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Media Literacy Among Gwadar-based Women: Analysis of Challenges, Opportunities, and Empowerment

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### Abstract

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**Keywords:** Media Literacy, Gwadar-based Women, Opportunities, Barriers, Technology

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## Title

### Media Literacy Among Gwadar-based Women: Analysis of Challenges, Opportunities, and Empowerment

#### Abstract

The port city Gwadar is currently Pakistan's developing city, where not only national but also international projects are being held. In spite of it people of Gwadar, mainly women in this modern and technological era have less or are not media literate. This quantitative research study is held to examine the level of media literacy, opportunities for women to make them media literate, challenges, and also to examine women empowerment in the city of Gwadar. Approximately 100 surveys were filled from the population of the city. The Social Cognitive Theory was used as a theoretical framework. The result of the study revealed that women residing in Gwadar face many challenges while gaining media literacy skills because of the lack of technology there, and the lack of opportunities most of the women are unaware of training centers that give media literacy skills. Apart from this because of technological and internet issues in the city, people don't have access to online training centers also.

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**Keywords:** [Media Literacy](#), [Gwadar-based Women](#), [Opportunities](#), [Barriers](#), [Technology](#)

## Introduction

The port city of Gwadar is a currently developing city in Pakistan. Where not only national but also international projects are being held and according to reports Gwadar is going to be one of the developed cities of Pakistan in the near future. Gwadar port is the route for international trading in Pakistan.

Media is the 4th pillar of the state and it is the link between the country or the whole world and the people/consumer of the media. Media in this modern and technological era is the basic need of the people

to be well-informed and well-aware of any situation occurring in the country or globally.

But being a developing city, Gwadar lacks even national media organizations. The only media organization running there is based in the district, which is "The Gwadar Post" a media company where only information related to Gwadar is being published or being on-air. The viewers of this channel also belong to Gwadar city, not even other parts of the country watch it.

The aim of the study is to evaluate media literacy skills among people of Gwadar mainly focusing on women. And examining opportunities and highlighting



the challenges people face while accruing media literacy skills.

## Objective

1. To examine the challenges women of Gwadar city are facing in developing media literacy skills.
2. To highlight opportunities that are given to people of Gwadar, mainly to women for the improvement of their skills of media literacy.
3. To check the level of skills of media literacy among the women of Gwadar city

## Research Questions

1. To what extent do women of Gwadar possess media literacy skills?
2. What are existing opportunities for media literacy education among women in Gwadar?
3. What are the barriers faced by women in Gwadar in developing media literacy skills?

## Hypothesis

- H1:** Women in Gwadar possess media literacy skills to a significant extent.
- H2:** There are many opportunities for media literacy education among Gwadar's women
- H3:** There are significant barriers for Gwadar-based women in developing media literacy skills.

## Literature Review

(Suwana & Lily, [2017](#)) in their qualitative research study, they focus on the gender digital divide in Indonesia and the significance of digital media literacy abilities for Indonesian women in improving their quality of life. The study examines the experiences of creators, leaders, and members from IWITA (Indonesian Women Information Technology Awareness) and FemaleDev (Female Developer), organizations dedicated to promoting women's digital literacy. Through interviews, the study explores the challenges and barriers that contribute to the low digital media literacy degree among women in Indonesia, including inadequate education, limited opportunities, and the influence of the patriarchal system. The results emphasize the vital requirement of equipping women with digital media literacy skills so they can utilize the internet, obtain information, evaluate content critically, participate in introspective activities, exchange knowledge, and produce digital content. For politicians, educators, and groups that support Indonesian women's digital empowerment and

aim to close the gender gap in technology, the research offers insightful information.

Through an examination of media literacy's impact on rural women's entrepreneurial endeavors, the study looks at the economic consequences of media literacy.

The study examines the impact of a media literacy project implemented with rural and indigenous women, primarily from the Lenca ethnic group, in poverty-stricken regions of Honduras, specifically in the departments of La Paz, Ocotepeque, and Lempira. In order to empower women to advocate for and implement efficient practices regarding food safety, productivity in agriculture, advertising for products, gender governance, and the preservation of cultural heritage in local communities, the initiative sought to increase women's resistance through media literacy. The results show that media education provided outside of official settings promotes social transformation, improves employment prospects, and gives vulnerable people more power, all of which help to reduce poverty. In-depth interviews with project participants and subsequent follow-ups validate the positive impact of media literacy in non-formal educational environments. The acquisition of skills through media literacy enables women to increase their visibility within their municipalities and digital platforms, address critical issues, foster Indigenous cultural identity, mitigate productivity vulnerabilities, and improve their socioeconomic status through accessible communication tools (Camarero & Aramburu, [2019](#)).

The study explores the empowerment of women, particularly in underdeveloped countries, where women often rely on male members in various aspects of their lives. It emphasizes the significance of education and societal training as powerful tools for women's empowerment. The review focuses on the role of media in promoting awareness and empowering women in Pakistan. The study, based on data collected from 499 literate females through a questionnaire, examines the influence of media usage on ladies' empowerment. Findings reveal that a majority of women rarely or never utilize media, but those who do perceive a positive impact on their status. The frequency of media usage demonstrates a positive relationship with women's empowerment scores. Critical analysis of women's perspectives on the role of media suggests that while it has played a constructive role in educating women about empowerment, there is room for improvement. The review acknowledges the media's contribution in highlighting cases of women's violence, promoting social awareness, and educating

women about their rights and responsibilities. However, it identifies a weaker focus on women's professional development, income generation, and achieving equal status in society. The study suggests the need for literature that educates people about the benefits of women's empowerment to society, families, and men, while also raising awareness about techniques to elevate the status of women through empowerment (Akhter & Naheed, 2014). The study examines the portrayal of aged females in Western civilization through the lens of television. The study further reports on a study conducted within a Social Work graduate course focusing on adults, where a pair of Golden Girls episodes served as a catalyst for thought and examination. The results show that popular perceptions about older women in society are both reinforced and challenged by television. It has been noted that condescending stereotypes and constrained portrayals of elderly women and their daily activities are frequently shown on television. This review highlights how important it is for educators and historians to help kids develop media literacy and critical thinking skills because of how powerful television can be. It is possible to promote new television programming that provides more precise and diverse representations of older women by questioning and dissecting the stereotypes of older women that are shown on television. The study underscores the importance of addressing the double oppression faced by older women and calls for a proactive approach to shaping media narratives surrounding aging and gender (Cohen, 2010).

The study looks at how important it is for teachers to be motivated and have news media literacy skills in order to run successful media education programs. This research is based on a survey that was completed in 2018 by 97 primary and secondary school teachers as an aspect of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the College of Tasmania's National Media Literacy Project. The study data highlights the difficulties in implementing media literacy in the classroom, with a focus on the generational gap resulting from Australians' greater use of social media and digital platforms for news consumption. While educators recognize the need to encourage students to think critically about media, a sizable fraction of them—roughly 25%—do not actively participate in class discussions on news articles. The study's conclusions point to the need for more research to fill in the gaps found in the field as well as additional resources, curricular support, teacher preparation, and community involvement. Initiatives promoting media

literacy can be enhanced and better prepared to handle the changing demands of consuming information in the digital age by tackling these problems (Nettlefold & Williams, 2021). The influence of literacy in the media on how one views oneself with respect to the media's ideal of thinness is investigated in this study. The empirical results of prior studies have been conflicting when it comes to how much media literacy reduces the negative impact of the slender ideal on the perception of one's body. An explanation for this contradiction might be found in objectification theory, which holds that specific social contexts influence women's self-objectification. The study suggests that media literacy may lead to both positive and negative outcomes, including elevated well-being and greater self-objectification. Two studies investigated the effects of watching the "Slim Hopes" movie on state objectification of oneself confidence, and positive affect using a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results showed that seeing the video improved positive affect and self-esteem but also raised state self-objectification. The study talks about how these results relate to self-objectification and what they mean for successful media literacy (Choma, Foster, & Radford, 2007).

The study emphasizes on how important digital literacy is to women's empowerment and elevation. It offers an overview of the Indian paradigm known as BMDL and provides a conceptual foundation for digital literacy (DL). The study highlights a special initiative put forth through Banasthali Vidyapith, the biggest entirely residence university for female students worldwide, and lists other measures the Indian government has launched to encourage digital literacy. The university aims to collaborate with appropriate buddies under Corporate Social Responsibility to enhance digital literacy among approximately 10,000 women residing on the campus and in the surrounding villages of Rajasthan. The study provides insights into the current landscape of digital literacy initiatives in India, highlighting the role of educational institutions and government initiatives in bridging the digital divide and empowering women through digital skills (Purohit, Bharti, & Joshi, 2015). The study examines the media's role in a democracy and its impact on raising awareness about political, social, and economic issues, with a specific focus on women's issues. While media channels have the potential to play a vital part in raising awareness of gender issues in society, there is a prevailing tendency to prioritize political and economic news over social issues, particularly those affecting women. This biased media coverage has led

to the marginalization of women's issues and a lack of equal portrayal in the media. The unequal distribution of power between genders, both physically and economically, perpetuates discrimination against women. Media, as a powerful influencer of public opinion, needs to prioritize portraying women as equals and addressing women's issues in a sensitive and responsible manner. To raise public awareness, the media must cover important issues like dwindling sex ratios, rape, sexual harassment at work, crimes involving dowries, domestic abuse, molestation, eve-teasing, and honor killings. In order to fully empower women, they must participate in and have authority over resources and power, as well as be included in the political, social, societal, and other spheres of human existence. Electronic media, especially television, is a powerful tool for mass communication, but when it reinforces gender stereotypes and presents women as less capable than men, it is cause for concern. Furthermore, a very marketable but unsettling trend is indicated by the exaggerated coverage of distorted violence, particularly the sexual abuse of women. It is necessary to combat and discourage the monetization of women as sexually explicit items in advertisements. In the end, the media can choose to support discrimination based on gender or to counteract it by offering fair coverage that supports equality and tackles issues pertaining to women. The report emphasizes the need for greater investigation and action to develop a media environment that is more egalitarian and inclusive (Sharda, 2014).

The media's role and impact on the all-inclusive progress of society has become a prominent subject of scholarly and party-political debates worldwide. There is growing recognition of the media's potential to empower marginalized groups, particularly women, which has sparked extensive public discourse. Previous studies have established that the development and prosperity of any society are contingent upon the advancement of women, with empowerment being the desired outcome. Women's empowerment entails developing self-will, liberation, and self-assurance in the face of male-controlled cultures, and access to information is recognized as a key factor in this process.

### Theoretical Framework:

#### Social Cognitive Theory

The foundation of Social Cognitive Theory is the idea that people pick up knowledge from watching others as well as from firsthand experiences. This theory was

proposed in the 1960s by Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura, who added three important concepts to it.

1. People learn best in social settings through imitation and observation.
2. An individual's state of mind can affect this learning process.
3. Even though something can be learned in any environment, learning does not always translate into a learner's behavior changing permanently.

From the above hypothesis of the study, the theory of Social Cognitive Theory fits as a theoretical framework here. This may show that people, mainly women of Gwadar by observing and imitating the people of their surroundings who can be their classmates, friend's colleagues, etc. can copy or pick skills related to media literacy. Also from their past experiences, they may become confident enough about their abilities to acquire skills in media literacy.

### Methodology

In this study, data on the media literacy level, including knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities among women in Gwadar, Pakistan, were gathered using the quantitative technique. The mode used was the survey method and both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires were distributed among the respondents.

### Sampling

A sample population of 100 women who are aged below 18 years and above 32, residing in Gwadar, and have regular exposure to media platforms is selected through purposive sampling will ensure representation from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic strata, to capture a diverse range of perspectives.

### Research Design

The research adopts a quantitative research design to obtain numerical data for analysis. A survey questionnaire is used to collect data on media literacy levels and related variables, i.e., challenges, opportunities, and empowerment. The questionnaire consists of Likert scale items, close-ended, and multiple-choice questions to provide an assessment of media literacy.

### Data Analysis

SPSS software was also used for further analysis to test

the hypothesis.

### Population

The population selected for this study was only women residents of Gwadar, Balochistan who have exposure to media platforms.

### Findings and Discussion

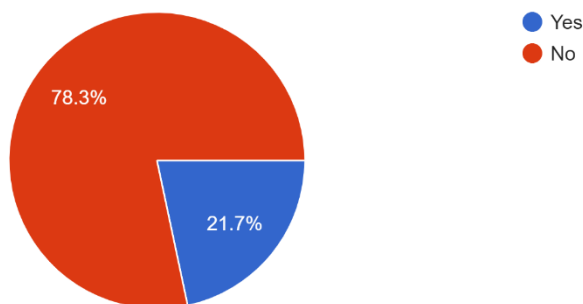
On inquiring about the level, challenges, opportunities, and empowerment of media literacy among Gwadar-based women. The survey was conducted among 60 participants. The survey was responded to by 100% of female respondents. 39 respondents out of 60 belonged to the age group 19-26 (65%), while

10(16.7%) fit into the age group 27-32, and 7 (11.7%) fit into the age group below 18. The majority of women are born residents of Gwadar, which shows they are well aware of the area and facilities around there.

### Have you received any formal media literacy training?

A significant majority, 78.3% of Gwadar-based women said they have not received any formal media literacy training or education, while 21.7% said they do receive media literacy training. This suggests a substantial gap in media literacy skills among this demographic

Figure 1

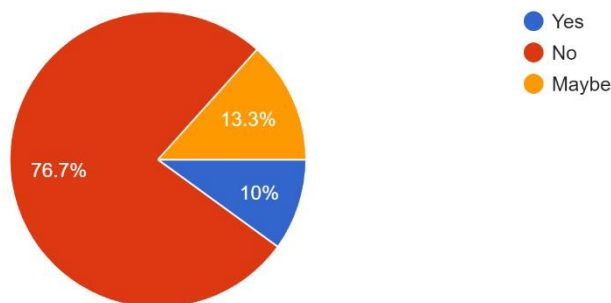


### Are you aware of any local programs that offer media literacy education for women in Gwadar?

A significant majority, 76.7%, were unaware of such programs. A smaller percentage, 10%, indicated awareness of such programs, while 13.3% remained

uncertain. This suggests a potential gap in media literacy resources in the Gwadar region, emphasizing the need for further exploration and development in this area.

Figure 2



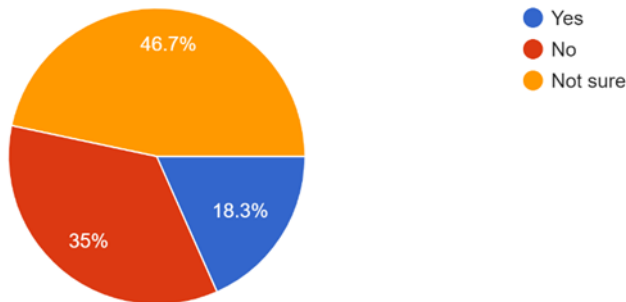
### Is there any societal factor that is hindering your media literacy development?

35% of respondents reported no societal factors hindering their media literacy development, indicating a degree of independence in this regard. However,

18.3% acknowledged the presence of societal barriers, highlighting existing challenges. A significant 46.7% remained uncertain, suggesting the need for further

investigation into the complex interplay of factors affecting media literacy empowerment in this specific context.

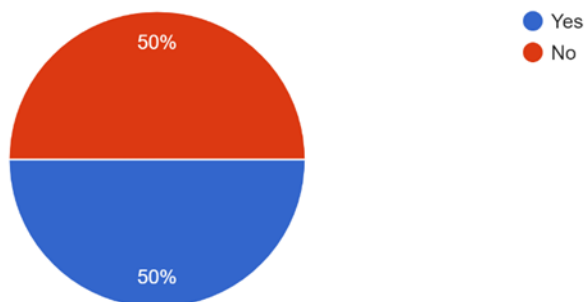
Figure 3



Are there technological barriers that limit your access to digital media literacy resources (e.g., lack of internet access or devices)?

The results indicate a significant divide among Gwadar-based women regarding technological barriers impacting their access to digital media literacy resources. While 50% reported facing such limitations, the other 50% did not.

Figure 4



What challenges do you face in improving your media literacy skills?

In the research, Gwadar-based women identified several challenges in improving their media literacy skills. Approximately 23.3% cited a lack of access to media resources such as the

Figure 5

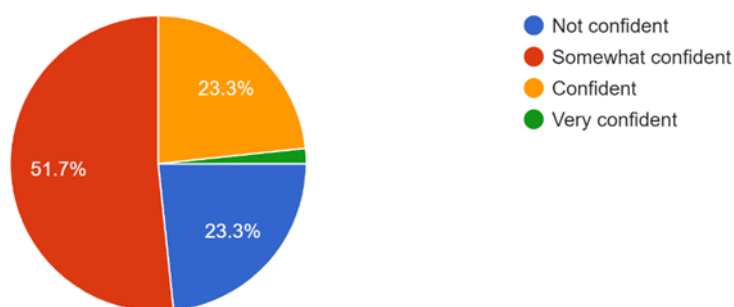


Internet and newspapers as a barrier. 33.3% indicated limited time for media literacy education as a challenge, while expressed a lack of awareness about available programs. These findings highlight the need for increased accessibility, time management support, and awareness initiatives to empower women in Gwadar with media literacy skills.

### How confident do you feel in your ability to Evaluate the accuracy of information from media sources?

A sizable majority of participants—51.7%—felt at least somewhat confident in their capacity to assess the veracity of information gleaned from media sources, and 23.3% expressed confidence in this area. But a sizeable percentage, 23.3%, also

Figure 6



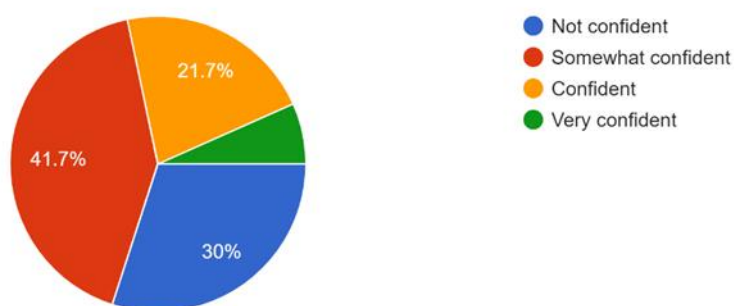
acknowledged that they were unsure of their media literacy abilities. These results highlight the necessity of focused efforts to improve Gwadar women's media literacy.

### Identify false information in media reports.

A considerable proportion of women residing in Gwadar indicated low self-confidence in their capacity

to identify inaccurate data in media content. Particularly, 21.7% of respondents felt confident, compared to 41.7% who felt only marginally confident. 30% of respondents said they were not confident in their ability to spot false information. These results demonstrate the necessity of media literacy programs and materials to enable Gwadar women to evaluate media material critically.

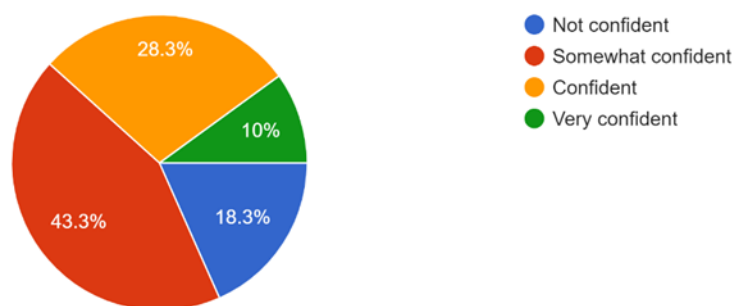
Figure 7



### Use digital tools and technology for media consumption.

The confidence in using digital tools and technology for media consumption varies.

Figure 8:



Approximately 43.3% expressed being somewhat confident, 28.3% felt confident, while 18.3% were not confident. A smaller percentage, 10%, reported feeling very confident in utilizing digital tools for media consumption. These results highlight a range of confidence levels among women in Gwadar regarding digital media skills.

### Hypothesis Testing

H1: Gwadar-based women possess media literacy skills to a significant extent.

Chi-Square Tests are applied to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software

Table 1

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	120.387 <sup>a</sup>	108	.196
Likelihood Ratio	109.331	108	.446
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.995	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 130 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

### Interpretation

- Only the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is required for this investigation.
- The Chi-Square statistic's p-value is .196, greater than the alpha value of .05.
- As a result, there is sufficient data to support the null hypothesis and rule out the alternative.

- Suggesting, that Gwadar-based women may not possess media literacy skills to a significant degree.

H2: There are many opportunities for media literacy education among Gwadar's women.

Chi-Square Tests are applied to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software.

Table 2

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.334 <sup>a</sup>	4	.856
Likelihood Ratio	1.924	4	.750
Linear-by-Linear Association	.913	1	.339
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .58.

**Interpretation**

- Only the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is required for this investigation.
- The Chi-Square statistic's p-value is .856, greater than the alpha value of .05.
- As a result, there is sufficient data to support the null hypothesis and rule out the alternative.

- Suggesting, there may not be substantial opportunities for media literacy education among Gwadar's women.

H3: There are significant barriers for Gwadar-based women in developing media literacy skills.

Chi-Square Tests are applied to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software

**Table 3**

*Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	54.615 <sup>a</sup>	36	0.24
Likelihood Ratio	61.200	36	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.980	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	60		

**Interpretation**

- Only the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is required for this investigation.
- The Chi-Square statistic's p-value is .024, which is less than the alpha value of .05.
- As a result, there is sufficient data to support the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis.
- Indicating major barriers hinder Gwadar-based women from developing media literacy skills.

respondents reporting technological barriers that limit access to digital media literacy resources.

The women residing in Gwadar have recognized a number of significant issues, including their lack of trust in their ability to identify falsehoods in media content. This underscores the need for extensive media literacy activities and tools. Even though some responders might be skilled in this field, a sizable portion are not, indicating a critical need for instructional support.

**Conclusion**

where media is present and affects every individual in the country, Gwadar the developing and international trade city of Pakistan, people especially women lack media literacy skills. In the age of information, Gwadar-based women face a digital divide in media literacy. The study sought to evaluate the level of media skills, opportunities for media literacy education, and the challenges faced by Gwadar-based women. Where findings indicate a major gap in media literacy skills between this demographic, with a majority of respondents reporting no formal media awareness training. Additionally, awareness of local programs offering media literacy education is low, highlighting the need for increased resource availability. Research revealed that while some women face societal barriers to media literacy development, others enjoy a degree of independence in this regard. Furthermore, a digital divide exists, with half of the

Our theories were validated by the statistical analysis, which suggested that there might not be plenty of possibilities for media literacy instruction among Gwadar-based women and that they might not have very strong media literacy abilities. Nonetheless, it was established that there are substantial impediments preventing the development of media literacy skills, highlighting the significance of removing these barriers.

The importance of improving media literacy instruction and resources for women residing in Gwadar is highlighted by this study. Giving students abilities in media literacy will help close the current knowledge gap and provide them the ability to successfully navigate the complicated information landscape. Attempts in this direction will support their empowerment and help them participate in today's information-driven community in an educated and active manner.

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## Recommendation/Suggestions

- Media literacy should be taught to the general public as it is the need of the hour and added as a compulsory course in schools and universities.
- Internet access should be better in the developing city of Gwadar.
- There should be training centers where women of Gwadar can get media literacy skills.

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