



Impact of Incessant Sit-At-Home on Psychosocial Behaviour, Interest and Academic Achievement of In-School Adolescents in South East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The state of order to sit at home is taking a major toll on the educational institutions in Southeast, Nigeria. This study looked at how adolescents in South-East Nigeria who were enrolled in school were doing academically, what their interests were, and what their psychosocial behaviour was as they spent the day sitting at home. The study will use an Ex-post facto research design. A sample of 900 SS2 in-school adolescents will be selected from 18 public secondary schools, 300 each from the three states that will be sampled for the study in South East, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the subjects. The study employed the Psychosocial Behaviour Inventory, Interest Inventory, and Academic Achievement Proforma as instruments for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha statistical approach. The Psychological behaviour inventory yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79 while the interest inventory yielded 0.81. This shows that the instruments were reliable and could be used for the study. The findings of the study showed that teenagers who are enrolled in school suffer psychologically from prolonged periods of sitting at home. Teenagers who are enrolled in school suffer academically when they spend all day at home. Counsellors and all those in psychological support services should help in-school adolescents to develop academic interest.

Keywords: Sit-at-home, psychosocial behaviour, interest, in-school adolescents

Introduction

Education has been accepted as the largest enterprise in Nigeria. The government and people of Nigeria are investing large amounts of money in the education of the young ones, and at the same time believe that they will bring about the social, economic, cultural, political, and educational development of the nation. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) stated that the broad aim of secondary education according to the national objectives is preparation for useful living in society. Unfortunately, Southeast, Nigeria has been plagued by problems of continual sit-at-home orders that the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) applied on the area due to Mazi Nnamdi Kalu, their leader, being detained by the Federal Government.

Observations have shown that in-school adolescents in Southeast, Nigeria are still required to skip school on Mondays and on days when the IPOB leader would go to court. Agitations were made worse by the arrest of the Indigenous People of Biafra's

(IPOB) founder in August 2021. Igbo youths in the Southeast Zone staged protests in the streets over his incarceration and demanded that he be released. Conflicts between protestors and security personnel resulted from prolonged demonstrations. Despite IPOB's subsequent revocation of the order, it remains very effective. According to this, IPOB planned the sit-ins to exert pressure on the Nigerian government to free its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who is on trial for treason and terrorism at the Federal High Court in Abuja. Understandably, IPOB first announced the vacation for Mondays, then expanded it to include all days Mazi Kanu is in court. Several incidents have been attributed to IPOB by the Nigerian government, although the group has always denied any involvement.

Overzealous hoodlums threaten and maim the residents and shut down every human activity in the zone. Residents stay at home on these days, primarily due to fear of assault, leaving the area looking abandoned and barren. All schools and businesses are



closed. Across the region, shopkeepers and commuters who defy the order are attacked by unidentified attackers. On these days, they set fire to millions of naira worth of commodities that were being moved or sold, and they have murdered a lot of people.

Further investigation shows that the IPOB is spearheading the movement in the South-East and some regions of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria to become the independent state of Biafra. To settle the Biafra issue, the group supports the holding of a democratic and peaceful referendum in the Igbo territory (Nwaiwu, 2016 & Okafor, 2017). The ongoing demonstrations harm the psychological behaviour, level of interest, and academic performance of teenagers attending secondary schools in this region.

Effiom and Jack (2019) asserted that learners can develop psycho-social behaviour when subjected to harsh conditions. Some common psycho-social effects on students include substance abuse, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, malnutrition, and repeated self-injury. Igba (2021) lamented that the constant sit-at-home in the Southeast, Nigeria has made students experience anxiety, depression and drug abuse. In addition, many children are suffering from psychological trauma as a result of all of these issues, which can also affect their learning process as well as other aspects of their well-being. This is because of the worry associated with not attending school on Monday because of the imposed limitation. This view was supported by Offor and Offia (2023) who argued that some students engage in substance abuse and other psychosocial tendencies as a result of recurrent lockdowns in the zone. According to the authors, some adolescents end up in different joints to drink while some end up attending parties instead of attending classes. There appears to be a link between in-school adolescents' psychosocial behaviours and their academic interests.

These psychosocial consequences can affect students' academic interest that is manifested in their lack of concentration, and attention in school activities. Interest is one's sense of concern and feeling of likeness for something. It is the primary engine that powers all of the teaching-learning processes' apparatus and aids students in developing certain learning experiences, attitudes, aptitudes, and other character attributes (Mangal, 2007). The degree and direction of attitudes towards school subjects are largely determined by the kind of interest developed by the in-school adolescents in the subjects or school activities. In-school adolescents shift interest from schoolwork to fashion

and going to joints (Igba, 2021). Several studies have demonstrated that when pupils demonstrate an interest in the subject matter, learning is improved. Nonetheless, teachers still struggle with the issues or fail to see their possible contributions to their academic interest growth (Larson & Rusk, 2011).

Lack of academic interest among adolescents appears to affect their intellectual achievement. Achievement is a crucial educational characteristic that conveys whether the teaching and learning process was successful or unsuccessful. There has been a decline in the performance of students who received credit passes in at least five courses, including mathematics and English language, in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) over the past 10 years. The situation has become worse since 2021 because of incessant sit-at-home in Southeast, Nigeria. Okafor, Obialor and Osuafor (2020) reported that high academic achievement is attributed to the effort of the students while failure in achievement occurs when they are incapable of succeeding in their tasks. In another study, Anyadiegwu and Nzeukwu (2022) reported that incessant sit-at-home results in the inability of schools to cover the scheme of work and the consequent poor performance of students in examinations. Students in this zone suffered the lockdown brought about by COVID-19 with the whole world in 2020. After COVID-19, schools resumed but shortly after that, IPOB enforced a sit-at-home mandate in Southeast, Nigeria. This holds serious implications for the nation, especially the in-school adolescents.

Adolescence is an important time in each person's life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2015), adolescence is the stage of human growth and development that takes place between the ages of 10 and 19 following infancy but before adulthood. One may consider adolescents to be those who are in the stage between childhood and maturity. Incessant sit-at-home in Southeast, Nigeria hurts in-school adolescents' psychosocial behaviour, interest, and academic achievement.

Nigeria has the world's highest rate of children who are not attending school. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2021) reports that females make up more than half of the 18.5 million children in Nigeria who lack access to school. Igba (2021) claimed that enrollment and retention are two learning outcomes impacted by the cumulative effect of the Monday restrictions on learning. According to the authors, school dropout rates may rise due to educational results. Carrasco (2009) discovered that children highly that



are involved in drug abuse and alcoholism hardly perform well academically. Also, Ona and Amamezie (2022) reported that poor achievement of students could be linked to their lack of interest in school activities. Studies have been carried out on sit-at-home in Southeast, Nigeria. None of these studies have focused on the impact of incessant sit-at-home on the psychosocial behaviour, interest and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in this zone. Also, because the destiny of this nation lies in the hands of the adolescents, this study therefore sets out to fill this gap.

The primary issue that has motivated this research is the persistent sit-at-home order in Southeast Nigeria, which adversely affects the psychosocial behavior, academic engagement, and academic performance of adolescents currently enrolled. Literature sources indicate that the detention of the founder of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, intensified agitations among Igbo youths throughout the South-East Zone, prompting them to take to the streets in protest against his arrest and detention. The sustained protests led to clashes between the demonstrators and security personnel. Though IPOB subsequently rescinded the sit-at-home directive, its impact remains significantly pronounced. It seems like the group is campaigning for a democratic and peaceful referendum to be held in Igbo land to resolve the Biafra problem. The unknown gunmen threaten and maim the residents and shut down every human activity in the Southeast thereby making the geo-political zone look desolate and deserted in those days the order to sit-at-home is enforced. The sit-at-home mandate has drastically disrupted economic and academic activities and calendars in the schools in the area. In-school adolescents are forced to skip school on Mondays and days the leader of IPOB, Mazi Nnamdi Kalu would go to court.

Despite various measures devised by the various governments to put an end to incessant orders to sit-at-home enforced by IPOB which disrupts academic activities in schools, it still stands strongly in Southeast, Nigeria. This tends to harm in-school adolescents' psychosocial behaviour. These psychosocial consequences range from behavioural problems and anxiety. Some other common psychosocial effects on the students include substance abuse, depression, panic attacks, and repeated self-injury. It seems the students' learning is not enhanced when they show disinterest in the subject matter. Consequently, some students develop attention problems and lack concentration. Lack of academic interest appears to

affect their academic achievement. West African Examination Council (WAEC) Chief Examiner's report suggested that poor achievement of the students could be linked to their lack of interest in school subjects.

The result of in-school adolescents in external examinations over the past four years in Southeast, Nigeria has been on the downward trend. It is against this background that this study comes in useful. The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of incessant sit-at-home on psychosocial behaviour, interest and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in Southeast, Nigeria. The following issues were addressed:

1. What is the impact of incessant sit-at-home on psychological behaviour of in-school adolescents?
2. What is the impact of incessant sit-at-home on interest of in-school adolescents in academic activities of in-school adolescents?
3. What is the impact of incessant sit-at-home on academic achievement of in-school adolescents?

Literature Review

Education is the process of growth and development that takes place throughout life. An educated person is capable of applying his knowledge and skills to solve whatever problem he faces. Educating oneself is the most important factor in achieving one's objective, since it helps the development of the whole individual. The education one receives is the greatest input for advancing towards his objective since education helps the total development of human personality (Offor & Offiah, 2023). Thus, education equips in-school adolescents with desirable behaviour, attitudes, interests, knowledge, understanding, and skills such as decision-making and problem-solving skills that they can utilize for the development of the nation. The period of adolescence according to scholars is characterized by storm and stress. This developmental stage is characterized by issues relating to independence, identity, sexuality, and relationships (Egbochuku & Oliha, 2014). In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined adolescence as the period of human growth and development that occurs from ages 10 to 19. Thus, adolescents are individuals who are within the transitional period of childhood to adulthood. In-school adolescents are adolescents who are in secondary schools (Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya, 2010). Contextually, in-school adolescents refer to young boys and girls in secondary school who are no longer in childhood but not yet in adulthood stage. In-school adolescents are



vulnerable to transitional changes. Along with changes in psychological and social functioning, adolescents go through phases of biological growth. The forced absence of teenagers from school on Mondays and days when Nnamdi Kalu has court appearances is currently having an impact on the education sector.

There has been debates on the order to sit-at-home mandated by IPOB in Southeast, Nigeria by different people. Igba (2021) asserted the administration has shown little concern for Monday sit-at-home rule which is brutally enforced, leading students to miss school and become victims of violence as well as injuring or even killing teachers in certain circumstances. On the other hand, Philips (2022) reported that some Nigerians believe that sit-at-home is not worse than genocide and good blockage, still, they survived to what the envy of others have become. According to the author, everything has a consequence. The author also reported that other people believe that Nigeria is a failed state, and that the central government is not helping anyone in the geopolitical zone. According to the author, the Federal Government is supposed to see to the needs of the agitators and see how things will work out.

The mandate to sit-at-home in the zone has drastically disrupted economic activities and academic activities and the calendar in the school. The education sector is presently affected as they are forced to skip schools on Mondays and days the leader of IPOB, Mazi Nnamdi Kalu would go to court. This tends to have negative impact on psycho-social behaviour, interest and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in the area. The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2013) defines psycho-social as social, cultural, and environmental occurrences and factors that impact behavior and mental health. Conversely, Igbo (2009) described it as a blend of social and psychological elements that ascertain a person's level of mental stability. According to the authors, a person's personality and psychological makeup can be shaped by social influences such as peer pressure, religious beliefs, self-esteem, family background, stress, hospitality, depression, hopelessness, socialization, parental upbringing style, family-child relationships, and interpersonal relationships. Pupils who lack psychological support will undoubtedly struggle to interact socially and may find it challenging to communicate clearly with others.

Effiom and Jack (2019) asserted that learners can develop psycho-social behaviour when subjected to harsh conditions. These psycho-social consequences

range from behavioural problems, attention problems, and anxiety. Some other common psycho-social effects include substance abuse, concentration problems, depression, panic attacks, malnutrition, and repeated self injury. Effiom and Jacks (2019) in a study on the psychosocial impact on students' academic performance reported that a significant number of children involved in drug abuse perform poorly academically. Similarly, Carrasco (2009) in his study in Mexico discovered that children highly involved in drug abuse and alcoholism hardly perform well academically. Offor and Offia (2023) reported that incessant sit-at-home order makes students to involve themselves in substance abuse. Some adolescents end up in different joints instead of attending classes, and consequently, some female in-school adolescents become pregnant and drop out of school because academic activities are shifted to Saturdays. Hirst (2001) reported that students with positive self-esteem could achieve far more difficult task than students with low self-esteem and the level of students' self-esteem would influence their achievement. Also, Brooklover, Patterson, and Thomas (2010) reported a significant positive relationship was found between self-esteem of ability and grade point average and that this continued even when measured intelligence was applied. On the other hand, Schwartzman and Glaus (2000) reported that emotional depression significantly influenced the academic performance of students.

Additionally, a plethora of studies has demonstrated that learning is improved when pupils demonstrate an interest in the material. According to Omodube (2014), interest is the likes or dislikes of things, or a person's preference and aversion. As a result, it might be viewed as an incentive for doing anything. According to Eze (2010), interest may be thought of as the mother of attention since learning and attention are both ensured when there is a direct interest. Goodman (2013) distinguishes between situational and individual interests. Situational interest is related to the psychological state that is imposed by environmental motives. Nonetheless, educators still have difficulties in fostering students' academic and general interests in learning, or they fail to see their potential contributions in this regard. According to Larson and Rusk (2011), situational interest can grow into more enduring dispositional interest. Offor and Offia (2023) lamented that there is a shift of interest from school work to fashion to joints as a result of sit-at-home. In places where students attend school on Saturdays, some of them go to school to showcase their clothes and some

from poor backgrounds may skip school because they do not have beautiful clothes to put on. Furthermore, some students do not concentrate in the classroom and lack decorum. They make the classroom un conducive for teaching and learning. The classroom becomes very noisy that the teacher cannot even hear himself while some students would be eager to learn. Arihin and Yanney (2000) reported that there is a high or strong relationship between students' interest and academic performance. Also, Ona and Amamezie (2022) reported that poor achievement of students could be linked to their lack of interest in school activities. Lack of academic interest appears to affect their academic achievement.

Achievement is the ability of one to accomplish a task by effort, skill or courage (Ali, 2006). Academic achievement refers to the scholarstical standing of a student. It also portrays the students' intellectual capacity (Adeyemi, 2008). This implies that academic achievement is the level of attainment of predetermined learning objectives by the in-school adolescents at the end of a given period. Academic achievement is a measure of knowledge gained through education process usually indicated by test scores, grade point averages and degree (Bitrus, 2014). Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no procedural knowledge such as skills or declaration such as facts (Eze, 2010). The result of in-school adolescents in external examinations over the past ten years in Southeast, Nigeria has been on the downward trend. This situation has become worse since 2020 with the coming of COVID-19 and enforcement of incessant sit-at-home by IPOB. Nigerians have cried out that the government should do all in its power to bring sit-at-home in the Southeast to an end. Okafor (2021), Obinna (2022), Philips (2022) and Offor and Offia (2023) argued that the Federal Government should dialogue with Nnamdi Kanu and release him unconditionally, practice federalism in other to carry all the ethnic groups along and call the secessionist group to dialogue with them. If nothing is done to stop incessant sit-at-home in the South East, the future of in-school adolescents in this zone will be in jeopardy. It is against this background that this study sets out to bridge this gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (MHN) and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Maslow (1943) propounded need theory in

which organized human needs in form of a pyramid thus: physiological, safety, belongingness and love, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization needs. The theory stated that as each succeeding layer of needs is addressed, people are motivated to look for the need of the next higher step until we attain the summit of self-actualization. The theory also stated that learning depends upon whether the individual needs are satisfied, and tension reduced. Conversely, Bandura (1986) presented a theory of cognitive learning. Among the key ideas of the theory are the following: human behavior is shaped by the dynamic interaction of individual factors (cognitive, emotional, and biological events). Behaviour, surroundings, and cognition are also important in how individuals create reality, control their behaviour, process information, and encode it. People have self-belief that allow them to exert some influence over their ideas, feelings, and behaviors, among other personal aspects.

These theories are relevant to this study because MHN stressed the importance of meeting the needs of in-school adolescents this crucial period such as security and love so that they can be motivated to go to school and develop academic interest that will promote academic achievement. Similarly, SCT will help the in-school adolescents to improve their emotional state, academic and life skills, and self regulatory practices that will help them to promote good behaviour and academic achievement.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post-facto research design. The study was carried out in Southeast, Nigeria. Southeast is made up of five states namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The justification for carrying out the study in the area is informed by the fact that incessant sit-at-homes in the area have disrupted school activities, thereby causing in-school adolescents to experience psychosocial behaviour such as substance abuse, depression, violence and anxiety. Also, in-school adolescents in the area develop a negative interest in academic activities and consequently poor academic achievement. The population of the study was made up of all SS2 students in all 43,814 secondary schools in Southeast, Nigeria.

The sample for the study was 900. Nine hundred SS2 in-school adolescents were selected from 18 public secondary schools in three states out of five states in Southeast, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the study. In

the first stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 900 in-school adolescents for the study. Secondly, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select three schools, one each from each senatorial zone in each state. Thirdly, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 300 in-school adolescents from each state for the study to ensure equal representation of in-school adolescents in the study.

The researchers obtained approval from the Research and Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka before the commencement of the study. Also, permission was obtained from the principals of public secondary schools where the study was carried out in Southeast, Nigeria. Again, counselor assistants signed the consent form before the commencement of the study.

The research assistants were briefed on how to properly carry out the study. This included how to collect students' academic achievement proforma from the secondary schools, administration, and retrieval of research instruments. The research assistants administered the instruments on the respondents. Direct delivery method was used to

ensure maximum return of copies of the instruments. The research assistants proceeded to the secondary schools to get "Academic Achievement Proforma of SS2 students from 2018- 2019 and 2021-2023. Academic Profoma of 2020 was skipped because of Covid-19 outbreak. Data collection tools included psychosocial behaviour inventory, interest inventory, and academic achievement proforma. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data generated for the study.

Results

Data on Table 1 showed that in-school adolescents have mean, standard and confidence interval values ($M=-31.45$ and $Std =32.01$; $CI=95\%$) in the year 2021 to 2023 when there is sit-at-home while in-school adolescents in the years 2018 to 2019 when there was no sit-at-home have mean, standard and confidence interval value ($M= 35.99$ and $Std =16.61$; $CI=95\%$). The result showed that psychological behaviour of in-school adolescents was negatively impacted in the years when there is sit-at-home than the no sit-at-home years.

Table 1: Mean and Std deviation of the impact of incessant sit-at-home on the psychological behavior of in-school adolescents

years	n	psychological behaviour		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		Mean	Lower Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Years of sit- at-home (2021 to 2023)	424	-31.45	32.01	-27.11	35.79
Years of no sit-at-home(2018 to 2019)	476	35.99	16.61	33.87	38.11
	900				

Data on Table 2 showed that in-school adolescents have mean, standard and confidence interval values ($M=-32.45$ and $Std =30.01$; $CI=95\%$) in the year 2021 to 2023 when there is sit-at-home while in-school adolescents in the years 2018 to 2019 when there was no sit-at-home have mean, standard and

confidence interval value ($M=36.16$ and $Std =16.74$; $CI=95\%$). The result showed that in-school adolescents' academic activities were negatively impacted in the years when there is sit-at-home than the no sit-at-home years.

Table 2: Mean and Std deviation of the impact of incessant sit-at-home on the in-school adolescents' academic activities

years of sit- at –home	n	interest of in-school adolescents in academic activities		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		Mean	Std	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Years of sit- at–home (2021 to 2023)	424	-32.46	30.01	-27.11	35.79
Years of no sit-at–home(2018 to 2019)	476	36.16	16.74	34.03	38.30
Total	900				

Data on Table 3 showed that in-school adolescents have mean, standard and confidence interval values ($M=-30.96$ and $Std. =31.56$; $CI=95\%$) in the year 2021 to 2023 when there is sit-at-home while incessant in-school adolescents in the years 2018 to 2019 when there is no sit-at-home have mean, standard

and confidence interval value($M= 36.37$ and $Std =15.15$; $CI=95\%$). The result showed that in-school adolescents' academic achievement was negatively impacted in the years when there is sit-at-home than the no sit-at-home years.

Table 3: Mean and Std deviation of the impact of incessant sit-at-home on the academic achievement of in-school adolescents

years of sit- at –home	n	interest of in-school adolescents in academic activities		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		Mean	Std	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Years of sit- at–home (2021 to 2023)	424	-30.96	31.56	26.68	-35.25
Years of no sit-at–home(2019 to 2020)	476	36.37	15.15	34.43	38.29
Total	900				

Discussion

The outcome of the study provided data showing the negative impact of incessant sit-at-home on psycho-social behaviour, interest and academic achievement of in-school adolescents in South East, Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that sit-at-home has negative impact on psychological behaviour of in-school adolescents. This finding tallies with the report of Effiom and Jack (2019) who asserted that learners can develop psycho-social behaviour when subjected to harsh conditions such as sit-at-home.. These psycho-social consequences range from behavioural problems, attention problems, and anxiety. Some other common psycho-social effects include: substance abuse, concentration problems, depression, panic attacks, malnutrition, and repeated self injury. Similarly, this finding supports the finding

of Carrasco (2009) who discovered that children highly involved in drug abuse and alcoholism hardly perform well academically. This finding is also consistent with the finding of Offor and Offia (2023) who reported that incessant sit-at-home order makes students to involve themselves in substance abuse.

The study's findings indicated that teenagers who are enrolled in school experience a decline in interest in school-related activities when they spend all of their time at home. This conclusion is consistent with that of Offor and Offia (2023), who bemoaned the change in focus caused by sit-at-home from academics to fashion to joints. Furthermore, the study's findings demonstrated that teenagers who are enrolled in school suffer academically when they spend a lot of time sitting at home. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Green and Ajadi's (2022) paper,



which suggested that sit-at-home policies had a detrimental effect on pupils' academic achievement. This finding is also in line with Demissie and Egziabher's (2023) study, which found that environmental factors had an impact on academic success. Thus, it follows that tactics that may improve the academic performance of teenagers enrolled in school ought to be used. Among the tactics are government involvement, assertiveness training, and exposing teenagers in school to cognitive restructuring, to name a few.

Conclusion

In light of the findings of this study, a conclusion was drawn that the government should put an end to incessant sit-at-home in Southeast Nigeria to eradicate psychological behaviour, and lack of interest in school activities and to improve the academic achievement of in-school adolescents. Counsellors should help in-school adolescents to desist from psychological behaviour using counselling strategies like cognitive restructuring. All those in psychological support services should help in-school adolescents to develop interest in school activities.

Acknowledgment

This research was funded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) through Institutional Based Research (IBR) – Reference number: TETF/DRBD/CE/UNI/NSUKKA/BR/2024/VOL 1. The researchers sincerely acknowledge TETFund for sponsoring this study which culminated in its successful completion.

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