CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, EXPLANATION

OF TERMS, AIMS, METHOD AND

PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH

1.1   INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

Parenting today faces some of its toughest challenges, more than at any other time in the history of mankind. This problem is aggravated by the emergence of a new brand of poor parents and black single parents, particularly those born to adolescent mothers in the early 1970s.

One of the greatest parental problems of this time is that of parental education. Many parents are ignorant themselves first and foremost - but moreover, they are ignorant of their children's needs which are generated by contemporary socioeconomic pressures. Thirdly, the parents of the 1990s lack genuine love of and commitment to their children - a symptom which bears testimony to prevailing ignorance of parental responsibilities (Elster & Lamb, 1986: 1-2).

After the findings of a research project (Sedibe, 1991) which indicated that the majority of pupils from single parent families need guidance regarding their problems of personal,

social, educational and career-directedness, the researcher (as a teacher) was prompted to explore this phenomenon more fully.

It is an inescapable fact that each person wants to actualize his potential in one way or another. This is essentially true and necessary since each person, as a social and participating being in his given community, should "become the best that [he] is able to become" (Vrey, 1979: 42). This also becomes evident from the fact that people everywhere are studying and striving in an attempt to maximise their potential and to reach the highest possible level of education.

Despite the above-stated facts, numerous people seem unable to realize their potential to the fullest sense of the word (Vrey, 1979: 42). As an example, reasonably large numbers of black adolescents from single parent families do not achieve the success their potential ought to make possible for them.

At this stage it needs to be pointed out that, in this study, an attempt will be made to account for reasons why most of these adolescents experience personal, social, educational and career choice problems. In order to place this problem area in a clear perspective, the following facts which might have contributed to adolescents' problems, warrant careful consideration.

■   **Lack of parental education**

In modern-day society people can become educated and trained in virtually any field such as sex education, computer education, conservation education, investment education, physical education, technological education and many others. If people make the effort

to obtain education on how to conserve nature and the environment, should they not be more concerned about being educated on sound parental responsibilities?

Parents need to be educated in current trends regarding child and parental behaviours. This includes child psychology, adolescent psychology and the contemporary parental life style. It is through education in these disciplines that parents, single parents in particular, acquire acumen in the art of successful parenting. This can be provided through guidance services.

■   **Single parenting**

Single parenting as a phenomenon in society results from various factors. Analysing these factors will place single parenting in perspective and effect a more sympathetic approach towards lending a helping hand. Single parenting also has challenges of its own. Again, when these challenges have been scientifically explored, educationist will be better able to intervene positively in assisting to alleviate the problems.

1.2   ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of the adolescent in a single parent family have been investigated by a number of researchers abroad, but very little or no investigation has been done on this phenomenon in the Republic of South Africa [RSA]. Kerka (1988) conducted research in the USA on single parents, career-related issues and needs. Abrahamse (1988) and Burge (1987) are just a few examples of some researchers who studied the subject of single parenting abroad.

In the RSA a number of researchers have investigated the need for guidance among adolescents in general. Warren (1989); Mohanoe (1983); Mathibedi (1991); Sedibe (1991); Stoop (1990); Kunutu (1990) and many others agree that there is a need for guidance and training of black adolescents in order to overcome their personal, social, educational and career problems. However, none of these researchers have explored the problems of the adolescent within the milieu of a single parent family.

The phenomenon of the single parent family has been singled out by many politicians as a major social problem. Political statements frequently label the victims of this phenomenon as the "lost generation". There is general concern because these children roam the streets during daytime and have nowhere to sleep at night - yet their parents are alive elsewhere.

It is therefore the aim of this study to explore these problems as objectively as possible. The fact is that among the black South African population thousands of children are being left with the single remaining parent (mother or father) or single grandparent. These children and their parents need to be identified and provided with guidance to accept themselves as people - not outcasts.

As fundamental social change takes place in South Africa, society should equip itself to cope with new problems as well as the legacy of problems which Apartheid South Africa failed to solve. The restructuring of education should take cognizance of these problems in an effort to provide equal education for all.

It should be emphasised that while every child possesses his own distinctive physical, social, mental and emotional characteristics and qualities, which constitute his individuality, there are children who are extremely different because they possess these qualities to a greater or lesser degree, with the result that they present very special problems. Such children require special attention, consideration, facilities and curriculum provision if their potential and capacity are to be developed (Sedibe, 1991: 5).

While pupils from all racial groups may encounter learning problems, such problems occur to a much greater extent amongst black pupils than amongst pupils from other racial groups. Explanations which are offered for this phenomenon include the historical backlog which black pupils experience in terms of economic, educational and social circumstances (Maree, 1995: 1).

The problem of underachievement by black pupils, as Maree (1995: 13) puts it:

> *... is one of the most serious this country is facing today, in this struggle towards a just and equal South Africa. This matter deserves an urgent place on any future agenda regarding the state of education in a post-apartheid South Africa.*

It should be noted however that not even the most strenuous and best intended efforts of affirmative action will be able to compensate for equal authentic education and immediate efforts are needed to uplift blacks in this critical field and as a result this will have impact on quality of work, career choice, and work in professional life. The solution of this problem thus mainly lies in research and strategies aimed at remediation with the emphasis on a problem-centred approach.

Adolescents from single parent families who attend school with others who live with both parents are no exception. Kelly (1956: 226) contends that these children are designated exceptional, because they present a marked deviation from the average.

On the issue of different qualities of individuals, Mohanoe (1983: 1-2) remarks as follows:

> *While there are general unifying characteristics shared by all adolescents the world over, there are those aspects which are endemic to certain socio-cultural situations. While there are physico-physiological (biological) convergences that are shared by all adolescents, there are also socio-cultural divergences that serve as differentials. It is they who give rise to specific multiple youth cultures that are a far cry from universalistic and diffuse monolithic youth culture.*

The present study is concerned with adolescents in the single parent family on their way to adulthood. It is, therefore, concerned with specific adolescents who come from a particular environment. It is important that the research approach and method should be meaningful, as viewed against the background of the adolescent in relation to the needs of the community.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.3.1 Introduction

In view of the above overview of the problem, it becomes necessary to examine the problem in greater detail and to direct attention to the specific area that constitutes the

phenomenon to be researched. The researcher will logically and systematically direct attention to the problem area by making use of the following structural questions:

1.3.1.1   How do black adolescents from a single parent family experience their needs regarding personal, educational, social and career-directness in terms of spontaneous dimension, interpersonal relationships and orientation towards adulthood?

1.3.1.2   What is the nature of school teachers' knowledge and understanding of these adolescents' personal needs in terms of spontaneous dimension, interpersonal relationships and orientation towards adulthood.

1.3.1.3   What is the attitude of the single parents towards the needs of their children in terms of interpersonal relationships and career-directness?

1.3.1.4   What role can guidance services play in black schools to assist adolescents from a single parent family in actualising their potential in terms of personal, social, educational and career-directness needs.

Within the framework provided by the above structural questions, the researcher will endeavour to highlight some of the essentials required to formulate a guidance programme in the school situation, which will effectively address the problem researched by this study.

To further clarify the structure that will be followed within this study to explore the problem as stated, it is necessary to formulate provisional research hypotheses.

1.3.2 Provisional hypotheses

It is postulated in this study that:

- Adolescents in general, and in the single parent family in particular, experience personal, social and career-directness problems which affect their interpersonal relationships and orientation towards adulthood. Such adolescents need guidance to overcome these problems.

- School teachers lack knowledge and understanding of adolescents' needs in general, and in particular those of adolescents from single parent families in terms of personal needs, interpersonal relationships, career-directness and orientation towards adulthood. As a result guidance in a school situation is essential to fill this vacuum.

- Single parents seem to have a negative attitude towards their children's needs in terms of their interpersonal relationships and career-directness. They project their frustrations to their children and transfer duties which are essentially parental duties, over to the school.

- Guidance in schools, particularly in black schools, is essential in assisting adolescents from a single parent family to actualize their potential in terms of personal, social, educational and career-directness needs.

1.4   EXPLANATION OF TERMS

1.4.1   <u>Adolescence</u>

According to Hurlock (1973: 2) the term *adolescence* is derived from the Latin verb "adolescere" which means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". She further states that "Adolescence is a period of transition when the individual changes physically and psychologically from a child to an adult" (Hurlock, 1973: 2).

Hamacheck (1971: 135), on the other hand, indicates that physical adolescence is a:

> *... universal phenomenon. What varies are the meanings and expectations that different cultures and subcultures within a culture place upon a growing youngster as he moves through the growth stage.*

The last-mentioned author outlines psychological adolescence by referring to it as:

> *... a state of mind, an attitude, a style of existence that begins with puberty and ends when one is relatively independent of parental control (Hamachek, 1971: 137-138).*

Grinder (1973: 2) describes adolescence as:

> *... a time when individuals begin to assert themselves as distinct human beings. Since no two persons have exactly the same experience or occupy*

identical positions in the social structure, each can assert his distinctness

providing he receives as least modest encouragement from society.

Vrey (1979: 165) is of the opinion that the term *adolescence* implies the period during which the child is at secondary school level, irrespective of age or sex. This definition of the term will be applicable for the purpose of this study.

1.4.2 Guidance and school guidance

Webster's Dictionary (Gove, 1981: 430) includes:

Advice in choosing courses, preparing for a vocation or further education, or coping with personal problems given to students by a teacher or a professional counsellor.

The report of the Work Committee: Guidance of the Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] (HSRC, 1981: 5-11; 1989) notes firstly that the terminology generally used with regard to School Guidance is open to diverse interpretations by the various education departments of the RSA: a situation the report recommends be rectified. It adopts the following as an operational definition of School Guidance:

It is a practice, a process of bringing the pupil into contact with the world of reality in such a way that he acquires life skills and techniques which allow him to direct himself competently (i.e. to become self-actualizing) within the educational, personal and social sphere and the world of work in order to progress and survive effectively (HSRC, 1981: 8).

The report sees guidance as incorporating education towards and preparation for adulthood (inclusive thus of career adulthood), and involving a particular view of man which implies "the common human dignity and basic rights of all persons" as well as "the importance of individual differences within every person" (HSRC, 1981: 8,10).

Shertzer, Stone and Stone (1976: 38) define guidance as:

... the process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world.

According to Naude and Bodibe (1986: 5) the most appropriate definition of guidance is the one adopted by the work of the De Lange Report on Education (1981) and they also agree with the view of the report that guidance is a process that brings the pupil into contact with reality so as to allow the pupil to actualise himself effectively.

Guidance, as defined by Lindhard, Dlamini and Barnard (1987: 1):

... is an affinity in which the teacher brings children into contact with the world as it really is, and helps them to make choices wisely in their day-to-day lives.

They further indicate that:

... guidance helps the child to develop. If he has no guidance it is likely that this development will take longer, for he will have to discover facts about himself and about life outside school which will take a good deal longer than discovering these facts under guidance in the classroom.

Guidance in education thus refers to the presentation of knowledge, information and advice to individuals or groups in a structured manner, so as to provide sufficient material upon which they may base choices or decisions. Here the emphasis is on the provision of information and advice. Through guidance:

... schools are encouraged to attend to the proper development of pupils as individuals which will result in successful future careers (Sedibe 1991: 12).

For the purpose of this study, the last-mentioned statement will constitute the meaning of the term guidance.

1.4.3 Counselling

According to Shertzer et al. (1976: 62) counselling in education is:

> *... a learning process in which individuals learn about themselves and the interpersonal relationships and behaviour that advance their personal development.*

Galloway (1990: 4) on the other hand, sees counselling as a process in which:

> *... one individual, the counsellor works with another, the client, to clarify the nature of some of the problems experienced or presented by the client, and to explore possible solutions. He further contends that counselling can also take place in a group but the essential characteristics remain, namely that it is problem oriented and it involves the interrelated stages of clarifying the nature of the problem and exploring possible solutions* (Galloway, 1990: 4).

1.4.4 Single parent

It is difficult to give an exact definition of the term *single parent* because, as Abrahamse (1988) puts it:

> *Young women with different background profiles exhibit markedly different rates of single parenthood, because teenage women who become single mothers are a highly diverse population - not all are equally responsive to some forms of social control.*

For the purpose of this study a single parent is any women or man who has the responsibility of sole supporter of their families, that is taking care of children without assistance of the other party.

1.4.5 Career

The noun *career* is defined in the Collins Concise English Dictionary (Guralnik, 1980: 112) as "a swift course. 2. One's progress through life in a particular vocation. 3. A profession or occupation". Super (Gysbers, 1984: 17) speaks of life career rainbow, which includes amongst other:

> *The continuation and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a life time and the pattern in which they fit together at any point of time* (Super in Gysbers, 1984: 17).

Thus the roles as "child, student, leasurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent, pensioner" (Super, 1980: 284) are included in this definition.

Gybers and Moore (Gysbers, 1984: 17) who proposed the concept of life career development, define it as "self-development over the life span through the integration of the roles, settings and events of a person's life". The word development, as used by these authors, indicates that people are continually in the process of becoming.

In addition to the above, the term career implies the following: "Life of professional work" (Collin: 1980). The meaning of career can also be described as a general cause of action or progress through life, which is a way of living, occupation and profession.

In other words a career enables one to have a chance of altering his way of life. Throughout this study the last-mentioned description will constitute the meaning of the term career.

1.4.6 <u>Lifeworld</u>

Vrey (1979: 14) defines the term "lifeworld" as follows:

> *An individual's lifeworld can be represented as a network of relationships with objects, people, ideas, himself. These are often interdependent and interactive, so that the nature and horizons of his lifeworld are never static. This Gestalt of meaningful relationships makes up the individual lifeworld.*

1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study are as follows:

■ To give an exposition of the lifeworld of the black adolescent in a single parent family as typically found in Western Societies. The content presented will be extrapolated to the black adolescent in a single parent family in South-Africa where possible and applicable, due to the unavailability of literature and enough research findings concerning black South African adolescents in a single parent family. The researcher holds the opinion that there are a number of universal commonalities between black adolescents. In addition to this, the assumption is made that black South African adolescents and their parents have been influenced by the typical Western image of adolescence. The exposition of the lifeworld of the adolescent

will be in terms of the following three dimensions of educational concern with the adolescent: spontaneous dimension, interpersonal relationships and orientation towards adulthood.

- To discuss the personal, social, educational and career needs of the black adolescent in a single parent family in order to determine the necessity of guidance.

- To conduct an empirical investigation into ways in which black adolescent pupils in a single parent family experience their personal, social, educational and career needs, in order to establish or reject the necessity of guidance in black schools.

- To ascertain through an empirical study the nature of teachers' knowledge and understanding of black adolescents in single parent families, in order to establish or reject the necessity of guidance in black schools.

- To ascertain through an empirical study the attitude of black single parents towards the personal, social, educational and career-directness problems experienced by their children and how these problems project towards them as parents.

- To make certain recommendations based on the results of the empirical investigation regarding the provision of special guidance services in a school system for black adolescents in a single parent family.

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

1.6.1 <u>Literature study and critical study of texts</u>

An effective literature study of both primary and secondary sources is essential as it forms a fundamental part of research. It serves as a point of departure by enabling the researcher to acquaint himself thoroughly with the latest research and developments covered in the field being studied. This will prevent both trivial and superficial research and unnecessary duplication. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to determine the boundaries of his field and it provides him with the opportunity to place his problem in perspective, which in turn results in a better evaluation of his own findings (Landman, 1980: 33; RAU, 19?6: 7-21).

In support of an in-depth literature study, a critical study of texts should also be made, inclusive of the following:

- Analysis of the title and subtitles of literature consulted.

- Analysis of content pages and table of contents.

- Analysis and evaluation of problem statements and hypotheses formulation appearing in the various texts.

- Analysis and evaluation of the methodological justification in the various texts consulted.

- The compilation of tables of essentials found in and taken from evaluation of the texts consulted.

- The analysis and evaluation of the meaning of the texts with regard to the adolescent in a single parent family.

■   Logical and phenomenological verification of various statements made regarding the adolescent in a single parent family.

■   An overview of the commentaries made in the texts consulted.

A literature study using relevant primary and secondary sources, and inclusive of a critical study of the texts, was undertaken.

1.6.2   The phenomenological method

According to Killian and Viljoen (1974: 3) pedagogic is a particular form of "practising science" via the "systematic assimilation of scientific insights", with education as the object of the research. The phenomenological method is employed in order to discover the essences of a phenomenon as they appear against the background of universal reality. Initially the essentials have to be distinguished and separated from non-essential features of the phenomenon being studied. These essentials subsequently disclose themselves only via contemplative thinking, reflection, description, elucidation and interpretation.

Reflection includes going to the roots or radical discovery of the aspects: thus Edmund Husserl (Landman & Gouws, 1969: 17) calls this method "radical empiricism".

The essentials are then described in formulations called categories, which themselves are descriptions of ways of thinking via which the matter itself is penetrated or reached. The categories must have the quality of universal validity and they must, furthermore, be irreducible or ontologically determined. The relationship between the categories may be

established, but no hierarchical structure of categories exists - only "structural enunciation" (of real pedagogic essences) (Killian & Viljoen, 1974: 17).

Criteria are constituted from categories and these criteria are used to judge whether or not an appearance is an authentic manifestation of the phenomenon it appears to be, or not. Criteria line theory to practice (Killian & Viljoen, 1974: 3-8; Landman & Gouws, 1969: 15-78; Landman, Van Zyl & Roos, 1975: 1-49; Pickworth, 1989: 7).

According to Husserl (Landman & Gouws, 1969: 24-25) and Landman (University of Pretoria, 1989: 2) phenomenology is the method that allows phenomena to be seen as they allow themselves to be seen. Thus from a phenomenological standpoint, the method entails going back to the matter itself with the phenomenologist reconnoitring reality by allowing the said reality to describe and explain itself as it would have done if it could.

Via the use of phenomenological thought processes and steps, the essentials of the research theme can be uncovered in order to penetrate, non-judgementally, to the nature thereof. These essentials can then be described and interpreted in a conscious attempt at problem solving.

The point of departure for the phenomenologist is neither subjective nor objective, but rather the subject-object relationship or relationship between people and the world (Landman & Gouws, 1969: 28). In order to describe the nature of reality accurately, certain reduction steps need to be followed, the justification of which forces the phenomenologist to test characteristics he determines against the reality. Some of these steps include:

- The identification and definition of the phenomenon being studied and the use thereof as a point of departure.

- The suspension of all beliefs, dogmas, opinions, theories, philosophies and presuppositions that might affect the outcome.

- That the phenomenologist looks at diverse ways in which the phenomenon manifests itself from a variety of perspectives, having excluded non-relevant features.

- That he distinguishes between and separates the essentials from the non-essentials and deals only with the former, namely those features which do not change, are optic, real and apparent.

- Reflection on how the natural, optic characteristics can be intentionally and radically empirically constituted - which, to a degree, involves the use of intuition.

- A consideration of the alliance and relationship between the characteristics must take place.

- A hermeneutic layout must be applied in order to interpret the meaningfulness of what has been found within the whole structure (Landman & Gouws, 1969: 30-33).

As regards the present study, the phenomenological method as the fundamental or basic method complies with acceptable methodological requirements as follows:

- The lifeworld of the adolescent in a single parent family represents the point of departure in this study in order to determine his needs from a school guidance perspective.

- Phenomenology as method lends itself to a purposeful, critical and systematic investigation of the adolescent in a single parent family from a guidance perspective.

- Via phenomenological scrutiny of the adolescent in a single parent family, the true essence of the role of guidance in assisting the adolescent to meet his personal, social, educational and career choice needs, is revealed.

- Phenomenology as method is free of all prejudicial obfuscation of a metaphysical or theoretical nature so that the knowledge of the needs of the adolescent in a single parent family is revealed.

- For the purpose of this study the phenomenological method is anthropologically and pedagogically accountable, and from a school guidance perspective phenomenology as method is also viable and also permissable from a life and work view (Pickworth, 1989: 7-8; Van Wyk, 1985: 22-23).

1.6.3   The triadic method

Using the triadic method involves moving from a first premise or thesis to a second premise or thesis, followed by a level or niveau elevation when synthesis is reached.

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- **First thesis:** Each person possesses his own unique potential. This potential can be realized through school guidance resulting in the acquisition of self-knowledge and career development and competence in essential life skills needed.

- **Second thesis:** School guidance as covered in this study, offers the adolescent in a single parent family the opportunity to realize his potential.

- **Synthesis:** In this study, a school guidance programme consisting of both general and career guidance will be investigated in an attempt to establish its role in assisting the adolescent in a single parent family to meet his personal, social, educational and career choice needs.

1.6.4   The hermeneutic method

The hermeneutic method involves the science of exegesis (hermeneutics), a method to establish what the goal, sense and purpose of the matter under investigation is (Jacobs, 1983: 72-73). Etymologically speaking, the concept *hermeneutic* derives from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret, explain and create (Landman & Gouws, 1969: 32-33).

As hermeneutics is defined in the shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Onions, 1973: 956) as "pertaining to interpretation", it is used in this study with the purpose of understanding, explaining and interpreting. The hermeneutic question posed in this study is: **What are the needs of the adolescent in the single parent family and how can these needs be met through a school guidance programme?**

1.6.5 Field study method

When a researcher seeks a solution to a problem entrenched in the present, he frequently makes a survey of prevailing conditions in the field being studied by means of research aids such as questionnaires, interviews or schedules. This constitutes research (RAU, 1986: 31).

Employment of the field study method in this instance entails the study of the phenomenon *adolescent in a single parent family* with the aid of a questionnaire, the processing and interpretation of data thus acquired and the compilation of profiles from the said data.

1.6.5.1 Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires will be designed, namely one for the adolescents (pupils) and the other for the teachers. The questionnaire statements will be based on the content of the literature study and will claim content validity. As the two questionnaires share the same themes, their statements will be basically similar. They will only differ in as much as they address different respondents, namely pupils and teachers respectively.

1.6.5.2 The sample

For logistical and financial reasons such as transport, time and expenses, the investigation will include only high schools within the North West Province Eastern Region (Moretele Region). The pupil sample will consist of black Standard 8 and 10 pupils of both genders. The reason why these two groups have been decided upon, is to make provision for two

levels of adolescent development towards adulthood, as this will make comparison possible. The latter is also the reason why both genders are involved in the investigation.

The teacher sample will consist of male and female teachers of the sample schools. Three high schools will be used as samples, one of which will be located in an affluent economic area (semi-urban), the other two in an underdeveloped disadvantaged economic area (rural).

Respondents will be selected through random sampling. The overall supervision of the administration of the questionnaire will be mainly the personal responsibility of the researcher.

1.7   PROGRAMME OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter One serves as an introductory orientation and states the problem of the research, giving the explanation of important terms and concepts, the aim of the research as well as the method of research and programme or plan of study.

In **Chapter Two** available literature is reviewed in order to shed more light on the theoretical perspective. An analysis will be made of an educational model of development as a framework for the prospective research. This will be followed by a detailed discussion of the lifeworld of the adolescent from a single parent family perspective.

Chapter Three deals with the provision of guidance to the adolescent in a single parent family. This will concentrate on personal guidance, social guidance, educational guidance and career choice as well as meeting the needs of adolescents in the single parent family

as outlined in Chapter Two. Attention will be given to spontaneous and formalised guidance; objectives; content and strategies of the guidance programme and to a certain extent counselling where necessary. Parental as well as family involvement and the educational criteria for guidance will be explored. An assessment will be made of current guidance programmes in black schools.

In **Chapter Four** the design of the empirical investigation will be discussed. An assessment will be made of the views of teachers and adolescents in single parent families regarding these adolescents' need for guidance. Questionnaires will be designed to make this assessment. These questionnaires will be based on the content of Chapters 2 and 3.

In **Chapter Five** an interpretation and discussion of the empirical findings will be undertaken. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the adolescents' guidance needs will be compared with the adolescents' expression of these needs. Parents' perception of their children's needs will also be compared with those of the adolescents and their teachers.

Chapter Six will consist of a synopsis of the thesis and will formulate recommendations regarding future restructuring and provision of guidance services in schools that will also cater for adolescents in a single parent family as a unique group.

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