



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDES OF MALE UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS RAPE OF FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN HOST COMMUNITIES OF TAI SOLARIN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Rape is a pervasive issue affecting female students in university communities, with far-reaching consequences. Despite its severity, there is a dearth of research exploring male students' perceptions and attitudes towards rape. Hence, this study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of male students towards rape of female students in the host communities of Tai Solarin University of Education. Three research questions were raised and answered in the course of the study. Purposive and volunteering sampling techniques were used to select 173 male students who were residing in the host communities of TASUED. The study adopted a descriptive research design in which questionnaire tagged: "Perception and Attitude of Male Students towards Rape of Female Students Questionnaire" (PAMSRFSQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The results of the study revealed that male students had positive and supportive perception and attitudes towards rape survivors, but had negative attitude towards the act 'rape'. Among others it was recommended that special workshop should be organized for male students, in which they will be trained on the different type of modality they can adopt to support the female gender and prevent them against rape.

Keywords: Rape, male students, female students, perception, attitude

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

In our communities including tertiary institutions, rape has become a common phenomenon which is like deadly disease that needs urgent medication for its eradication. Rape mars many lives because it leads to severe emotional trauma, physical injuries and social withdrawal and isolation. Though many measures have been implemented in order to eradicate it, but all to no avail. The issue of rape on university campuses has become a pressing concern globally. Rape of female students has become a prominent word among students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. As a matter of fact, incidences of rape across the students' hostels in various communities around TASUED campus demands very urgent attention. Rape is a serious crime that involves sexual assault or sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim. Rape is such a serious issues that does not only affect the welfare of victims, but also those connected to them. Sexual violence amongst college and university students is a widespread problem that requires the urgent attention of academics, administrators, and policymakers (Perez-Trujillo, Jaramillo-Sierra, Quintane,2019).

Rape is a forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Penetration may be by a body part or an object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim (RAINN, 2024). Many a times rape victims are forced through threats or physical means. In Nigeria, there have been rising newspaper reported cases of rise in rape incidences. Despite this, the issue of rape has been one bereft of in-depth studies in this environment. The increase in reportage of rape cases could however be attributed to an increased awareness, total increase in number of rape cases or both. It is worthy of note however that the reported cases represent the tip of the iceberg; with estimated eight out of every nine cases remaining unreported (Idoko, Nwobodo & Idoko, 2020).



Rape is disproportionately committed against women and girls, with 98% of reported cases involving female victims and that most victims are between 15 and 24 years old (RAINN, 2024). Since many rape cases are against young ladies, and the perpetrators are male gender, there is need to involve the male gender in the process of its eradication. Engaging the male students in the eradication of rape is important, but more importantly before their engagement, it is expedient one knows their perception and attitudes towards the term 'rape' and the survivors of rape. Hence, the need for this study to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of male students towards rape and survivors of rape among TASUED female students.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In the recent times, tertiary institutions in Nigeria including Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun (TASUED) seems to be in the spotlight of rape cases with increasing incidences of sexual abuses within the host communities of the campus. There have been various reports of cases of rape of female undergraduates of TASUED in their different private hostels which are in the host communities of the campus. Reports show that some cases of rape were not reported by the victims because of stigmatisation; but within a short period of four months, that is, 15th September, 2023 till 18th January, 2024, TASUED had 20 cases of reported rape of female students which happened at different private hostels of the students within the host communities. Despite many awareness programme to sensitize the female students about menace of rape and protection strategies, rape still persists, especially in recent times. This may be because the gender that perpetrates the evil displays less concern towards its eradication. It is necessary to involve the male students of our tertiary institutions in the eradication of rape because male gender are the perpetrators of the evil. Hence, in order to facilitate the eradication of rape of female students through the engagement of male students in the task, it is expedient to investigate how male students perceive the term rape, and their attitudes towards it and the female gender, especially the victims and survivors of rape. Therefore, this study



explored the perception and attitudes of male students towards rape of TASUED female students in the host communities of TASUED.

1.2. Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the perception and attitudes of male undergraduates towards rape of female undergraduates in the host communities of TASUED. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Determine the perception of TASUED male students concerning the causes of rape of female undergraduates within the host communities of TASUED.
2. Find out the perception and attitude of TASUED male undergraduates towards rape of female undergraduates in the host communities of TASUED.
3. Investigate the attitudes of male undergraduates towards female undergraduates who are survivors of rape within the host communities of TASUED.

1.3. Research Questions

The following questions were raised in order to achieve the above objectives.

1. What are the perception of TASUED male students about the causes of rape of female undergraduates in the host communities of TASUED?
2. What are the perception and attitudes of male undergraduates towards rape of female undergraduates in the host communities of TASUED?
3. What are the perceptions and attitudes of TASUED male undergraduates towards female undergraduates who are survivors of rape within the host communities of TASUED?

2.1. Literature Review

Rape was long considered to be caused by unbridled sexual desire, but it is now understood as a pathological assertion of power over a victim (Barstow, 2025). Rape has plagued tertiary institutions of learning since women began to access higher education in Nigeria and the global world. Rape is one of the most common crimes



against women in Nigeria. There is a general agreement that sexual violence against women is rooted in gender power inequalities prevalent in society and in hierarchical gender relations (Idoko, Nwobodo & Idoko, 2020). Researchers across the world have identified diverse factors that increase vulnerability to risk of rape, rapists and raped. These factors could be economic, physical, social and legal (Akinade, Adewuyi & Sulaiman, 2010)

In different studies, it has been revealed by some scholars that male students have supportive perceptions about female students who are victims of rape. McMahon (2010) in his study on 'Male College Students' Perceptions of Rape: The Role of Empathy and Self-Blame', states that male college students who reported higher levels of empathy and self-blame were more likely to perceive rape as a serious crime and to support victims. In another study on 'Masculinity and Bystander Attitudes: A Mixed-Methods' by Edwards et al. (2014) who explored the relationship between masculinity and bystander attitudes towards rape, it was suggested that male participants who endorsed more positive masculinity traits (e.g., empathy, respect) were more likely to report supportive attitudes towards victims. Katz et al. (2018) in their study of 'Male Allies Against Sexual Violence: A Qualitative Study' examined the experiences and perspectives of male allies who actively worked to prevent sexual violence. The findings highlighted the importance of male allies in promoting positive attitudes and behaviors towards victims.

Furthermore, some scholars have revealed that male students showed empathy and love to female rape victims, hence they have positive attitudes towards them. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) in their study on "Male College Students' Attitudes Toward Rape Victims" found out that male college students who held more empathetic attitudes towards rape victims were less likely to blame the victim or believe rape myths. Moreso, Davies and McCartney (2003) in their study on "Masculinity and Attitudes Toward Rape Victims" explored the relationship between



masculinity and attitudes towards rape victims. The findings suggested that men who endorsed more positive masculinity traits (e.g., empathy, respect) held more supportive attitudes towards rape victims. Katz and Moore (2013) carried out research on "Male Allies and Bystander Intervention", examined the role of male allies in preventing sexual violence. The findings highlighted the importance of male allies in promoting positive attitudes and behaviors towards victims of sexual violence.

Meanwhile, Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999) in their study "Rape Myth Acceptance and Male College Students" found that some male college students held negative attitudes towards rape victims, believing that victims were partially responsible for the assault. Also, Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny (2002) found out from their study on relationship between masculinity and attitudes towards sexual assault that some men who endorsed traditional masculine norms held more negative attitudes towards victims. Moreso, Deitz, Blackwell, and Daley (2011) who examined male attitudes towards victimization, including rape, indicated that some men held victim-blaming attitudes, believing that victims were responsible for the assault.

Moreover, from the literature, some scholars revealed the causes of rape. Abbey, Zawacki, and Buck (2001) on their study on "The Role of Alcohol in Sexual Assault" found that alcohol consumption is a significant factor in sexual assault, as it can impair judgment and increase aggression. Ullman (2007), who investigated "Situational Factors in Sexual Assault" examined the role of situational factors, such as lack of security and isolation, in sexual assault. The findings suggested that these factors can increase the risk of sexual assault. Morrison, Hardison, and Mathew (2009), in their study on "Betrayal and Sexual Assault" explored the role of betrayal in sexual assault, including betrayal by friends or acquaintances. The findings suggested that betrayal can increase the trauma and distress experienced by survivors.

It is evident that some scholars provide evidence that many male students hold positive attitudes towards female students who have been raped, and are willing to



support and care for them. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) in their study: "Male College Students' Attitudes Toward Rape Victims" found out that male college students who held more empathetic attitudes towards rape victims were less likely to blame the victim or believe rape myths. Davies and McCartney (2003) carried out research on "Masculinity and Attitudes Toward Rape Victims". The study explored the relationship between masculinity and attitudes towards rape victims. The findings suggested that men who endorsed more positive masculinity traits (e.g., empathy, respect) held more supportive attitudes towards rape victims. Katz and Moore (2013) in their study titled "Male Allies and Bystander Intervention" examined the role of male allies in preventing sexual violence. The findings highlighted the importance of male allies in promoting positive attitudes and behaviors towards victims of sexual violence.

3.0. Research Methods

The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The target population of the study consisted of all male students of Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), who are residing in the host communities of the campus, that is, Ijagun, Imaweje, Ijele and Abapawa. The communities were considered for the study because many of the reported cases of rape of TASUED female students occurred in those communities. The sample size for the study was 173 male students from the College of Social and Management Sciences (COSMAS) who were residing in the host communities of TASUED, that is, Ijagun, Ijele, Abapawa and Imaweje. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the male students of COSMAS because they were easily accessible considering the time constraint of the study, while purposive sampling technique was adopted to select male students who reside in the host communities because the reported cases of rape of TASUED female students occurred in those communities.

The instrument used to collect data from the respondents was a questionnaire tagged "Perception and Attitude of Male Students towards Rape of Female Students



Questionnaire” (PAMSRFSQ). The instrument was divided into two sections: Section A Comprised Demographic Information about the respondents, such as, age and community of residence; while section B consisted statements intended to address the research objectives. Section B of the instrument was developed by the researcher in line with 4point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). PAMSRFSQ was subjected to content and face validation by given it to experts in measurement and evaluation. All necessary contributions, suggestions, corrections and comments were effected and integrated into the instrument. The reliability of PAMSRFSQ was carried out using 20 male students in the Department of Social Studies in Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State. The result of the reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha Method. The reliability co-efficient result was 0.74

4.0. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: How do male undergraduates perceive the causes of rape of TASUED female undergraduates within the host communities of TASUED?.

Table 1 shows that TASUED male students agreed that poverty and financial difficulties (70%), unstable living arrangement (60%), lack of support system from family (60%), living alone without room partner (60%), inadequate lightening of the communities (68%), Inadequate security measures in the communities (68%), living in isolated arears (60%), Living in areas that have easy access to students hostels(60%, Increased independence from parents and guardians which leads to increased risk-taking behaviours (60%), Substance abuse by female students can make them vulnerable (65%), Lack of awareness and education on protecting one self from sexual assault (75%), Frequent display of ladie’ on social media (50%), Frequent display of half nude self on social media (62%), Lack of support services by the host communities and TASUED(60%), Lack of provisions and inadequate safety measures by institutions and host communities of TASUED (60%), and ineffective reporting mechanism for incidents of rape and sexual assaults (68%)



Table 1: Perception of Male Students towards the Causes of Rape and other Sexual Assault of Female TASUED Students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Poverty and financial difficulties	(30%) ⁵²	(40%) ⁶⁹	(20%) ³⁵	(10%) ¹⁷
2	Unstable living arrangements	(25%) ⁴³	(35%) ⁶¹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
3	Lack of support system from family and friend	(20%) ³⁵	(40%) ⁶⁹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
4	Living alone without room partner(s)	(22%) ³⁸	(38%) ⁶⁶	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
5	Betrayal by room/hostel mates	(18%) ³¹	(32%) ⁵⁶	(35%) ⁶¹	(15%) ²⁶
6	Inadequate lighting in the communities	(28%) ⁴⁸	(40%) ⁶⁹	(22%) ³⁸	(10%) ¹⁷
7	Inadequate security measures in the communities	(30%) ⁵²	(38%) ⁶⁶	(20%) ³⁵	(12%) ²¹
8	Living in isolated areas	(25%) ⁴³	(35%) ⁶¹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
9	Living in areas that have easy access to students hostels	(20%) ³⁵	(40%) ⁶⁹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
10	Increased independence from parents and guardians which leads to increased risk-taking behaviours	(22%) ³⁸	(38%) ⁶⁶	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
11	Substance abuse by female students can make them vulnerable	(25%) ⁴³	(40%) ⁶⁹	(25%) ⁴³	(10%) ¹⁷
12	Lack of awareness and education on protecting one self from sexual assault	(30%) ⁵²	(40%) ⁶⁹	(25%) ⁴³	(10%) ¹⁷
13	Frequent display of ladies' on social media	(20%) ³⁵	(30%) ⁵²	(35%) ⁶¹	(15%) ²⁶
14	Frequent display of half nude self on social media	(22%) ³⁸	(40%) ⁶⁹	(30%) ⁵²	(8%) ¹⁴
15	Wearing of revealing clothes	(30%) ⁵²	(35%) ⁶¹	(25%) ⁴³	(10%) ¹⁷
16	Lack of support services by the host communities and TASUED	(25%) ⁴³	(35%) ⁶¹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
17	Lack of provisions and inadequate safety measures by institutions and host communities of TASUED	(20%) ³⁵	(40%) ⁶⁹	(30%) ⁵²	(10%) ¹⁷
18	Ineffective reporting mechanism for incidents of rape and sexual assaults	(30%) ⁵²	(38%) ⁶⁶	(22%) ³⁸	(10%) ¹⁷

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes of male undergraduates towards rape of female undergraduates in the host communities of TASUED?

In Table 2, the researchers sought to find out the perceptions and attitudes of male students towards rape. The table reveals that many male students believe that rape is criminal offence (70%), assaulting ladies is a serious issue (60%), rapist is a criminal (70%), forcefully sleeping with ladies is not acceptable (70%), girls should not be blamed for any assault or abuse they get from men (80%), ladies should not be sexually abused because they reveal part of their bodies (68%), and that men that sexually abuse ladies should be blamed and punished (70%). In all, the findings imply that male students do not support any form of abuse and rape of any female students.



Table 2: Attitudes of Male Students Towards Rape and Sexual Assaults of Female Students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Rape is not a criminal offence	(10%) ¹⁷	(20%) ³⁵	(40%) ⁶⁹	(30%) ⁵²
2	Assault of female students is not a big deal	(15%) ²⁶	(25%)	(35%)	(25%) ⁴³
3	I do not perceive someone who forcefully sleeps with a lady as a criminal	(12%) ²¹	(18%) ³¹	(45%) ⁷⁸	(25%) ⁴³
4	If one propose to a lady and she does not accept, one can force her to accept	(8%) ¹⁴	(22%) ³⁸	(50%) ⁸⁷	(20%) ³⁴
5	Touching a lady without her consent is not a big deal	(18%) ³¹	(27%) ⁴⁷	(30%) ⁵²	(25%) ⁴³
6	I cannot castigate my friend who assaults a lady	(20%) ³⁵	(30%) ⁵²	(25%) ⁴³	(25%) ⁴³
7	Touching a lady forcefully is the fault of the lady	(10%) ¹⁷	(28%) ⁴⁸	(40%) ⁶⁹	(22%) ³⁹
8	A lady that is sexually abused should not feel bad	(5%) ⁹	(15%) ²⁶	(50%) ⁸⁹	(30%) ⁵²
9	Any lady that reveals part of her body should be abused	(12%) ²¹	(20%) ³⁵	(43%) ⁷⁴	(25%) ⁴³
10	I cannot condemn any man/boy who sexually assault a lady, most of the time its not his fault.	(7%) ¹²	(23%) ⁴⁰	(45%) ⁷⁸	(25%) ⁴³

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions and attitudes of male undergraduates towards female undergraduates who are survivors of rape within the host communities of TASUED?

Table 3: Perception and Attitude of Male Students towards Female Students that have been sexually abused

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	A lady that is sexually abused should be heartbroken because it is a shameful thing	(25%) ⁴³	(30%) ⁵²	(30%) ⁵²	(15%) ²⁶
2	A lady that is sexually abused should not speak out because of shame	(18%) ³¹	(27%) ⁴⁷	(33%) ⁶¹	(20%) ³⁴
3	A lady that is sexually abused should check herself, its her fault	(12%) ²¹	(22%) ³⁸	(40%) ⁶⁹	(26%) ⁴⁵
4	I cannot befriend a lady that has been sexually abused	(10%) ¹⁷	(20%) ³⁵	(45%) ⁷⁸	(25%) ⁴³
5	A lady that is sexually abused must be a wayward	(15%) ²⁶	(25%) ⁴³	(35%) ⁶¹	(25%) ⁴³
6	Lady that has experienced sexual abuse should vacate her vicinity because of shame.	(20%) ³⁵	(25%) ⁴³	(40%) ⁶⁹	(25%) ²⁶
7	Lady that has been sexually abused is worthless	(12%) ²¹	(18%) ³¹	(45%) ⁷⁸	(25%) ⁴³
8	Ladies that have been sexually abused are careless	(15%) ²⁶	(28%) ⁴⁸	(37%) ⁶⁹	(20%) ³⁵
9	I dislike ladies that have been raped or sexually assaulted	(8%) ¹⁴	(18%) ³¹	(50%) ⁸⁷	(24%) ⁴¹
10	I can never associate myself with a lady that has been raped before	(10%) ¹⁷	(20%) ³⁵	(45%) ⁷⁸	(25%) ⁴³
11	I will feel ashamed rolling with sexually assaulted lady	(10%) ¹⁷	(22%) ³⁸	(45%) ⁷⁸	(23%) ⁴⁰



Table 3 reveals the perception and attitudes of male students towards female students that have been sexually abused. Many male students believe that they can befriend ladies that have been sexually abused (70%), ladies that have been sexually abused are not wayward (60%), that ladies that have been abused are not worthless (70%) and that they should not vacate their vicinity because shame (65%) because their not careless (57%). The male students believed that they can associate themselves with the survivors of rape (70%), they will never feel ashamed of moving with rape survivors (68%) and that female survivors of rape should be shown love and care.

4.2. Discussion of Results

The findings of the study revealed what male students thought that would be the perceived causes of rape of TASUED female students within the host communities of TASUED. According to them, poverty and financial constraint, unstable living arrangements, lack of support system from family and friends, betrayal by room mates, inadequate lightening in the communities, inadequate security measures in the communities, living in isolated area, substance abuse, wearing of revealing clothes by ladies and ineffective mechanism for incidents of rape. These findings are in line with the opinion of Wolters and Smith (2020) about the factors that contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence in tertiary institutions. It was opined by Wolters and Smith (2020) that dangerous fraternity traditions, extensive alcohol and drug use among college students, and vast normalization of sexual violence contributed to rape of female students, they later argued that the only true cause of sexual violence was perpetrators themselves. Furthermore, Abbey, Zawacki, and Buck (2001) in support of the findings stated that alcohol consumption is a significant factor in sexual assault, as it can impair judgment and increase aggression. Ullman (2007) in corroboration of the study, found out that situational factors, such as lack of security and isolation, can increase the risk of sexual assault. More so, Morrison, Hardison, and Mathew (2009) revealed that betrayal by friends or acquaintances could increase the trauma and distress experienced by rape survivors.



More so, the findings of this study revealed that male students had unpleasant perception about rape despite that it is being committed mostly by male gender. The male students never supported the act, or supported the perpetrators. To them, rape is a criminal offence against ladies and that it should not be taken for granted. The male students affirm that rapists are criminals and should not be spared but condemned. To the male students, if a man proposed to a lady and the lady did not give consent, the man should let the lady be, he must not violate her. Participants also perceived that ladies who are victims of rape should be treated nicely and not be stigmatized. This findings corroborate the findings of McMahon (2010). McMahon in his study stated that male college students who reported higher levels of empathy and self-blame were more likely to perceive rape as a serious crime and will support rape victims. Likewise, Edwards et al (2014) whose finding on the study of relationship between masculinity and bystander attitudes towards rape suggested that male participants who endorsed more positive masculinity traits (e.g.) empathy, respect, were more likely to report supportive attitudes towards victims. Katz, and Fleming (2018) also highlighted in their studies, the importance of male allies in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour towards rape victims.

Further more, the study revealed the perception and attitudes of male students towards rape survivors. The male students is of the opinion that the female students who are survivors should not be ashamed but speak out because it was not their faults to be raped, as they were not careless or allowed it. The male students are also of the opinion that female rape survivors should not be castigated, they are not worthless, instead male gender should show love and empathy to them, hence they should accept them, and not reject them; they should not feel ashamed to associate with them; they should be loved and cared for; male students should be free to associate with rape survivors as the incident was not caused by them. The findings are in line with the findings of Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) who found out that male college students who held more empathetic attitudes towards rape victims were less likely to blame the



victim or believe rape myths. Moreso, Davies and McCartney (2003) revealed that men who endorsed more positive masculinity traits (e.g., empathy, respect) held more supportive attitudes towards rape victims. Contrary to these findings Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999) found out from their studies that some male college students held negative attitudes towards rape victims, believing that victims were partially responsible for the assault. Moreso, contrary to the findings, Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny (2002) in their findings suggested that some men who endorsed traditional masculine norms held more negative attitudes towards victims. Deitz, Blackwell, and Daley (2011) also indicated that some men held victim-blaming attitudes, believing that victims were responsible for the assault.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The study found out the perception and attitudes of male students towards rape and rape victims in the host communities of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. It is evident from the findings that male students of Tai Solrin University of Education do not have supportive perception and attitudes towards rape and the perpewtrators of rape, even though they are male gender like them. The findings of the study also revealed that the male students of Tai Solarin University of Education have positive perception and attitudes towards female students that are rape survivors. They believe that the incidences of rape that happened to them were not their faults or caused by them, hence female students should be shown love and care to by their male counterparts in school.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Since the male students had positive attitudes towards rape survivors, special workshop should be organized for them, in which they will be trained on the



different type of modality they can adopt to support the female gender and prevent them against rape.

2. The university community should be encouraged through the Students' Affairs Division to organise symposium at college levels for the roles expected of male students in order to eradicate rape of female students.
3. The communities through the university management should be encouraged to put all necessary measures against rape, violence and abuse into place.
4. Female students should be encouraged to be careful and not engage in any form of activity or action that may make them to be prone to rape, or any form of abuse.
5. Both male and female students are to be encouraged to speak out and report any suspicion move by any one which can lead to rape or any form of abuse.

Competing Interest

The authors declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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