

**RESEARCH ARTICLE****Youth Employment: A Panacea to Security Challenges in Southeast Nigeria**Prof. Chiekezie, Obianuju Mary;¹ Akinroluyo, Bankole Isaac² and Okuoyibo, Azuka Monday³^{1&2}*Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.*³*Department of Marine Economics and Finance, Nigeria Maritime Uni, Okerenkoko. Delta State****Corresponding Author: Prof. Obianuju Mary Chiekezie. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

Unemployment and its attendant poverty situation poses serious problem to the security integrity of a nation and the consequences have a number of security implications. This study investigated youth employment as a panacea to security challenges in South-East Nigeria. The objectives include to assess the link between youth joblessness and human violence and the extent of relationship between under-engagement and youth restiveness in south East Nigeria. To attain the desired results, the study used a survey research approach. Questionnaire was used to collect data from one hundred and fifty (150) respondents in the research area. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and the hypotheses formulated were tested using regression analysis at a 5% level of significance. Findings revealed that youth joblessness has a significant effect on human violence in South East Nigeria ($F = 299.99$; $p < 0.05$). Further, youth under-engagement has significant effect on their restiveness in South East, Nigeria ($F = 199.835$; $p < 0.05$). Based on the findings, the study concluded that youth employment and security challenges in South-East Nigeria, have significant link. As a result, the study recommended that vocational and technical education be introduced at all levels of education. Government needs to make provision through various financial institutions to grant soft loan to potential and prospective youth entrepreneurs in order to encourage small scale business especially at the grassroots. Again, it is important that non-governmental organizations and relevant bodies endeavour to create training should create to promote and develop desirable work ethnics and skills that are congruent with real labour market demand.

Keywords: Youth Employment; security challenges; Human Violence and Restiveness; Unemployment

1. Introduction

Despite being blessed with abundant human and natural resources dispersed throughout the country, Nigeria is still struggling to be developed or become a power to be reckoned with in the community of nations. The problem of continuous increase in poverty, armed robbery, militancy in the Niger Delta region and Boko Haram turbulences in Nigeria may not be unconnected to the youths that are not empowered to contribute to national development (Nnachi, Nwigwe, & Ukoma, 2013). They believe that the nation has failed the youths and therefore, they are paying back to the country all the denials and adversities mated to them. Thus, the devil always finds work for an idle hand. Nnachi, et al (2013), further observe that most of our tertiary institutions turn out graduates on yearly basis without a corresponding job creation to take care of them.

Many developing countries like Nigeria have large and growing population of poor and unemployed citizens, many of whom have few choices other than economic activities that endangered the environment thereby threatening the nation's national security.

The speedy rise in the country's unemployment rate has become a major source of worry. It is no longer about going to school and graduating or learning a trade and acquiring a skill, but about how to face the reality of graduating and joining the brigade of the unemployed with little hope of what the future holds. The available statistics from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

(Year) indicate that, Nigeria's unemployment rate is at 23.9 per cent and 60 per cent of its population are youths, which translates to about 80 million Nigerian youths. Youth unemployment rate is over 50 per cent, and about 64 million Nigerian youths are unemployed. (Please reconcile this 80 million and 64 million youths) The result of the rising youth unemployment situation in the country has provided shrinking options to job seekers as those who find

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work are forced to be less selective about the type of job they settle for, including part-time work and temporary contracts. This is because, desirable employment opportunities are unavailable and they are in desperate need for any income for sustainable living. Unlike what obtains in most developed countries, Nigeria, has no social security system in place to cater for the unemployed. Hence, the unemployed do not receive unemployment benefits from the government and most of them do not have family support and are unable to fend for themselves. Consequently, many have, resorted to engaging in activities that constitute security challenges to Nigeria. This is an unacceptable situation, yet, it is the reality on ground.

Security is the condition of being protected physically, emotionally, psychologically as well as from other harm, attack, terror which could be considered as non-desirable. Edem (2010) defined security as assurance of the future wellbeing and freedom from threat. National security is a collection of precautions, resources and institutions built to secure a sovereign state. Providing national security for the lives and properties within a sovereign state is a vital social contract between the masses, the government and the state.

A broad understanding of what constitutes a national security concern in Nigeria includes disease, violent crimes, political assassination, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, terrorism and environmental degradation. European asylum Support Office (2021), noted that Nigeria is confronted by multiple security challenges: Islamist groups resurgent in the North-East Region; conflict in the North-West Region involving herder-allied groups, vigilantes, criminal gangs and jihadists; ethno-communal violence between nomadic cattle herders and farming communities in the North-West Region and from the Middle Belt southward; long-running discontent and militancy in the Niger Delta; and separatist Biafra agitation in the South-East Region.

The Global Peace Index (2020), ranked Nigeria 147th out of 163 countries (compared to 148th position in the previous year). The Index covering events in 2019, classified Nigeria in a state of 'Alert'. This means that intense insecurity and violence have persisted and increased. Nigerian youths may have contributed a good share in this intense violence. The Global Peace Index (2020) also observed that Nigeria had the most demonstrations and the largest increase in 2018, rising from 6 % to 79 %. Further, in October 2020 peaceful protests erupted across many cities calling for, and ultimately resulting in, the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), an elite police unit accused of serious human rights abuses. The protesters were met with intimidation, harassment and attacks by Nigerian security forces, leaving at least 10 protesters dead and hundreds (European asylum Support Office, 2021). This protest was organized and executed by angry youths most of whom were and are still unemployed. Unemployed to keep them off the street until they get jobs. Unemployment is generally caused by improper orientation of the youths, absence of policy on social welfare, societal attitude towards vocational and technical education, inadequate training and teaching facilities (Lamido, 2013). Conventional wisdom dictates that insecurity rises with unemployment and poverty (Kirby, 2011) because unemployment leads to loss of income which affects the people's ability to pay their bills and provide basic necessities for their households and dependent relatives. It is because of insecurity posed by unemployment that advanced countries provide social security payments to the unemployed. Thus, unemployment situation in Nigeria have manifested in the alarming rate of armed robbery incidents in the southwest region, militancy and arson in the south-south, terrorism in the north, north central and north east regions and kidnapping in the south- east region. All these have impact on the intense insecurity situation in the country, business and investments, social-political process and governance.

Unfortunately, unemployment and the attendant poverty situation it brings, poses serious problem to democratic governance as well as the security integrity of the country. Lack of employment opportunities has contributed to youth involvement in urban conflict and militancy that confront Nigeria. The increased rate of sectional violence, crime and terrorism are connected with employment (Rotimi, 2011). Where the youth cannot get jobs, they make themselves available for odd jobs which takes any imaginable criminal dimension. Akande and Okuwa (2009) posited that youth unemployment and poverty are playing a major role in African conflict experiences including Nigerians. The prevailing socio-economic environment is enticing youths to turn to war, crime and violence as a means of livelihood. The security situation in South East Nigeria, is rapidly deteriorating, as several incidents in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states show.

It is against these identified challenges that this study seeks to investigate youth employment as a panacea to security challenges in South-East Nigeria.

Specific objectives are to:

- I. Assess the link between youth joblessness and human violence in south East Nigeria.
- II. Ascertain the extent of relationship between under-engagement and youth restiveness.

2. Literature Review

Youth Employment is the direct opposite of youth unemployment. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2007) defines unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1988). According to Adebayo (1999), unemployment exists when the labour force wishes to work but cannot get jobs. Unemployment, therefore, is an economic condition when an individual or individuals seeking jobs cannot manage to get themselves economically employed (Adegoke, 2015). The level of unemployment differs with economic conditions and other market forces. Youth unemployment is becoming an increasingly troublesome issue in many parts of the world. In Nigeria in particular, it has become one of the most serious socio-economic problem confronting the country. Awogbenlu and Iwuamadi (2010) observed that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty million representing 60 percent of the total population of the country from the man power board and Federal Bureau of Statistics. Fifty-four (54) million of them are unemployed while one million of them six hundred thousand (1.6 million) are under employed.

Unemployment in Nigeria is with attendant social, economic, political and psychological consequences (Okafor, 2011). One of its social consequences on the Nigeria youth is the high level of youth unemployment. A phenomenon which encourages the development of street youths and urban urchins (Area Boys) in a society that encourages criminal behaviour.

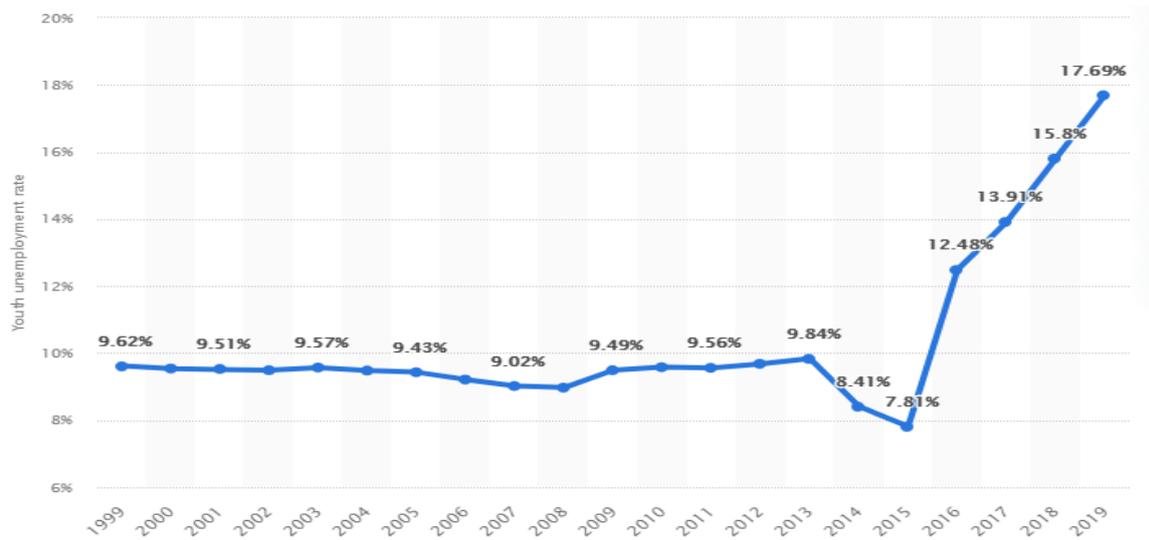


Figure 1: Youth unemployment rate from 1999 to 2019 in Nigeria

Table 2.1: Youth unemployment rate from 1999 to 2019 in Nigeria

Year	Unemployment rate (%)
1999	9.62
2001	9.51
2003	9.57
2005	9.43
2007	9.02
2009	9.49
2011	9.56
2013	9.84
2014	8.41
2015	7.81
2016	12.48
2017	13.91
2018	15.8
2019	17.69

Source: Statista, 2021

Unemployment has also contributed to increase feminization of poverty among young women, which has encouraged prostitution as a means of survival and leads to trafficking of young women across international borders with transnational security implications. Psychologically, the unemployed usually experience trauma, anger, frustration, low self-esteem, negative life satisfaction, unhappiness and mental disorder including depression and acute stress. Other economic consequences of unemployment include flight of youths and able-bodied men from the country in search for better opportunities elsewhere, thereby reducing the labour force and producing capacity in Nigeria (Akande, 2009; Okuwa, 2009). And for those that are left, they participate in all sorts of activities to put food on their table, some of which may include nefarious activities. From the picture of the high level of unemployment in Nigeria, it is easy to see how this population of unemployed persons can serve as security threat. According to the popular maxim “the idle hand is the devil’s workshop”, the situation whereby majority of the people are poor and hungry and a lot of youths are jobless and unemployed, will undoubtedly, engender high insecurity in the country.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2018) has reported Nigeria’s youth population eligible to work is about 40 million out of which only 14.7 million are fully employed and another 11.2 million are unemployed. NBS has analyzed that youth unemployment is synonymous with increased insecurity and poverty, a situation that is also seen as a ticking time bomb. To put things into context, Nigeria’s unemployed youth of 11.2 million is more than the population of Rwanda and several other African countries. In addition, Ohia, Bakarey, and Ahmad, (2020) identify that youth population is also about 64% of total unemployed Nigerians suggesting that the most agile working-class population in the country remains unemployed.

The definition of security has changed from the traditional military ways of protecting the state against internal and external aggression. Security can be defined as an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and wellbeing (Adegoke, 2015). A broad understanding of what constitutes a national security concern in Nigeria includes disease, violent crimes, political assassination, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, terrorism and environmental degradation. Many developing countries like Nigeria have large and growing population of poor and unemployed citizens, many of whom have few choices other than economic activities that endangered the environment thereby threatening the nation’s national security. Conventional wisdom dictates that insecurity rises with unemployment and poverty (Kirby, 2011) because unemployment leads to loss of income which affects the people’s ability to pay their bills and provide basic necessities for their households and dependent relatives.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data [ACLED] (2020) project, shown in Table 2.2 below, indicates 2404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria: 844 were coded as battles, 220 as explosions/remote violence, 297 as riots and 1043 as violence against civilians. These security incidents resulted in 7699 fatalities. The lowest number of security incidents was recorded in Kwara (8), Kebbi (6), and Gombe States.

Table 2.2: Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in 2020, based on ACLED data.

<i>Types of Incidents</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Number of Fatalities</i>
<i>Battles</i>	844	3336
<i>Explosions/Remote Violence</i>	220	1900
<i>Riots</i>	297	204
<i>Violence Against Civilians</i>	1043	2259
<i>Total</i>	2404	7699

Source: European asylum Support Office (2021). *Nigeria Security situation: Country of origin information report*. ISBN978-92-9465-082-5 June, 2021. (<http://europa.eu>)

In the first four months of 2021, a total of 997 security incidents took place (378 battles, 102 explosions/remote violence, 423 incidents of violence against civilians, and 94 riots), resulting in 3 490 fatalities (see Table 2.1). Most of the security incidents took place, as in 2020, in Borno state (195), followed by Kaduna state (188), Niger (63), Katsina (41), Benue (38), and Oyo (38).

Table 2.3 Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in January-April 2021, based on ACLED data

<i>Types of Incidents</i>	<i>Number of Incidents</i>	<i>Number of Fatalities</i>
<i>Jan-April 2021</i>		
<i>Battles</i>	378	2082
<i>Explosions/Remote Violence</i>	102	396
<i>Riots</i>	94	84
<i>Violence Against Civilians</i>	423	928
<i>Total</i>	997	3490

Source: European asylum Support Office (2021). *Nigeria Security situation: Country of origin information report.* ISBN978-92-9465-082-5 June, 2021. (<http://europa.eu>)

This research is based on the Frustration - Aggression Theory formulated by Dollard, et al. (1939) which stated that “the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression”. The relevance of the frustration-aggression theoretical framework to the insecurity in Nigeria is better appreciated when viewed against the backdrop of widespread poverty in Nigeria. Poverty is endemic throughout Nigeria and the poverty profile is exacerbated by the problem of unemployment and hopelessness. A negative condition caused not by the unwillingness of the people to work but by bad governance that creates capability gap. The capability gap portrays the inability of governance to effectively utilize the resources of the state to better the lots of its citizenry through the provision of job opportunities, infrastructural development and initiation of potent or viable poverty alleviation and eradication programmes. This failure of governance breeds frustrated expectations and bottled-up aggressions. This pathetic condition, members of this sect and other frustrated persons are readily available to be recruited under the auspice of violence as a destructive political agent for indiscriminate and sporadic killings and social vices in Nigeria. These aggressions are manifested as crimes and violence in Nigeria. Sometimes people resort to violence when they are oppressed, discriminated against, socially isolated or economically deprived. Some researchers hold that poverty and inequality trigger violence (Aweke, 2012) which invariably threatens the security of a nation.

On empirical review, Adegoke (2015) examined the impact of unemployment on security challenges in Nigeria. The study specifically examined the nexus between unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria as well as the effect of governmental attitude and policies on unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria. The paper adopted survey method for collection of data and it was revealed that there is significant relationship between unemployment and insecurity. The paper therefore recommends among others that government at all levels should put in place and sustain programs and policies geared toward reduction of poverty and unemployment.

Akpakan, Barileum and Lucky (2015) examined the relationship between insecurity and Youth unemployment in Nigeria with focus on the Niger-Delta. The study noted that national insecurity is one of the challenges facing the corporate existence and continued peace and stability of Nigeria and it is caused by youth unemployment. Based on this, the study suggests amongst others, the creation of employment opportunities and employment based on merit. Social security funds as unemployment compensation were also suggested as a plausible strategy to keep poverty at bay. The study also implored the government to employ the ALASKA model in compensating the Niger Deltas to ensure national security in the country.

Ojenike, Shodiya and Jolaosho (2016) examined the nexus between youth empowerment and security as a means of sustaining national development in Nigeria. The paper investigated the causes of national security challenges in Nigeria such as corruption, injustice, poverty, poor health care delivery services, decayed and collapsed infrastructure, environmental degradation and socio-religious crises and its effect on National development. It recommended among others that, Nigerian politicians should stop using youths as political thugs, but instead, empower them with relevant science and technical education skills that will make them to be self-reliant.

Onyekwere (2021) examined the effects of youth unemployment in Nigeria and revealed that the increasing rate of unemployment amongst youths has increased the wave of armed robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking kidnapping, terror threats, and ongoing abductions of Nigerians with reckless abandon. The study links youth unemployment to violence, drug trafficking and sometimes suicide. The study concluded that since the rate of youth unemployment

is likely to climb further in the country, hence, the study recommended that more efforts should be made by governments at all levels to create jobs and strengthen job market regulation so that young people with education or skills can live a meaningfully and contribute to the country development.

3. Methodology

The study used a survey research design, which entails gathering data from the target population. A total of 150 youths was chosen using a combination of purposive and convenience selection techniques. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the selected participants in order to elicit information. The questionnaire was served to the participants, and collected the same day it was administered to ensure 100% retrieval. The instrument's validity was determined using face and content validity. To determine the research instrument's internal consistency, the reliability test was conducted using the Cronbach alpha test. The data analysis used descriptive statistics, and the hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. SPSS v.21 was used as the statistical software for ease and accuracy in computation.

Model Specification

The model for the research is specified as:

$$y = f(x)$$

Where:

y = Dependent variables i.e. human violence, youth restiveness

x = Independent variables i.e. youth joblessness, youth under-engagement

$$YTR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HV + \mu \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$YTU = \beta_0 + \beta_2 YJ + \mu \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Where:

YTR = youth restiveness YTU = youth under-engagement

HV = human violence YJ = youth joblessness

β_0 = Constant $\beta_1; \beta_2$ = Coefficient of variables

μ = error term

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.1 Results

Table 3.1 Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.834	20

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.2 Demographic Information of respondents

Variable	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	48.0
	Female	78	52.0
	Total	150	100.0
Age	18 - 21 years	41	27.3
	22 - 25 years	79	52.7
	26 – 30 years	30	20.0
	Total	150	100.0
Educational Qualification	None	21	14.0
	SSCE	81	54.0

	B.Sc./HND	44	29.3
	M.Sc./MBA	4	2.7
	Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant relationship between youth joblessness and human violence in South East Nigeria.

H₁: There is significant relationship between youth joblessness and human violence in South East Nigeria.

Table 4.3 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.960 ^a	.922	.919		.7855

Source: Field Survey, 2021

a. Predictors: (Constant), youth joblessness

b. Dependent Variable: human violence

Table 4.3 summarizes the magnitude of the independent variable's (youth joblessness) effect on the dependent variable human violence). The R-square value of $R^2 = .992$ indicates that the independent variable accounts for roughly 92% of the total variance in human violence (youth joblessness). Other variables not included in the model account for the remaining 5%.

Table 4.4 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	555.295	3	185.098	299.995	.000 ^b
	Residual	70.907	146	.617		
	Total	602.188	149			

Source: Field Survey, 2021

a. Predictors: (Constant), youth joblessness

b. Dependent Variable: human violence

Table 3.4 reveals that at the 5% significant level, there is a positive significant association between youth joblessness and human violence. The result if $(3/146) = 299.995$, $P < 0.05$, supports this. At a 95% confidence interval, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. As a result, the study suggests that youth joblessness has a significant impact on human violence in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between under-engagement and youth restiveness.

H₁: There is significant relationship between under-engagement and youth restiveness.

Table 4.5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.916 ^a	.838	.834	1.12376

Source: Field Survey, 2021

a. Predictors: (Constant), youth under-engagement

b. Dependent Variable: youth restiveness

The model result of the variables used in this investigation is shown in Table 4.5. The value of R^2 in the table is .838, indicating that under-engagement explains around 83.8% of the variation in youth restiveness. The R^2 number of .838 also demonstrates the model's strength; the closer the value is to one, the better the result. After adjusting for the degree of freedom, the adjusted R^2 suggests that the model could explain around 80% of the systematic variance in South east youth restiveness.

Table 4.6 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	504.712	3	252.356	199.835	.000 ^b
	Residual	97.238	146	1.263		
	Total	601.950	149			
Source: Field Survey, 2021						
a. Predictors: (Constant), youth under-engagement						
b. Dependent Variable: youth restiveness						

Table 4.6 reveals that at the 5% significant level, there is a positive significant association between under-engagement and youth restiveness. The result if $(3/146) = 199.835$, $P < 0.05$, supports this. At a 95% confidence interval, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. As a result, the study shows that youth under-engagement has significant effect on youth restiveness in South East, Nigeria.

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

In South East Nigeria, the study studied the link between youth employment and national insecurity. The investigation revealed that lack of unemployment has afforded youths the time to be involved in urban conflict and militancy that negatively confront Nigeria. Based on the findings, this study concludes youth employment and security challenges in South-East Nigeria, have a positive and substantial association.

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that:

- i. Vocational and technical education need to be emphasized and strongly rooted at all levels of education. It is an indisputable means of reducing youth employment since it is skilled-oriented and self-employment motivated. Hence, it is the business of government at all levels - both federal, state and local government to ensure its implementation.
- ii. The government have a duty to provide enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship to thrive. It is important to make beneficial provisions through various financial institutions for grants and soft loan to potential and prospective youth entrepreneurs. This will inspire, encourage and boost small scale businesses especially at the grassroots.
- iii. Non-governmental organization and relevant bodies need to create training and development opportunities that will promote and develop desirable work ethnics and skills that are congruent with real labour market demand.

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