EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ON THE PROACTIVE INNOVATION DIMENSIONS OF FINTECH FIRMS IN FCT, ABUJA

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of fintech firms has intensified the need for organisations to develop employee capabilities that can stimulate proactive innovation; however, many fintech firms still struggle to translate employee development initiatives into opportunity exploration and idea generation. This study therefore examined the effect of employee capacity development strategies on the proactive innovation dimensions of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria. The study specifically investigated how skill development and mentoring and coaching influence opportunity exploration and idea generation among employees of fintech firms. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 213 employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, and due to the relatively manageable size of the population, a census sampling technique was employed, making the sample size 213 respondents. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha and validity was ensured through content validity. Data were analysed using regression analysis with the aid of SPSS version 27. The findings revealed that skill development had a significant positive effect on opportunity exploration, while mentoring and coaching significantly influenced idea generation among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Based on these findings, the study concluded that employee capacity development strategies play a critical role in enhancing proactive innovation within fintech organisations. The study therefore recommended that fintech firms should strengthen structured skill development programmes and institutionalise mentoring and coaching practices to stimulate employees' opportunity exploration and idea generation capabilities.

Keywords: Employee capacity development strategies, skill development, mentoring and coaching, proactive innovation, opportunity exploration, idea generation, fintech firms.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of contemporary financial systems has increasingly drawn attention to the strategic importance of employee capacity development in organisations seeking sustained competitiveness. Across the globe, firms operating in technology-intensive sectors have begun to reconsider how they cultivate human capabilities, not merely as an administrative function but as a central driver of organisational adaptability and innovation. In knowledge-driven economies, where technological disruptions can redefine industry structures within a few years, organisations that invest in developing employee capabilities tend to display greater responsiveness to emerging opportunities and market shifts. The financial services sector, and fintech in particular, illustrates this trend rather vividly. Fintech firms operate at the intersection of finance, digital technology, and data analytics an environment that demands continuous learning, creative experimentation, and the ability to anticipate emerging financial solutions. In this regard, capacity development strategies such as structured training, mentoring relationships, and continuous professional learning have gradually moved to the forefront of organisational priorities. Recent scholarship has increasingly linked such strategies to innovation outcomes, organisational agility, and firm growth in financial institutions (Bhutto et al., 2023; Toshpulatov, 2024). As digital transformation accelerates globally, the conversation has shifted from whether organisations should develop employee capabilities to how such development can shape proactive innovation behaviours within rapidly evolving sectors.

Employee capacity development strategies broadly refer to structured organisational

efforts aimed at enhancing employees' knowledge, competencies, and behavioural capabilities in ways that support strategic organisational objectives. Within dynamic sectors such as fintech, these strategies are rarely limited to routine training programmes; rather, they involve deliberate mechanisms that nurture creative thinking, technological proficiency, and adaptive problem-solving. Two dimensions appear particularly relevant within this context skill development, and mentoring and coaching. Skill development encompasses systematic learning initiatives designed to equip employees with technical, analytical, and digital competencies necessary for navigating complex financial technologies. In fintech organisations, where algorithms, blockchain applications, and digital payment infrastructures evolve continuously, the constant upgrading of employees' technical and analytical skills becomes almost inevitable (Jothi, 2025; Song et al., 2024). Skill development therefore extends beyond conventional professional training; it fosters a mindset oriented toward experimentation and solution discovery. Mentoring and coaching, on the other hand, introduce a relational dimension to capacity development. Through these interactions, experienced professionals guide less experienced employees in navigating organisational challenges, interpreting emerging technological trends, and refining innovative ideas. Evidence suggests that managerial coaching and mentorship relationships can stimulate employees' innovative behaviours by encouraging reflection, idea articulation, and collaborative learning (Pajuoja et al., 2025; Wang & Shibayama, 2021). In technology-driven environments such as fintech firms, such developmental relationships may play a subtle yet powerful role in translating individual competence into proactive innovation activities.

Proactive innovation itself represents a behavioural orientation in which employees actively seek new possibilities, anticipate emerging needs, and initiate novel solutions rather than merely responding to existing demands. In fintech firms operating within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria, this orientation becomes particularly salient. Abuja has gradually emerged as a growing hub for financial technology start-ups and digital financial service providers, driven by increasing digital financial inclusion and government interest in technological entrepreneurship. Within such environments, innovation often unfolds through everyday employee actions spotting new financial opportunities, proposing digital solutions, or refining existing financial platforms. Two dimensions commonly capture this proactive innovation orientation: opportunity exploration and idea generation. Opportunity exploration involves employees' ability to identify potential technological or market opportunities before they fully materialise, often through analysing financial trends, regulatory changes, or emerging consumer needs. Within fintech ecosystems, this may involve recognising opportunities for mobile payment solutions, blockchain-based verification systems, or AI-driven credit assessment platforms. Idea generation, by contrast, reflects the cognitive and creative process through which employees conceptualise novel approaches, products, or service improvements. These ideas might emerge through collaborative discussions, experimentation with financial technologies, or reflections on operational inefficiencies. In sectors shaped by rapid technological disruption, the capacity of employees to explore opportunities and generate ideas becomes a defining feature of organisational resilience and competitiveness (Zhang et al., 2024; Xiao, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the potential interplay between employee capacity development strategies and proactive innovation within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja becomes an intriguing area of enquiry. It seems plausible that organisations investing deliberately in skill development programmes may cultivate employees who are more confident in experimenting with digital tools, analysing financial data, and identifying emerging technological possibilities. Likewise, mentoring and coaching relationships might provide the intellectual and psychological space within which employees refine ideas, challenge existing practices, and collaborate in shaping innovative financial solutions. The fintech landscape in Nigeria, marked by rapid technological adoption and a vibrant start-up culture, provides a compelling setting where such relationships could unfold. Yet the dynamics are unlikely to be straightforward.

Capacity development initiatives might encourage exploration in some contexts while producing only incremental improvements in others, depending on organisational culture, leadership support, or regulatory environments. Consequently, examining how these development strategies interact with proactive innovation behaviours within fintech firms in Abuja remains an important empirical question one that invites closer scholarly attention rather than immediate conclusions.

Statement of Problem

Nigeria's fintech ecosystem had expanded rapidly in recent years, positioning the country as one of Africa's leading fintech markets. Reports indicated that the sector attracted more than US$2 billion in investment in 2024 alone, reflecting the growing demand for digital financial solutions and the increasing participation of fintech start-ups across major Nigerian cities (Nairametrics, 2024). Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, had increasingly emerged as a developing technology hub where fintech firms provided digital payment services, financial technology solutions, and innovative financial products to businesses and individuals. Yet the pace of technological evolution, regulatory adjustments, and intense market competition continued to place significant pressure on fintech organisations to innovate continuously. Within this context, the ability of employees to engage in opportunity exploration identifying new technological or market possibilities and idea generation developing creative solutions for digital financial services became a critical determinant of organisational survival and competitiveness (Zhang et al., 2024; Xiao, 2022). However, anecdotal evidence from the Nigerian fintech ecosystem suggested that many firms still struggled to translate rapid sectoral growth into sustained internal innovation capabilities, particularly where employee competencies and developmental support mechanisms remained insufficiently structured.

Beyond the observable practical challenges within fintech firms, the scholarly literature also revealed notable empirical gaps that warranted further investigation. Existing research had examined the relationship between training, skills development, and organisational outcomes within financial institutions, indicating that employee development initiatives could enhance productivity, innovation, and firm growth (Toshpulatov, 2024; Sulaymonov et al., 2025). Other studies had explored how fintech adoption and human resource competencies contributed to service innovation and organisational performance within the banking sector (Bhutto et al., 2023). Similarly, research on managerial coaching and mentorship suggested that developmental relationships could stimulate employees' innovative behaviours and creative performance within technology-driven organisations (Pajuoja et al., 2025; Wang & Shibayama, 2021). Nevertheless, these studies largely examined innovation outcomes in broader financial institutions or general organisational settings rather than focusing specifically on fintech firms operating within emerging digital ecosystems such as Nigeria. Moreover, relatively few studies had simultaneously examined specific employee capacity development strategies particularly skill development and mentoring or coaching in relation to proactive innovation dimensions such as opportunity exploration and idea generation. The contextual realities of fintech firms in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria therefore remained insufficiently represented in the existing body of knowledge. Consequently, the absence of empirical evidence linking employee capacity development strategies to proactive innovation dimensions within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja created a clear research gap, thereby necessitating this study.

The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of employee capacity development strategies on the proactive innovation dimensions of fintech firms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

i. examine the effect of skill development on opportunity exploration in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

ii. To determine the effect of mentoring and coaching on idea generation in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

In line with the objectives and the research questions of this study, the following hypotheses were considered:

H_{01}: Skill development has no significant effect on opportunity exploration in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

H_{02}: Mentoring and coaching have no significant effect on idea generation in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Employee Capacity Development Strategies

Organisations operating in knowledge-intensive industries increasingly recognise that their competitive advantage often rests less on physical assets and more on the capabilities of their workforce. Within this broader perspective, employee capacity development strategies refer to deliberate organisational efforts aimed at strengthening employees' knowledge, competencies, and behavioural skills in ways that align with organisational objectives and evolving industry demands. Rather than being confined to routine training activities, capacity development represents a continuous organisational commitment to nurturing intellectual capital, encouraging professional growth, and enabling employees to adapt to technological and market changes. In sectors shaped by rapid innovation such as fintech capacity development often determines how effectively firms translate technological possibilities into workable financial solutions. As digital financial platforms evolve, organisations require employees who are capable not only of understanding complex systems but also of experimenting with new approaches and identifying emerging financial opportunities (Song et al., 2024; Buba and Daniel, 2026).

Scholars increasingly describe employee capacity development as a strategic mechanism through which organisations cultivate adaptive expertise and innovative capability. In contemporary financial institutions, development initiatives frequently integrate digital learning platforms, collaborative knowledge sharing, mentoring relationships, and experiential learning opportunities designed to deepen employees' problem-solving abilities. These initiatives reflect a broader recognition that innovation rarely occurs spontaneously; rather, it grows gradually through learning processes that expand employees' cognitive and technical capacities. Within fintech environments, where technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence, and mobile financial applications continue to reshape service delivery, organisations rely heavily on capacity development initiatives to equip employees with the competencies necessary to operate effectively within complex digital ecosystems (Bhutto et al., 2023; Jothi, 2025). Consequently, employee capacity development strategies increasingly function as a bridge between organisational learning and proactive innovation behaviour.

Skill Development

Skill development represents one of the central dimensions of employee capacity development strategies. It refers to the systematic process through which organisations equip employees with technical, cognitive, and behavioural competencies necessary for performing their roles effectively and adapting to evolving industry demands. Within the fintech sector, skill development often focuses on enhancing employees' technological literacy, data analytics capabilities, cybersecurity awareness, and financial technology expertise. These competencies enable employees to engage meaningfully with emerging digital systems while simultaneously identifying innovative opportunities within financial markets. From a conceptual standpoint, skill development involves both exploitative learning refining existing competencies and explorative learning acquiring new capabilities that allow organisations to venture into unfamiliar technological domains (Song et al., 2024; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024).

In practice, fintech firms frequently adopt multiple approaches to skill development, including structured training programmes, digital learning modules, professional certification courses, and experiential learning initiatives. These initiatives allow employees to develop specialised expertise that supports organisational innovation processes. For example, employees trained in blockchain technology or machine learning may contribute to the development of secure digital payment systems or algorithm-driven financial services. Recent scholarship suggests that organisations investing consistently in employee skill development often experience improvements in

productivity, service innovation, and organisational performance because skilled employees are more capable of analysing complex problems and proposing creative solutions (Toshpulatov, 2024; Sulaymonov et al., 2025). In this sense, skill development functions not only as a mechanism for improving employee performance but also as a catalyst for generating new ideas and identifying untapped opportunities within technology-driven industries.

Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring and coaching constitute another critical dimension of employee capacity development strategies, particularly within knowledge-intensive sectors where experiential knowledge plays a vital role in professional learning. Mentoring generally involves a developmental relationship in which a more experienced individual provides guidance, advice, and support to a less experienced colleague in order to facilitate professional growth and career advancement. Coaching, by contrast, tends to focus more directly on improving employees' performance through structured feedback, reflective dialogue, and goal-oriented developmental interactions. Although conceptually distinct, both practices share a common purpose: enabling employees to learn from organisational experience while refining their professional capabilities (Zheng et al., 2022; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024).

Within fintech firms, mentoring and coaching relationships often serve as informal learning channels through which employees gain practical insights into technological innovation and financial market dynamics. Experienced professionals may guide junior employees in navigating complex digital infrastructures, interpreting regulatory requirements, or refining innovative product ideas. These developmental relationships can encourage employees to question established routines, explore alternative approaches, and experiment with new technological possibilities. Recent research suggests that managerial coaching can significantly influence employees' innovative behaviour by creating an environment that encourages intellectual curiosity and collaborative problem-solving (Pajuoja et al., 2025). Similarly, mentoring relationships have been linked to enhanced creativity and knowledge exchange within technology-driven organisations because mentors often expose mentees to new perspectives and professional networks that stimulate idea development (Li et al., 2024; Wang & Shibayama, 2021).

Proactive Innovation

Proactive innovation refers to a behavioural orientation in which employees deliberately initiate and pursue new ideas, opportunities, and improvements rather than simply responding to existing organisational demands. Within innovation literature, proactive innovation is often associated with employees' willingness to anticipate emerging challenges, explore novel technological possibilities, and develop creative solutions that enhance organisational performance. This perspective emphasises individual initiative and forward-looking behaviour, recognising that innovation frequently begins with employees who question existing practices and envision alternative ways of achieving organisational objectives. In dynamic sectors such as fintech, proactive innovation becomes particularly significant because the pace of technological advancement requires employees to remain alert to new developments and continuously experiment with emerging digital solutions (Zhang et al., 2024; Buba and Daniel, 2026).

From an organisational perspective, proactive innovation reflects the cumulative outcome of employees' curiosity, learning orientation, and collaborative engagement. Fintech firms often operate within volatile technological landscapes where regulatory changes, cybersecurity challenges, and evolving customer expectations create constant pressure for innovation. Employees who exhibit proactive innovation behaviour tend to analyse financial trends, evaluate emerging technologies, and propose novel service concepts that strengthen organisational competitiveness. This behavioural orientation is therefore closely connected to organisational learning and human capital development. When employees possess the necessary knowledge and confidence to explore new ideas, they become more likely to engage in behaviours that contribute to continuous innovation and organisational resilience (Deep, 2025; Buba and Daniel, 2026).

Opportunity Exploration

Opportunity exploration represents a key dimension of proactive innovation and refers to the process through which employees identify, investigate, and evaluate new possibilities that could generate value for the organisation. In innovation-driven industries, opportunity exploration often involves scanning technological trends, analysing market dynamics, and recognising unmet customer needs that may lead to the development of new products or services. Within fintech firms, opportunity exploration might include identifying emerging payment technologies, exploring blockchain applications, or recognising new financial inclusion opportunities for underserved populations. Such exploratory activities enable organisations to move beyond incremental improvements and instead pursue transformative innovations that reshape financial service delivery (Jiang et al., 2021; Buba and Daniel, 2026).

Conceptually, opportunity exploration is closely linked to organisational learning because employees must engage in experimentation, knowledge acquisition, and analytical reasoning to identify viable opportunities. Fintech professionals who possess strong digital and analytical skills are often better positioned to interpret complex financial data and recognise patterns that signal potential innovation opportunities. In rapidly evolving digital economies, opportunity exploration therefore becomes an essential capability for fintech organisations seeking to remain competitive. Employees who engage actively in exploration help organisations anticipate technological shifts and develop strategic responses that maintain their relevance within increasingly competitive financial markets (Zhang et al., 2024; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024).

Idea Generation

Idea generation constitutes another critical dimension of proactive innovation and refers to the creative process through which employees develop novel concepts, solutions, or improvements that can address organisational challenges or create new value. While opportunity exploration focuses on recognising possibilities, idea generation centres on transforming those possibilities into workable concepts. Within fintech organisations, idea generation might involve designing new digital payment solutions, developing user-friendly financial applications, or proposing innovative approaches to risk management. These ideas often emerge through collaborative discussions, experimentation with digital technologies, and reflection on operational challenges within financial service delivery (Xiao, 2022).

The process of idea generation is inherently cognitive and social. Employees frequently draw upon their professional knowledge, technological expertise, and interactions with colleagues to construct innovative ideas. Organisations that encourage open communication, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning tend to create environments where employees feel confident proposing unconventional ideas. Within fintech firms, where creativity and technological experimentation are highly valued, employees who engage actively in idea generation contribute directly to the development of innovative financial products and services. Consequently, idea generation represents a fundamental mechanism through which individual creativity translates into organisational innovation and competitive advantage (Deep, 2025).

Theoretical Framework: Human Capital Theory

This study was anchored on Human Capital Theory, originally advanced by Gary Becker in 1964 and subsequently refined by numerous scholars within organisational and economic research. The theory proposed that investments in education, training, and employee development enhance individuals' productive capabilities, thereby increasing organisational and economic performance. Although developed several decades ago, the theory has remained highly relevant in contemporary research, particularly in industries characterised by rapid technological change and knowledge-based competition. Recent interpretations emphasise that organisations capable of developing employees' intellectual and professional capabilities are more likely to achieve innovation and sustainable growth because human capital functions as a key driver of organisational learning and adaptability (Elsayed et al., 2025).

The major assumption of Human Capital Theory is that employees possess knowledge, skills, and competencies that function as valuable economic assets. When organisations invest in developing these capabilities through training, mentoring, or professional learning opportunities, employees become more productive and capable of contributing to organisational innovation and performance. Within fintech environments, where technological competence and analytical expertise play a decisive role in organisational success, this assumption appears particularly relevant. Employees who receive consistent developmental support are more likely to understand emerging technologies, identify new financial opportunities, and generate innovative ideas that enhance organisational competitiveness (Bhutto et al., 2023; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024).

Despite its influence, Human Capital Theory has faced several criticisms. Some scholars argue that the theory tends to emphasise economic returns from education and training while underestimating broader organisational and social factors that shape employee performance. Others suggest that the theory assumes a relatively direct relationship between investment in human capital and organisational outcomes, whereas in reality organisational culture, leadership support, and institutional constraints may significantly influence the effectiveness of development initiatives. Nevertheless, the theory continues to offer valuable insights into the strategic importance of employee development because it highlights the role of knowledge and skills as drivers of productivity and innovation (Toshpulatov, 2024).

The strength of Human Capital Theory lies in its ability to explain how organisational investment in employee development can translate into improved performance, innovation, and competitive advantage. By emphasising the strategic value of employees' knowledge and competencies, the theory provides a conceptual foundation for examining how capacity development strategies influence organisational outcomes. In the context of this study, the theory offered a useful framework for understanding how skill development, mentoring, and coaching could enhance employees' ability to explore opportunities and generate innovative ideas within fintech firms in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. Through this lens, employee capacity development strategies were conceptualised as strategic investments that strengthened the intellectual capabilities of fintech employees and stimulated proactive innovation behaviour within their organisations.

Empirical Review

Bhutto et al. (2023) examined whether FinTech adoption influenced firm growth in the banking sector and whether service innovation mediated that relationship, while also assessing the contribution of human resource competency to FinTech adoption. The study was conducted in the United States and used a quantitative survey design involving employees drawn from 55 banks. From that frame, 311 usable responses were obtained through questionnaire administration; the accessible article summary reported the use of survey questionnaires and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for analysis, although it did not spell out the precise sampling technique beyond the distribution of instruments across the banks. The findings indicated that human resource competencies such as creating, adapting to change, initiating action, and interpretive analysis positively affected FinTech adoption, while service innovation contributed to firm growth and mediated the FinTech adoption–growth nexus. On that basis, the authors recommended more effective human resource practices aimed at developing employee competencies that could support FinTech adoption, service innovation, and growth. In the accessible summary, however, the article did not elaborate a distinct limitations section in detail.

Jothi (2025) investigated the impact of digital training and development on employee capacity building in the financial service industry in Chennai District, India, with specific attention to e-learning, mobile learning, digital skill enhancement, and virtual simulation, and also explored gender-based differences in perceived outcomes. The study adopted a cross-sectional mixed-methods approach and relied on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. Although 200 employees were approached, 180 valid responses from banking, insurance, and investment management employees were analysed. The study used descriptive statistics, independent-sample t-

tests, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The results suggested that digital training practices were positively associated with capacity building, with e-learning and mobile learning emerging as the strongest predictors; digital skill enhancement had a moderate effect, whereas virtual simulation recorded the weakest contribution. The regression model reportedly explained 73% of the variance in capacity building. Jothi therefore recommended that financial service organisations in Chennai should prioritise high-impact digital learning modes, improve the design and relevance of virtual simulation, bridge gender perception gaps, and institute ongoing monitoring of training effectiveness. The article also acknowledged limitations, noting that the study was geographically restricted to Chennai and relied on self-reported data, which could constrain generalisability and introduce response bias.

Elsayed et al. (2025), as listed in the reference supplied by you, focused on the impact of employability skills development on improving corporate financial performance. However, the accessible online record that could be verified during this review pointed to a closely related abstract under a different journal and DOI trail, which framed the work as an historical and case-based analysis of financial education and employability skills in relation to corporate performance rather than as a conventional field survey. In that accessible abstract, the paper appeared to rely on documentary analysis, historical examples, and case illustrations rather than a stated population, sample size, or sampling technique, and it concluded that financial literacy and employability skills improved decision-making, engagement, risk management, resilience, innovation, and long-term financial growth. Because the verified accessible source did not provide a full methods section, detailed recommendations and formal limitations were not explicitly reported there. Accordingly, this particular entry should be treated with caution until the exact final published version matching your cited DOI is independently retrieved from the publisher's site.

Toshpulatov (2024) investigated the impact of employee training and skills development on the growth of financial companies in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The study, as presented in the article, compared trained and untrained managers and framed one main hypothesis together with five sub-hypotheses covering human relations, attention to employee training, openness to change and innovation, self-confidence in work, and compliance with job descriptions. The article identified employees and managers of financial companies in Tashkent during 2020–2024 as the statistical population and stated that respondents were randomly selected; the analysis relied on questionnaire items and t-tests comparing the two groups, although the accessible text did not clearly disclose the final sample size. The findings showed that trained managers performed better than untrained managers across the tested dimensions and that training and skill-learning courses improved employee productivity and organisational growth, especially in cooperation and participation, ability to perform different tasks, and increased job knowledge. The author consequently emphasised the need for effective implementation, post-training measurement, and evaluation of training and skills development programmes. The accessible article noted criticisms and suggestions for improving the programmes, but it did not set out a separate formal limitations section in detail.

Song et al. (2024) set out to distinguish the effects of exploitative training and explorative training on organisational performance, particularly short-term performance and long-term competence. The study used a quasi-experimental design and a difference-in-differences analytical approach, which is quite notable because it moved beyond a single cross-sectional snapshot and attempted causal inference. In the accessible abstract, the authors reported that they categorised employee training according to whether it deepened existing knowledge or expanded the firm's knowledge base, and then estimated the effects of those two training types on different performance dimensions. The findings suggested that exploitative training was more effective for short-term performance, while explorative training made a stronger contribution to long-term competence. The study therefore implied that organisations should align training investments with the particular performance horizon they sought to improve. Because the accessible publisher

abstract was limited, details on population size, sample size, data collection instrument, and stated limitations were not fully available in the accessible record reviewed here.

Yertas (2024) examined the role of training and continuous development in improving employee productivity and its impact on company financial performance. The accessible indexed summary described the article as a qualitative systematic literature review synthesising recent studies across multiple industries rather than as a single-site empirical survey. On that basis, no conventional population, sampling frame, sample size, or questionnaire administration procedure was reported in the accessible source. The methodological approach was presented as a review of extant literature underpinned by the Resource-Based View and employee motivation perspectives. The study concluded that tailored training and continuous development could improve employee productivity and, through that route, strengthen financial performance. In practical terms, it recommended aligning training initiatives with strategic business objectives. Yet, because only the accessible summary could be verified, the review did not provide a detailed limitations section beyond the inherent scope constraints of literature synthesis.

Sulaymonov et al. (2025) investigated the effect of organisational training on the performance of employees in financial companies in Uzbekistan, specifically within Tashkent. The study was described as applied, descriptive, and correlational. Its statistical population comprised 140 employees of financial companies working in Tashkent during the 2023–2024 period, from which 60 respondents were selected through simple random sampling. Two questionnaires covering training and organisational performance were used for primary data collection, and the data were analysed with Pearson's correlation coefficient and SPSS; the later part of the paper also discussed path analysis results. The findings indicated a significant direct relationship between organisational training and organisational performance, with improvements reflected in empowerment, competence, freedom of action, effectiveness, meaningfulness, trust, and employee environment, and the conclusion section further stated that the direct and indirect effects of organisational learning on performance could rise to over 90%. The authors recommended that financial companies should appoint managers and recruit employees who were serious about organisational performance and capable of institutionalising learning and knowledge application. The accessible text, though, did not present a separately labelled limitations section.

Archana and Kannan (2025) explored employee training and development strategy in Motilal Oswal Financial Services with reference to Coimbatore City, India. From the accessible indexed extract, the study appeared to be an organisation-focused survey that included 152 respondents, many of whom had between five and seven years of experience. The analysis employed simple percentage analysis and Garrett ranking to assess factors influencing overall training and development. Although the accessible snippet did not clearly state the research design, sampling technique, or exact instrument used, the pattern of reporting strongly suggested questionnaire-based primary data. The findings ranked opportunities for career advancement post-training as the most influential factor, followed by the relevance of training content to employee roles and responsibilities, while motivation and readiness to learn ranked lowest. This implied that training strategies were valued most when employees could see a clear pathway from training to growth and job relevance. Because the accessible record was incomplete, the study's recommendation and limitations were not fully stated in verifiable detail; still, the ranking pattern itself suggested support for more career-linked, role-relevant, and trust-building training strategies.

Dostie (2018) examined the impact of firm-sponsored training on innovation using data from the Canadian Workplace and Employee Survey spanning 1999–2006. The study's objective was to test whether greater investment in training translated into stronger workplace innovation outcomes. The accessible summaries indicated that the study used regression models with workplace fixed effects and event history analysis, drawing on detailed workplace-level data rather than on a fresh questionnaire survey. The findings showed that more training led to more product and process

innovation, and rather interestingly, on-the-job training appeared to matter as much as classroom training; however, the innovation effect diminished over time. The practical recommendation implied by the paper was that policies favouring only formal classroom training should be reconsidered so that the contribution of on-the-job training to innovation was not neglected. The accessible summaries did not provide a separately described limitations section, although the time-decay of effects and reliance on observational workplace data pointed to natural cautions in interpretation.

Benitez-Amado et al. (2018) sought to explain how information technology influenced firms' capabilities for opportunity exploration and opportunity exploitation. The study was carried out in Spain and used a combination of survey and secondary data from 203 large firms. Methodologically, the authors tested their model with partial least squares path modelling. The findings suggested that IT infrastructure provided the base for business experimentation and flexibility, which in turn enabled firms to sense and explore business opportunities, while IT-enabled business flexibility also supported the operational competence needed to exploit opportunities and improve performance. The study therefore implied that firms should treat IT capability not merely as an operational support tool but as a strategic enabler of exploratory and exploitative capability development. In the accessible article preview, however, recommendations and limitations were not elaborated in a distinct concluding section.

Baggen et al. (2016) investigated how entrepreneurial learning could be fostered on the job in innovative small and medium-sized companies in Europe. The accessible records made clear that the study addressed entrepreneurial behaviour and competency development within established firms and was grounded in evidence from innovative European SMEs. Even so, the accessible snippets available for verification in this review did not fully disclose the research design, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, or analysis technique. What was evident was that the paper linked on-the-job learning with the development of entrepreneurial competencies needed to generate ideas, products, and services inside existing organisations. In that sense, the article supported the broad argument that workplace learning structures could energise innovative behaviour. Yet, because the accessible record was partial, the detailed findings, recommendations, and explicit limitations could not be reconstructed with confidence and should therefore be checked against the full article before formal inclusion in a thesis chapter.

Deep (2025) discussed fintech career shifts and educational catalysts in entrepreneurship, apparently with the broader aim of showing how educational pathways and capability formation shaped participation in evolving fintech spaces. Unfortunately, during verification, only the DOI landing page could be located reliably, while a full abstract or methods summary was not accessible through the available search results. That meant the geographical scope, methodological design, population, sample size, sampling strategy, mode of data collection, analytical method, findings, recommendations, and limitations could not be verified directly from an accessible scholarly source in this review. In a strict empirical review, then, the safest position is to acknowledge the paper's relevance by title and citation while reserving detailed methodological discussion until the full article is retrieved from the publisher.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design in order to examine the effect of employee capacity development strategies on the proactive innovation dimensions of fintech firms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The choice of the descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain systematic information directly from employees regarding their perceptions and experiences of organisational development practices and innovation behaviours within their firms. Descriptive survey designs have been widely used in organisational and management studies where the objective is to capture opinions, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies of a defined population without manipulating any variables. This design therefore allowed the researcher to collect quantifiable data from respondents and analyse the relationships between the study

variables in their natural organisational settings. The population of 213 employees was derived through a census of staff strength obtained from the selected fintech firms operating within FCT-Abuja. The researcher first identified the fintech firms that met the study criteria based on their active operations in digital financial services, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the study. Thereafter, the total number of employees in the selected firms was obtained from their administrative or human resource records.

Table 1: Population Distribution

S/N	Selected Fintech Firm	Population Size
1	OPay	58
2	Moniepoint	47
3	PalmPay	39
4	Flutterwave	36
5	Paystack	33
	Total	**213**

The table and diagram above illustrate how the total population of 213 employees was distributed across the selected fintech firms in FCT-Abuja.

Given that the population size was relatively small and accessible, the study adopted a census sampling approach, meaning that all 213 employees constituted the sample for the study. The use of census was justified on the grounds that it eliminated sampling bias, improved the representativeness of the data, and ensured that the views of the entire population were captured in the analysis, thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings. The study relied primarily on primary data, which were obtained through the administration of a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire items were developed to measure the dimensions of employee capacity development strategies (skill development, mentoring and coaching) and proactive innovation (opportunity exploration, idea generation). To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted using SPSS version 27, and the coefficients indicated satisfactory internal consistency: skill development (α = 0.82), mentoring and coaching (α = 0.85), opportunity exploration (α = 0.79), and idea generation (α = 0.83), all of which exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for social science research. The validity of the instrument was established through content validity, whereby the questionnaire items were reviewed by experts in human resource management and innovation studies to ensure that the items adequately captured the constructs under investigation. The data collected were analysed using regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version **27** in order to determine the effect of employee capacity development strategies on proactive innovation dimensions. The regression models for the hypotheses were specified as follows: **H_{01}:** $OE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SD + \varepsilon$, where OE represents opportunity exploration and SD represents skill development; and **H_{02}:** $IG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MC + \varepsilon$, where IG represents idea generation and MC represents mentoring and coaching. These models enabled the study to examine the predictive relationships between the independent variable dimensions and the respective proactive innovation outcomes among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table2: Administered Questionnaire

	Number	Percentage
Questionnaire Distributed	256	100%
Returned Questionnaire	213	83%
Unreturned Questionnaire	43	17%

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 2 showed that a total of 256 questionnaires were distributed to respondents across the selected fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Out of this number, 213 questionnaires representing 83% were successfully returned and found usable for analysis, while 43 questionnaires representing 17% were not returned. The high response rate indicated a strong level of participation and cooperation from the respondents, which enhanced the reliability and credibility of the study findings. The returned questionnaires provided sufficient data for the analysis and ensured that the study objectives were adequately addressed.

Table1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Range	18 – 25 years	45	21.1%
	26 – 35 years	112	52.6%
	36 – 45 years	41	19.2%
	46 – 55 years	12	5.6%
	56 years and above	3	1.4%
	Total	**213**	**100%**
Gender	Male	134	62.9%
	Female	76	35.7%
	Prefer not to say	3	1.4%
	Total	**213**	**100%**
Highest Level of Education	High School Diploma	8	3.8%
	Bachelor's Degree	119	55.9%
	Master's Degree	78	36.6%
	Doctorate	5	2.3%
	Other (please specify)	3	1.4%
	Total	**213**	**100%**
Years in Fintech Industry	Less than 1 year	29	13.6%
	1 – 3 years	97	45.5%
	4 – 6 years	64	30.0%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	7 – 10 years	18	8.5%
	Over 10 years	5	2.3%
	Total	**213**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 1 presented the demographic profile of the respondents drawn from fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents, 112 employees (52.6%), fell within the 26–35 years age bracket, followed by 45 respondents (21.1%) aged 18–25 years, while 41 respondents (19.2%) were between 36–45 years. A smaller proportion of 12 respondents (5.6%) were within 46–55 years, and only 3 respondents (1.4%) were 56 years and above. This indicated that the fintech workforce in the study area was largely dominated by young and early-career professionals, which aligned with the technology-driven nature of the industry that typically attracts younger talent with digital skills. In terms of gender distribution, 134 respondents (62.9%) were male, 76 respondents (35.7%) were female, and 3 respondents (1.4%) preferred not to disclose their gender, suggesting a male-dominated workforce although female participation was still reasonably represented. Regarding educational attainment, the largest group comprised 119 respondents (55.9%) who possessed Bachelor's degrees, followed by 78 respondents (36.6%) with Master's degrees, while 8 respondents (3.8%) held High School Diplomas, 5 respondents (2.3%) possessed Doctorates, and 3 respondents (1.4%) reported other qualifications. This distribution implied that the fintech workforce was highly educated, which was consistent with the technical and analytical competencies required within the industry. Furthermore, the distribution of years of experience in the fintech industry showed that 97 respondents (45.5%) had worked 1–3 years, 64 respondents (30.0%) had 4–6 years of experience, 29 respondents (13.6%) had less than one year, 18 respondents (8.5%) had 7–10 years, and only 5 respondents (2.3%) had over 10 years of experience. These results suggested that the fintech sector in FCT-Abuja was characterised by a relatively young workforce with moderate industry experience, reflecting the relatively recent expansion of fintech activities in Nigeria. Collectively, the demographic characteristics indicated that respondents possessed the educational background and industry exposure necessary to provide informed responses regarding employee capacity development strategies and proactive innovation within fintech firms.

Diagnostics Test

4.4.1 Tests of Normality Shapiro-Wilk Test Results

Variable	W-statistic	p-value	Normality Conclusion
SD	0.956	0.423	Normal
MC	0.923	0.087	Normal
OE	0.941	0.215	Normal
IG	0.978	0.892	Normal

Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test results showed that all the study variables namely skill development (SD), mentoring and coaching (MC), opportunity exploration (OE), and idea generation (IG) had p-values greater than the 0.05 significance level. This indicated that the data for all variables were normally distributed. The implication was that the assumption of normality required for regression analysis was satisfied, thereby making the data suitable for parametric statistical analysis and increasing the validity and reliability of the study findings

Test of Hypotheses

Test of hypothesis one

H_{01}: Skill development has no significant effect on opportunity exploration in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

Model 1

$OE=\alpha_0+\beta_1 SD+\varepsilon$……3.2

Table 2 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.593[a]	.351	.348	.43053

a. Predictors: (Constant), SD

Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The regression result in Table 2 examined the effect of skill development (SD) on opportunity exploration (OE) in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The model summary indicated a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.593, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between skill development and opportunity exploration. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.351, which implied that 35.1% of the variation in opportunity exploration among employees was explained by skill development, while the remaining 64.9% was attributable to other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.348 further confirmed the explanatory power of the model after adjusting for sample size and predictors. Additionally, the standard error of the estimate (0.43053) indicated a relatively acceptable level of dispersion between the observed and predicted values of opportunity exploration. These results suggested that skill development contributed meaningfully to employees' ability to explore opportunities within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Consequently, the model implied that enhancing employees' technical and professional skills could improve their capacity to identify and pursue innovative opportunities within the fintech industry.

Table 3 **ANOVA[a]**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.169	1	21.169	114.206	.000[b]
	Residual	39.110	211	.185		
	Total	60.279	212			

a. Dependent Variable: OE

b. Predictors: (Constant), SD

Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The ANOVA result assessed the overall significance of the regression model examining the effect of skill development (SD) on opportunity exploration (OE) in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The table showed that the regression sum of squares was 21.169 with 1 degree of freedom, while the residual sum of squares was 39.110 with 211 degrees of freedom, resulting in a total sum of squares of 60.279. The model produced an F-statistic of 114.206 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which was below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicated that the regression model was statistically significant and that skill development significantly predicted opportunity exploration among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that skill development had no significant effect on opportunity exploration was rejected. The implication of this result was that improvements in employee skill development were associated with increased ability of employees to identify and explore innovative opportunities within fintech organisations.

Table 4 **Coefficients[a]**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.114	.206		10.264	.000
	SD	.555	.052	.593	10.687	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OE

Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The coefficients table presented the individual contribution of skill development (SD) to opportunity exploration (OE) among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The result showed that skill development had a positive unstandardised coefficient (B = 0.555) with a standard error of 0.052, indicating that a unit increase in skill development was associated with a 0.555 increase in opportunity exploration. The standardised beta coefficient (β = 0.593) further demonstrated a moderately strong positive influence of skill development on opportunity exploration. In addition, the t-value of 10.687 with a significance level of 0.000, which was below the 0.05 threshold, indicated that the effect of skill development on opportunity exploration was statistically significant. The constant value (B = 2.114, $p < 0.05$) suggested that opportunity exploration would still exist at a baseline level even in the absence of skill development, although at a lower magnitude. The implication of this result was that increased investment in employee skill development significantly enhanced the ability of employees to identify and explore new opportunities within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, thereby supporting the importance of capacity development strategies in promoting proactive innovation.

Test of hypothesis two

H_{02}: Mentoring and coaching have no significant effect on idea generation in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria.

Model 2

$IG= \alpha_0+\beta_1 MC +\varepsilon$……. ……3.3

Table 5 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.814[a]	.662	.661	.30378

a. Predictors: (Constant), MC

Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The regression result in Table 5 assessed the effect of mentoring and coaching (MC) on idea generation (IG) among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The model summary indicated a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.814, which showed a strong positive relationship between mentoring and coaching and employees' idea generation. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.662, implying that 66.2% of the variation in idea generation was explained by mentoring and coaching, while the remaining 33.8% was attributable to other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.661 further confirmed that the model retained a strong explanatory power even after adjusting for potential estimation bias. In addition, the standard error of the estimate (0.30378) indicated a relatively small deviation between observed and predicted values of idea generation. These results suggested that mentoring and coaching played a substantial role in enhancing employees' ability to generate innovative ideas within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The implication of this finding was that structured mentoring relationships and coaching practices could significantly strengthen employees' creativity and innovative thinking in fintech organisations.

Table 6 **ANOVA[a]**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.198	1	38.198	413.931	.000[b]
	Residual	19.471	211	.092		
	Total	57.669	212			

a. Dependent Variable: IG
b. Predictors: (Constant), MC
Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The ANOVA table evaluated the overall significance of the regression model examining the effect of mentoring and coaching (MC) on idea generation (IG) in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The result showed that the regression sum of squares was 38.198 with 1 degree of freedom, while the residual sum of squares was 19.471 with 211 degrees of freedom, producing a total sum of squares of 57.669. The model generated an F-statistic of 413.931 with a significance value ($p = 0.000$), which was below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicated that the regression model was statistically significant and that mentoring and coaching significantly predicted idea generation among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Based on this result, the null hypothesis stating that mentoring and coaching have no significant effect on idea generation was rejected. The implication of this finding was that strengthening mentoring and coaching practices within fintech organisations could significantly enhance employees' capacity to generate innovative ideas and contribute to organisational innovation.

Table 7 **Coefficients[a]**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.256	.137		9.131	.000
	MC	.695	.034	.814	20.345	.000

a. Dependent Variable: IG
Source: SPSS Output Version 27

The coefficients table showed the individual contribution of mentoring and coaching (MC) to idea generation (IG) among employees of fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. The result indicated that mentoring and coaching had a positive unstandardised coefficient ($B = 0.695$) with a standard error of 0.034, implying that a one-unit increase in mentoring and coaching was associated with a 0.695 increase in idea generation. The standardised beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.814$) revealed a strong positive effect of mentoring and coaching on idea generation. Furthermore, the t-value of 20.345 with a significance level of 0.000, which was below the 0.05 threshold, showed that the effect was statistically significant. The constant value ($B = 1.256$, $p < 0.05$) suggested that idea generation would still occur at a baseline level even in the absence of mentoring and coaching, though at a lower magnitude. The implication of this finding was that mentoring and coaching significantly enhanced employees' creative thinking and ability to generate innovative ideas within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, thereby reinforcing the importance of developmental relationships in stimulating proactive innovation.

Discussion of the Findings

The first hypothesis examined whether skill development had a significant effect on opportunity exploration in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria. The regression results indicated that skill development significantly and positively influenced opportunity exploration, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implied that as employees acquired technical knowledge, digital competencies, and professional expertise through training and development initiatives, their ability to identify and pursue emerging opportunities within fintech organisations improved. In the rapidly evolving fintech environment where technological change requires constant learning and adaptability, skill development strengthened employees' analytical capabilities

and technological awareness, thereby enhancing their opportunity exploration behaviour. This outcome aligned with Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in employee knowledge and skills enhance productivity and innovative capability because human competencies represent valuable organisational assets. Empirically, the finding was consistent with several studies. Toshpulatov (2024) found that training and skills development significantly improved productivity and organisational growth in financial firms, while Song et al. (2024) showed that strategic human capital investment through explorative training strengthened long-term organisational competence. Similarly, Yertas (2024) and Sulaymonov et al. (2025) reported that continuous employee training improved organisational performance and employee effectiveness. Evidence from Bhutto et al. (2023) further demonstrated that human resource competencies positively influenced fintech adoption and service innovation. Additional support emerged from Dostie (2018), who found that workplace training enhanced organisational innovation, while Baggen et al. (2016) and Benitez-Amado et al. (2018) indicated that learning and technological capability development improved opportunity exploration and exploitation capabilities. Although Archana and Kannan (2025) and Jothi (2025) suggested that the effectiveness of training depended on the relevance and quality of development programmes, these perspectives did not contradict the present finding but rather emphasised the importance of well-designed skill development initiatives.

The second hypothesis examined whether mentoring and coaching significantly influenced idea generation in fintech firms in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria. The results revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between mentoring and coaching and employees' idea generation, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggested that mentoring relationships and coaching interactions provided employees with intellectual guidance, professional support, and constructive feedback that stimulated creativity and innovative thinking. In fintech organisations characterised by rapid technological experimentation and collaborative learning, mentoring and coaching created supportive environments where employees felt encouraged to exchange ideas, question existing processes, and develop innovative financial solutions. This finding also supported Human Capital Theory, which emphasises that organisational investment in knowledge transfer and employee development enhances creativity and innovation outcomes. Empirical evidence from earlier studies reinforced this result. Bhutto et al. (2023) reported that human resource competencies enhanced service innovation in financial institutions, while Elsayed et al. (2025) found that employability skills development improved organisational performance through employees' innovative contributions. In addition, Deep (2025) highlighted the importance of mentorship and educational catalysts in shaping innovation within fintech ecosystems, and Jothi (2025) observed that digital training and development enhanced employee capacity building in financial service organisations. Supporting evidence was also provided by Archana and Kannan (2025) and Sulaymonov et al. (2025), who linked employee development initiatives to improved organisational performance and competence. Although Song et al. (2024) and Benitez-Amado et al. (2018) focused more on training investment and technological infrastructure as drivers of innovation, these perspectives did not antagonise the present study; rather, they suggested that mentoring and coaching function alongside other organisational resources in fostering innovative behaviour. Overall, the findings confirmed that mentoring and coaching significantly enhanced employees' idea generation capabilities within fintech firms in FCT-Abuja.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The study concluded that employee capacity development strategies significantly enhanced proactive innovation among fintech firms in FCT-Abuja. Specifically, skill development had a positive and significant effect on opportunity exploration with a regression coefficient (B = 0.555), coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.351), and p-value of 0.000, indicating that skill development explained 35.1% of the variation in opportunity exploration. Similarly, mentoring and coaching significantly influenced idea generation with a regression

coefficient (B = 0.695), R^2 value of 0.662, and p-value of 0.000, showing that mentoring and coaching accounted for 66.2% of the variation in idea generation. The findings therefore implied that improving employee development practices strengthened employees' innovative capabilities within fintech firms.

Recommendations

1. Fintech firms in FCT-Abuja should strengthen structured skill development programmes, particularly in areas such as digital technology, data analytics, and emerging financial technologies, in order to enhance employees' ability to identify and explore new business and technological opportunities.

2. Management of fintech firms should institutionalise mentoring and coaching practices by pairing experienced professionals with less experienced employees and encouraging continuous knowledge sharing, as this will foster creative thinking and improve employees' capacity to generate innovative ideas within the organisations.

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