capital and inconsistent government support hinder their ability to comply with regulations, access markets, and participate in capacity-building initiatives. To address these challenges, the study recommends targeted interventions such as financial literacy programs, accessible microloans, technology support, and stronger government collaboration to improve the sustainability and growth of micro-businesses.

Keywords: sustainable growth, micro business, strategic framework, economic empowerment

INTRODUCTION

In Victoria, Laguna, micro-enterprises play a vital role in the local economy, yet they often face significant challenges in achieving sustainable growth. By developing a strategic framework tailored to the unique needs of these businesses, this research aims to provide actionable insights that can enhance their capacity for sustainable practices. By integrating sustainability into their operations, these enterprises can achieve scalability and long-term success while aligning with global development goals (International Finance Corporation, 2020; Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024).

Globally, micro-business enterprises are crucial to sustainable development, representing over 90% of businesses worldwide. These enterprises face common challenges, such as limited access to resources and financing. International initiatives like the United Nations MSME Day emphasize the vital role of micro-businesses in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in eradicating poverty and promoting decent work (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024).

In the Philippines, micro-business enterprises are the backbone of the economy, constituting a significant portion of all businesses. They are essential for poverty reduction, local

employment, and economic empowerment. However, these enterprises often struggle with issues like inadequate access to financing, limited technical support, and regulatory challenges. Addressing these issues is vital for ensuring their growth and contributions to national development (International Finance Corporation, 2020; World Economic Forum, 2023). This study seeks to address the lack of strategic frameworks tailored to promoting sustainable growth in barangay-level micro-business enterprises in Victoria, Laguna. While existing studies discuss sustainability in business, few focus on micro-enterprises in a localized Philippine context. This research fills that gap by proposing actionable strategies that address the unique challenges faced by micro-business owners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives to comprehensively understand the factors influencing the sustainability and growth of micro-businesses in Barangay Victoria, Laguna

1. To determine the demographic profile of micro-business owners.
2. To assess the existing conditions of micro-business enterprises.
3. To evaluate the extent to which micro-business enterprises promote sustainable growth.
4. To examine the relationship between strategic planning and sustainable growth in Barangay Micro Business Enterprises at Victoria, Laguna.
5. To develop a strategic action plan for enhancing financial management, marketing, promotion, and business operations to ensure sustainable growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach utilizing a descriptive-evaluative research design. The descriptive-evaluative research design allows for a comprehensive understanding of the current state of MBEs while evaluating the effectiveness of the existing strategies and frameworks in promoting sustainable economic empowerment. The descriptive aspect of the research provides an in-depth analysis of the current challenges.

The study population comprises proprietors of the 2023 list of Micro Business Enterprise (MBE) certificates issued within the prescribed time frame, as officially gathered from the Laguna Provincial Office and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). A total of fifty (50) registered micro-business enterprises were identified and included in the study. The study utilizes a purposive sampling technique to ensure that barangay micro-businesses registered as BMBEs in Laguna are adequately represented. The questionnaire development process involved an extensive review of literature and consultation with subject matter experts to ensure comprehensive coverage of all research variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of the Micro-Business Owners

Most of the micro-business owners surveyed are aged 28–37 years (36%), predominantly female (72%), and primarily college graduates (58%). The leading industries are food and beverage (42%) and retail/convenience (38%). Nearly half (46%) have operated their businesses for over seven years, indicating resilience and capacity to withstand economic challenges. In terms of employment, a majority (52%) manage small teams of 1–5 employees, while 42% operate as solo entrepreneurs. Monthly income data show that 54% earn between ₱10,000 and ₱30,000, reflecting the modest revenue levels typical of small-scale enterprises.

2. Existing Condition of Micro-Business Enterprise

Table 1
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The owner of the business has a clear grasp of fundamental business concepts, including budgeting and pricing mechanisms.	2.63	Observed
2. The entrepreneur continually looks for skills enhancement and training opportunities to further their entrepreneurial experience.	2.63	Observed
3. The entrepreneur successfully implements innovative approaches to enhance product quality and customer satisfaction.	2.50	Less Observed
4. The entrepreneur is assured of making well-informed decisions on business expansion and risk management.	2.50	Less Observed
5. The entrepreneur actively connects with other entrepreneurs to learn about and acquire business opportunities.	2.63	Observed
Over-all Weighted Mean	**2.58**	**Observed**

This table presents the assessment of the micro- business owners' entrepreneurial competencies based on selected indicators. The overall weighted mean is 2.58, which falls under the interpretation of "Observed." It suggests that while micro-business owners generally demonstrate entrepreneurial competencies, certain areas, particularly innovation and strategic decision-making, are less consistently practiced.

The findings highlight a need for targeted support in helping micro-business owners strengthen their decision-making capabilities in high-risk and growth-oriented areas. While the basic entrepreneurial mindset and practices are present, limited strategic foresight may hinder long-term sustainability and scalability (Agustin et al., 2024; Bazeley & Jackson, 2020). Therefore, interventions such as mentorship programs, access to business advisory services, and training in strategic planning and risk management could significantly enhance their entrepreneurial performance.

3. Financial Stability and Access to Capital

This table presents the assessment of the financial management practices of the micro-business owners based on selected indicators. The overall weighted mean is 1.30, indicating that financial management practices are generally "Not Observed" among the respondents.

The relatively low scores for access to funding and reinvestment of returns into the business indicate that while micro-business owners may be adept at day-to-day financial management, they face challenges when it comes to scaling their operations or ensuring long-term financial health. To address these gaps, Bocken et al. (2019) provide access to financing opportunities, such as microloans or government grants, and promote reinvestment strategies that could empower business owners to grow their businesses more effectively. Additionally, offering financial literacy training to help entrepreneurs understand and implement long-term financial planning strategies would further enhance their financial management capabilities (Deci et al., 2019).

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Table 2
Financial Stability and Access to Capital

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The owner keeps proper financial records and tracks cash flow regularly.	2.25	Less Observed
2. The company has stable funding sources, and it can manage to maintain daily operations without encountering financial difficulties.	1.00	Not Observed
3. The entrepreneur has access to grants or loans to finance business growth and sustainability.	1.00	Not Observed
4. The entrepreneur successfully controls costs and does not incur unnecessary debt.	1.25	Not Observed
5. The entrepreneur invests returns into the firm for long-term development.	1.00	Not Observed
Over-all Weighted Mean	**1.30**	**Not Observed**

4. Market Presence and Customer Reach

This table presents the assessment of the operational practices of the micro-business owners based on selected indicators. The overall weighted mean of 2.33 indicates that operational practices are generally "Less Observed." The low scores in planning business contingencies, adopting modern technology, and staff training reflect significant areas for improvement. According to Creswell & Creswell (2023), the absence of modern tools and contingency strategies can lead to inefficiencies and increased vulnerability to disruptions. Kumar et al. (2022) emphasize that integrating advanced technologies

and risk management plans can improve operational resilience.

Table 3
Business Operations and Resource Management

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business owner efficiently manages inventory and resources to minimize waste and losses.	2.88	Observed
2. The business follows a structured operational process to ensure smooth daily activities.	2.63	Observed
3. The business owner adopts modern technology and equipment to enhance productivity.	2.50	Less Observed
4. The business properly trains staff to improve efficiency and service quality.	2.50	Less Observed
5. The business owner has contingency plans in place for potential operational disruptions.	1.13	Not Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.33**	**Less Observed**

Moreover, proper staff training enhances service quality, efficiency, and overall business performance (Lopez & Fernandez, 2021). Establishing clear operational processes and continuous staff development can help reduce daily challenges and support long-term sustainability (Miller & Zorro, 2020).

5. Challenges Faced without Government Support

This table presents the assessment of the challenges faced by micro-business owners due to limited government support based on selected

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indicators. The overall weighted mean of 3.73 suggests that these government-related challenges are "Highly Observed" among the respondents.

Table 4
Challenges Faced without Government Support

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business struggles to access financial aid and government grants that could support its growth.	3.75	Highly Observed
2. The lack of government training programs limits the business owner's ability to enhance skills and knowledge.	3.75	Highly Observed
3. Limited government support makes it difficult for the business to comply with regulatory requirements.	3.75	Highly Observed
4. The absence of government-sponsored market opportunities reduces the business's exposure to new customers.	3.75	Highly Observed
5. The business owner faces challenges in securing permits and licenses due to the lack of government assistance.	3.63	Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.73**	**Highly Observed**

The high scores across the indicators reflect a strong sentiment of dissatisfaction among business owners regarding the government's role in supporting their ventures. Addressing these gaps in government support could have a significant impact on improving business growth and sustainability (Caballero et al., 2023).

According to Deci et al. (2019), MICR business owners could greatly benefit from more accessible financial assistance, training programs, and government- sponsored market opportunities.

6. Existing Conditions on Micro Business Enterprise

Table 5
Overall Existing Conditions on Micro Business Enterprise

Factors	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills	2.58	Observed
Financial Stability and Access to Capital	1.30	Not Observed
Market Presence and Customer Reach	2.60	Observed
Business Operations and Resource Management	2.33	Less Observed
Challenges Faces without Government Support	3.73	Highly Observed
Over - Weighted Mean	**2.51**	**Observed**

This table presents the assessment of various factors affecting micro-business owners based on selected indicators. The overall weighted mean of 2.51 suggests that most of the factors are generally "Observed" by the respondents.

The relatively high score for "Challenges Faced without Government Support" emphasizes the critical need for more governmental intervention to help micro-businesses thrive. To enhance business growth, Locke and Latham (2022) state that micro-business owners would benefit from more accessible financial support, training programs, and government-driven market opportunities. Addressing these challenges would

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not only reduce the burden on business owners but also provide them with the necessary resources to strengthen their operations and expand their customer base (Paredes & Lim, 2020).

7. Promotion of Strategic Business Operations to Sustainable Growth in Micro-Business Enterprise

Table 6
Availability and Utilization of Resources

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business efficiently utilizes raw materials and minimizes wastage in production.	2.88	Observed
2. The business has access to sustainable and affordable resources to maintain operations.	2.63	Observed
3. The business regularly updates equipment and technology to improve efficiency.	2.50	Less Observed
4. The business effectively manages its workforce to optimize productivity.	2.50	Less Observed
5. The business strategically allocates financial resources for long-term sustainability.	1.13	Not Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.33**	**Less Observed**

This table presents the assessment of resource availability and utilization among micro-business owners. The overall weighted mean of 2.33 indicates that these practices are generally "Less Observed." Low scores in equipment

updates, workforce management, and especially financial resource allocation highlight key areas for improvement. Limited investment in technology and poor financial planning can hinder long-term growth and efficiency. As noted by the *Philippine Business Review* (2020), upgrading equipment enhances productivity, while strategic financial management supports sustainability. Additionally, effective workforce utilization is essential for maximizing output and competitiveness (Garcia & Ramos, 2021).

8. Market Strategy and Competitive Positioning

Table 7
Market Strategy and Competitive Positioning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business has a well-defined marketing strategy that differentiates it from competitors.	2.63	Observed
2. The business owner regularly analyzes competitors to adjust pricing and product offerings.	2.63	Observed
3. The business effectively utilizes digital marketing to expand customer reach.	2.50	Less Observed
4. The business adapts to changing market trends to stay competitive.	2.63	Observed
5. The business participates in local trade fairs and promotions to increase visibility.	2.50	Less Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.58**	**Observed**

This table presents the assessment of market strategy and competitive positioning among micro-business owners. The overall weighted mean of 2.58 indicates that these practices are generally "Observed."

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The low scores for indicators related to digital marketing and participation in local promotions reveal areas needing improvement. These suggest limited use of modern marketing tools and insufficient community engagement. According to the *International Finance Corporation* (2020), embracing digital marketing is crucial for expanding reach and staying competitive. Enhancing online visibility and participating in promotional activities can help micro-businesses attract more customers and strengthen their market position (Rivera & Santos, 2021).

9. Community Engagement and Networking

Table 8
Community Engagement and Networking

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business actively collaborates with local suppliers and vendors to strengthen community ties.	3.00	Observed
2. The business participates in community events to promote its brand.	2.88	Observed
3. The business engages in social responsibility initiatives that benefit the community.	3.00	Observed
4. The business owner builds strong relationships with customers through personalized service.	3.00	Observed
5. The business supports local employment by hiring workers from the community.	3.00	Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.98**	**Observed**

This table presents the assessment of community engagement and networking practices by micro-business owners based on selected indicators. The overall weighted mean of 2.98 indicates a strong and consistent observation of community engagement practices among micro-business owners.

The lower scores for participation in community events and social responsibility initiatives highlight areas where micro-business owners may not be fully leveraging opportunities to enhance their community engagement. Active participation in these areas could improve the business's reputation and visibility while contributing to community development (Qualtrics, 2023).

10. Social and Economic Impact

Table 9
Social and Economic Impact

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The business contributes to job creation and economic growth in the community.	3.50	Highly Observed
2. The business promotes locally sourced products and supports sustainable practices.	3.63	Highly Observed
3. The business enhances the local economy by attracting more consumers and business opportunities.	2.75	Observed
4. The business fosters an inclusive environment by offering opportunities to marginalized groups.	2.88	Observed
5. The business improves the standard of living by providing quality and affordable food products.	2.88	Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**3.13**	**Observed**

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This table presents the assessment of micro-businesses' social and economic contributions. The overall weighted mean of 3.13 indicates that their impact is generally "Observed", with notable strengths in job creation and supporting local sustainability.

However, the slightly lower scores in economic enhancement and inclusivity indicate areas for improvement.

11. Strategic Business Operations for Sustainable Growth

Table 10
Overall Strategic Business Operations for Sustainable Growth

Factors	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Availability and Utilization of Resources	2.33	Less Observed
2. Market Strategy and Competitive Positioning	2.58	Observed
3. Community Engagement and Networking	2.98	Observed
4. Social and Economic Impact	3.13	Observed
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.75**	**Observed**

The overall weighted mean of 2.75 shows that strategic operations are generally "Observed", with varied performance across factors. The lower score in Market Strategy and Competitive Positioning (2.58) indicates room to better leverage market opportunities. Strengthening marketing and competitor analysis, combined with

strong social and economic efforts, can enhance sustainable growth and competitiveness (Paredes & Lim, 2020).

12. Significant Relationship to Current Condition and Level of Promotion to Sustainable Growth

Table 11
Relationship to Current Condition and Level of Promotion to Sustainable Growth

Micro Business Enterprise		Availability and Utilization Resources	Interpretation
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills	Pearson R	0.659	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Financial Stability and Access to Capital	Pearson R	0.220	Not Significant
	P-Value	.124	
	N	50	
Market Presence and Customer Reach	Pearson R	0.770	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Business Operation and Resource Management	Pearson R	0.673	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Challenges Faced without Government Support	Pearson R	0.438	Significant
	P-Value	.001	
	N	50	

The table presents the correlation results between various factors and the availability and utilization of resources in micro-business enterprises. The correlation between "Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurship Skills" and resource utilization (r = 0.659, p = 0.000) was statistically significant, similar to the remaining factors, which all revealed significant correlations with resource utilization, except financial stability and access to capital, suggesting these factors

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play a crucial role in influencing how effectively micro-businesses manage and utilize their resources.

The results suggest that skills, market presence, operational efficiency, and external challenges significantly influence how effectively micro-businesses utilize resources. Effective market engagement and resource management contribute to better resource use (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Enhancing market reach, operational capacity, and securing government support can improve resource utilization and promote sustainable growth.

13. Correlations between various factors and market strategy and competitive positioning in micro-businesses

Table 12

Correlations between various factors and market strategy and competitive positioning in micro-businesses

Micro Business Enterprise		Market Strategy and Competitive Conditioning	Interpretation
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills	Pearson R	0.652	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Financial Stability and Access to Capital	Pearson R	0.156	Not Significant
	P-Value	.278	
	N	50	
Market Presence and Customer Reach	Pearson R	0.662	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Business Operation and Resource Management	Pearson R	0.535	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Challenges Faced without Government Support	Pearson R	0.377	Significant
	P-Value	.007	
	N	50	

This table displays the correlations between various factors and market strategy and competitive positioning in micro-businesses. Significant positive correlations were found with Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills (r = 0.652, p = 0.000), Market Presence and Customer Reach (r = 0.662, p = 0.000), Business Operation and Resource Management (r = 0.535, p = 0.000), and Challenges Faced without Government Support (r = 0.377, p = 0.007). In contrast, Financial Stability and Access to Capital were not significantly correlated (r = 0.156, p = 0.278).

The results highlight that business knowledge and entrepreneurial skills strongly influence effective market positioning and competitiveness. Skilled entrepreneurs are better equipped to navigate the market and gain a competitive edge, underscoring the importance of continuous learning and development (Philippine Business Review, 2020).

14. Correlation results between factors related to community engagement and networking in micro-business enterprises

This table shows the correlation results between factors related to community engagement and networking in micro-business enterprises. Business knowledge and entrepreneurial skills (r = 0.532, p = 0.000), market presence and customer reach (r = 0.663, p = 0.000), business operation and resource management (r = 0.397, p = 0.000), and challenges faced without government support (r = 0.293, p = 0.039) all showed significant positive correlations with community engagement and networking. Financial stability and access to capital showed no significant correlation.

The findings suggest that community engagement is influenced by business skills, market reach, and operational factors, but not by

financial stability.The findings suggest that community engagement is influenced by business skills, market reach, and operational factors, but not by financial stability.

Table 13
Correlation results between factors related to community engagement and networking in micro-business enterprises

Micro Business Enterprise		Community Engagement and Networking	Interpretation
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills	Pearson R	0.532	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Financial Stability and Access to Capital	Pearson R	0.050	Not Significant
	P-Value	.733	
	N	50	
Market Presence and Customer Reach	Pearson R	0.663	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Business Operation and Resource Management	Pearson R	0.397	Significant
	P-Value	.000	
	N	50	
Challenges Faced without Government Support	Pearson R	0.293	Significant
	P-Value	.039	
	N	50	

It also implies that non-business factors, such as personal values and local culture, may play a key role in fostering community ties (Work Human Editorial Team, 2024).

15. Correlations between various factors and the social and economic impact of micro-businesses

This table presents correlations between various factors and the social and economic impact of micro-businesses. Significant positive correlations were found for Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills (r = 0.393, p = 0.005), Financial Stability and Access to Capital (r = 0.414, p = 0.003), and Market Presence and Customer Reach (r = 0.452, p = 0.001). In contrast, Business Operation and Resource Management (r = 0.276, p = 0.053) and Challenges Faced without Government Support (r = 0.133, p = 0.357) were not statistically significant.

The findings emphasize that market presence, financial stability, and entrepreneurial skills play key roles in enhancing social and economic impact. Strong market visibility and sound business management foster community development and economic growth (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Conversely, governmental challenges may hinder expansion and limit the business's economic contributions (Cherry, 2023).

Table 14
Correlations between various factors and the social and economic impact of micro-businesses

Micro Business Enterprise		Community Engagement and Networking	Interpretation
Business Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Skills	Pearson R	0.393	Significant
	P-Value	.005	
	N	50	
Financial Stability and Access to Capital	Pearson R	0.414	Significant
	P-Value	.003	
	N	50	
Market Presence and Customer Reach	Pearson R	0.452	Significant
	P-Value	.001	
	N	50	
Business Operation and Resource Management	Pearson R	0.276	Not Significant
	P-Value	.053	
	N	50	
Challenges Faced without Government Support	Pearson R	0.133	Not Significant
	P-Value	.357	
	N	50	

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several key insights emerged regarding the demographics, challenges, growth efforts, and relationships impacting micro-businesses in

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Barangay Victoria, Laguna. The following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of micro-business owners are women aged 28–37, most of whom have completed a college degree. Most operate in the food and beverage industry, have been in business for over 7 years, employ 1–5 people, and earn between ₱10,000 to ₱30,000 monthly.
2. The challenges faced without government support were the most highly observed conditions, followed by market presence, customer reach, and entrepreneurial knowledge. However, financial stability and access to capital were the least observed, suggesting financial constraints as a major issue among micro-businesses.
3. Micro-businesses generally observe efforts to promote sustainable growth, particularly in social and economic impact and community engagement. However, the availability and utilization of resources remain less observed, indicating a gap in resource accessibility and usage.
4. There is a significant relationship between business knowledge, market strategy, and operational management with resource availability, market strategy, and community engagement. However, financial stability and government support showed inconsistent significance across different growth indicators, highlighting the need for improved financial access and institutional backing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the key challenges and enhance the sustainability and growth of micro-businesses in Barangay Victoria, Laguna:

1. Develop and implement financial literacy programs to enhance entrepreneurs' understanding of financial planning, cash flow management, and reinvestment strategies, enabling better financial decision-making.
2. Collaborate with government agencies, financial institutions, and microfinance organizations to create accessible microloans, grants, and credit facilities tailored specifically for micro businesses.
3. Conduct workshops and mentorship sessions to educate owners on the importance of reinvesting profits into their business, supporting long-term growth and sustainability.
4. Provide support for technology adoption by offering subsidies, grants, or low-interest loans aimed at upgrading equipment and integrating modern technology to boost productivity.

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