

LECTURERS' DEPOSIT PRACTICES, PERCEPTION, AND PREFERENCES ON INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES AND TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING MODELS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated lecturers' deposit practices, their perception of depositing content, and their preference for institutional repositories (IRs) compared with traditional publishing models in public universities in South-East Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 5,759 lecturers in the five public universities in South-East Nigeria, from which a sample of 400 was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula and a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected with a 51-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Lecturers' Perception on Content Depository and Use of Institutional Repository Questionnaire" (LPCDUIRQ), validated by three experts and yielding a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95. Out of 400 copies administered, 381 (96%) were returned and used for analysis. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that the extent to which lecturers deposit content in institutional repositories is low (cluster mean = 2.02), their perception of depositing content in IRs is also low (cluster mean = 1.95), and their preference for IRs over traditional publishing models is similarly low (cluster mean = 1.75). The study concluded that lecturers in South-East Nigeria remain largely disengaged from institutional repositories despite their availability, preferring traditional publishing outlets. It was recommended that university management make deposit of research outputs compulsory, that librarians organise regular sensitisation and training programmes, and that institutional policies be strengthened to improve lecturers' deposit behaviour.

Keywords: Institutional Repositories, Content Depository, Lecturers' Perception, Open Access, Public Universities, South-East Nigeria

Introduction

Digital technologies have reshaped how universities create and share academic knowledge, and institutional repositories (IRs) have become one of the most important tools for this shift. An institutional repository is generally understood as a set of digital services that a university provides to its community for managing and disseminating materials produced within the institution (Idiedo et al., 2024). These repositories typically house research articles, theses, dissertations, conference proceedings, datasets and other scholarly works, and in doing so they extend the reach of an institution's research output well beyond its physical boundaries (Asadi et al., 2019; Suber, 2012). In effect, IRs have become central to how universities demonstrate the scale and quality of their research to the wider world.

Lecturers occupy a central position in this process because they generate most of the material that repositories depend on. As the principal producers of research articles, theses, dissertations and other scholarly materials, lecturers determine, through their willingness or reluctance to deposit, how rich and useful an institutional repository ultimately becomes (Ezema, 2013). When lecturers deposit their work consistently, repositories grow richer and more discoverable, supporting institutional visibility, research collaboration and improved citation rates (Khan, 2023; Chukwueke *et al.*, 2020). Evidence from Nigerian universities, however, points to a persistent gap between this potential and actual practice, with lecturer participation constrained by low awareness, limited digital skills, copyright concerns, weak institutional policies and inadequate

technological infrastructure (Chukwueke *et al.*, 2020; Okoroma, 2018; Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2019). It is this gap that motivates the present study.

In South-East Nigeria specifically, most public universities have established institutional repositories, yet lecturer engagement with these platforms remains visibly low, with many academics continuing to rely on journals and conference proceedings rather than self-archiving in their institutions' repositories. This pattern raises questions that go beyond simple non-use: it is necessary to understand how lecturers actually behave in relation to deposit, how they perceive the practice, and how they weigh institutional repositories against the traditional publishing avenues they already trust. Addressing these questions is essential for designing interventions capable of improving both the content and the utilisation of institutional repositories in the region, and this is the task the present study undertakes.

Statement of the Problem

Institutional repositories promise real benefits — greater visibility of research, a stronger institutional reputation, and support for global knowledge sharing — yet many public universities in Nigeria, particularly in the South-East, continue to grapple with low lecturer engagement in content depository and repository use. Because the success of any repository depends on the active participation of the academic staff who supply its content, the reluctance many Nigerian lecturers show toward depositing their work directly constrains both the quantity and quality of material available to their institutions. Although factors such as low awareness, limited technical skills, intellectual property concerns and inadequate institutional support are frequently cited as explanations, the specific extent of

lecturers' deposit practices, their perception of content depository, and their preference for institutional repositories over traditional publishing models had not been sufficiently examined within the South-East Nigerian context. It was this gap that the present study set out to address.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do lecturers deposit content in institutional repositories?
2. What is the extent of lecturers' perception of depositing content in institutional repositories?
3. What is the extent of lecturers' preference for institutional repositories compared with traditional publishing models in South-East Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Overview of Institutional Repositories

Institutional repositories occupy a well-established place among the infrastructures that higher education institutions use to manage and disseminate scholarly communication, and Nigerian universities are no exception. An IR is defined as a set of services offered by a university to manage and disseminate digital materials created by its community (Masrek *et al.*, 2021), a definition that captures the dual responsibility of stewardship and long-term preservation that repositories carry. Recent research indicates that IRs increasingly function as knowledge hubs that promote visibility, collaboration and

access to open scholarship (Mushi *et al.*, 2022), and it is this expanding function that makes lecturers' engagement with them worth investigating.

The scope of institutional repositories extends well beyond simple archiving. They safeguard academic outputs against technological obsolescence while facilitating open access to research, thereby enhancing institutional reputation and supporting knowledge transfer across geographical boundaries (Ngulube & Ukwoma, 2020; Patowari & Barooah, 2023). The materials typically stored in IRs — journal articles, theses, conference papers, research datasets and multimedia learning materials (Kaladhar *et al.*, 2018) — reflect the growing range of academic activities lecturers now undertake, which is precisely why their deposit behaviour deserves close attention.

Content Depository in Institutional Repositories

Content depository, in the context of this study, refers to the systematic collection, organisation and preservation of scholarly outputs to enhance institutional visibility and academic communication. For an institutional repository to remain a comprehensive and sustainable platform for knowledge dissemination, librarians and repository managers must continually develop policies, curate collections and engage content creators (Echezona & Ugwuanyi, 2019); without this active engagement, deposit rates tend to stagnate.

Faculty reluctance to submit materials is one of the most persistent challenges in content depository, often rooted in copyright concerns, lack of awareness, or the perception of additional workload (Bangani, 2018; Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2019). Lecturers nonetheless remain the primary contributors to IRs, since their research outputs — journal

articles, theses, conference papers and datasets — form the backbone of any repository, and their motivation is often linked to career incentives such as visibility, collaboration opportunities and institutional recognition (Kakai, 2018). Evidence further suggests that senior academic staff are sometimes less likely to contribute than junior staff and postgraduate students, which points to a need for targeted policies and awareness campaigns that ensure inclusivity in participation (Bangani, 2018). Where institutional self-archiving mandates are clear, repository deposits rise because uncertainty is reduced and compliance is easier to enforce (Zhang *et al.*, 2015; Kari & Baro, 2016); by contrast, institutions with vague or absent policies continue to record low content submission (Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2019). This pattern underlines why institutional policy, and not merely individual willingness, shapes deposit behaviour.

Attitude and Perception and Their Influence on Repository Use

Attitude is a critical psychological construct in technology adoption, and institutional repository use is no exception. It comprises cognitive, affective and behavioural components that shape how individuals perceive and interact with new technologies (Ledgerwood *et al.*, 2018). Within the context of IRs, lecturers' perception determines their willingness to deposit and use digital scholarly outputs: a positive perception is usually driven by perceived usefulness and ease of use, while a negative perception rooted in low awareness, limited digital literacy, or perceived workload discourages participation (Ngulube & Ukwoma, 2020; Tmava, 2017; Manchu & Vasudevan, 2018).

Awareness and familiarity form the foundation on which this perception is built. Even where academic staff report high general awareness of institutional repositories, their knowledge of the actual submission procedures is often limited, and this gap constrains usage regardless of how favourably they view IRs in principle (Jayakananthan & Jeyaraj, 2023). Institutional support in the form of technical infrastructure, copyright guidance and incentives has been shown to foster a more positive perception of IR use, while clear policies that mandate or encourage self-archiving create a culture of engagement and reduce uncertainty among faculty (Sankar & Kavitha, 2017; Lee et al., 2022). It follows that improving lecturers' perception of IRs is as much a matter of institutional support as it is of individual attitude.

Factors Affecting Lecturers' Participation in Content Depository in Public

Universities

Lecturers' participation in institutional repositories is shaped by a complex interplay of motivating and inhibiting factors, the most fundamental of which is how well an individual's personal and professional values align with open-access principles. Faculty who recognise the benefits of unrestricted dissemination of knowledge tend to be more willing to contribute their scholarly outputs (Mooketsi, 2020; Ngulube & Ukwoma, 2020), and increased visibility and citation impact reinforce this willingness, since research deposited in IRs tends to attract higher download and citation rates than work locked behind paywalls (Adeyemo & Jamogha, 2021; Demetres *et al.*, 2020).

Institutional policy plays an equally decisive role. Universities with clear self-archiving mandates record higher deposit rates than those without such policies, and

incentives such as research recognition, awards, or integration into promotion criteria further encourage faculty to deposit their work (Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2019; Lee *et al.*, 2022). Technical skill and ease of use matter just as much: lecturers with high digital literacy engage more actively with IRs, while those with limited skills tend to view the process as burdensome (Kumah & Filson, 2021). Intellectual property and copyright concerns remain a significant barrier as well, with many lecturers fearing loss of control over their work or violation of publisher agreements when depositing into an IR (Okoroma & Abioye, 2017).

Beyond these individual-level factors, structural constraints common to many Nigerian public universities compound the problem. Inadequate ICT connectivity, unreliable power supply, and insufficient advocacy and training on the value of repositories have all been identified as obstacles to sustained institutional repository operation (Kumah & Filson, 2021), while inadequate funding and a shortage of skilled repository staff make it difficult for many institutions to maintain functional systems in the first place (Okhakhu, 2015). Taken together, these structural gaps suggest that raising lecturers' awareness and improving their perception of IRs must go hand in hand with investment in the infrastructure and staffing that make deposit practically possible.

Empirical Review

A number of empirical studies offer useful points of comparison for the present research, particularly with respect to how awareness and perception shape engagement with institutional repositories. In a related study, Anenene, Alegbeleye and Oyewole (2017) examined factors influencing the adoption of institutional repositories in universities in

South-West Nigeria from the perspective of library staff, using a descriptive survey design with a structured questionnaire administered to 32 library staff across seven universities. The study found that a significant proportion of respondents (86.7%) demonstrated high awareness of IRs alongside a positive perception of their usefulness, and identified licensing agreements, deposit and withdrawal services, and copyright and intellectual property issues as key factors influencing adoption. This study is relevant to the present research in its use of a questionnaire and descriptive survey design and its focus on awareness as a determinant of IR engagement, though it focused on library staff rather than lecturers.

Similarly, Fasae and Adekoya (2021) investigated the awareness and perception of academic staff in private Nigerian universities toward institutional repositories, employing a descriptive survey of correlational type among 259 academic staff, of whom 182 responded (70.3% response rate). The study found that academic staff were generally aware of IRs and held positive perceptions regarding their use, and that hypothesis testing confirmed significant relationships among awareness, perception and use of IRs. This study is closely related to the present one in its focus on academic staff, its examination of awareness and perception, and its adoption of a descriptive survey design.

In a larger-scale study, Bamigbola (2021) explored the factors influencing the use of institutional repositories by lecturers in Nigerian universities, focusing on awareness, anchor factors such as computer self-efficacy and external control, and adjustment factors such as perceived enjoyment and usability. Using a descriptive correlational survey design with data from 857 lecturers across five Nigerian universities, the study found that awareness, anchor factors and adjustment factors significantly influenced the use of

institutional repositories, with computer self-efficacy, perceived external control and computer playfulness contributing positively to frequency of use. This study is relevant to the present research as both examine factors affecting lecturers' engagement with institutional repositories and the role of awareness in shaping such engagement.

Along the same lines, Oladokun (2023) examined the role of multidimensional awareness in the use of institutional repositories by academic staff in Nigerian universities, adopting a survey research method with a multistage sample of 235 lecturers in Oyo and Osun states. The study found that while respondents generally had a high level of perception about institutional repositories, many demonstrated low comprehension and projection — dimensions of awareness critical to a deeper understanding of IRs — and that awareness significantly influenced IR use. This study is related to the present one in its use of a questionnaire, its focus on lecturers as respondents, and its concern with the level of awareness of IRs among academic staff. Taken together, these studies confirm that awareness and perception consistently shape engagement with institutional repositories across different Nigerian university contexts, which lends support to the variables examined in the present study.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory, both of which offer useful lenses for understanding lecturers' engagement with institutional repositories. TAM, originally proposed by Davis (1989), explains user acceptance of technology through three constructs — perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude toward use — which together determine the

likelihood of adopting a technology. The model has been widely applied to institutional repository studies; for instance, lecturers' adoption of IRs in Nigerian universities has been found to be strongly influenced by their perceptions of usefulness in increasing visibility and enhancing research productivity (Ngulube & Ukwoma, 2020).

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, formulated by Rogers (1962), complements TAM by offering a framework for understanding how new ideas, behaviours and technologies spread within social systems. Its core concepts — innovation, communication channels, time and social systems — are directly relevant to understanding how lecturers come to perceive and adopt institutional repositories, since lecturers must first perceive IRs as beneficial tools that enhance their teaching and research capabilities before adoption can occur, while communication channels such as workshops, seminars and peer discussions shape their awareness and interest (Rogers, 2003). Together, these two theories provide complementary insight into the psychological and social processes underlying lecturers' deposit behaviour, perception and preferences regarding institutional repositories versus traditional publishing models, and they form the conceptual basis for the research questions this study addresses.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for investigating the perceptions and behaviours of lecturers toward content depository and the utilisation of institutional repositories. The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria, which hosts five prominent public universities: Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU); Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO); Nnamdi Azikiwe

University, Awka (UNIZIK); University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); and Alex Ekwueme-Federal University, Ndufu Alike Ikwo (AE-FUNAI). The population of the study comprised all 5,759 lecturers in these five universities.

A sample of 400 lecturers was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, and a multi-stage sampling procedure was used for selection. In the first stage, two faculties were purposively selected from each of the five universities, giving a total of ten faculties. In the second stage, two departments were randomly selected from each of the ten faculties, giving twenty departments, and in the third stage, twenty lecturers were randomly selected from each of the selected departments.

The instrument for data collection was a 51-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Lecturers’ Perception on Content Depository and Use of Institutional Repository Questionnaire” (LPCDUIRQ), structured on a four-point rating scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). The instrument was divided into Part A (biodata) and Part B, comprising clusters aligned with the study’s research questions: Cluster A addressed the extent of content deposit, Cluster B addressed lecturers’ perception of depositing content, and Cluster C addressed lecturers’ preference for institutional repositories relative to traditional publishing models.

Face validation of the instrument was carried out by three experts — two in library and information science and one in measurement and evaluation — all from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.95, indicating high reliability. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the assistance of four research assistants. Of the 400 copies administered, 381 (96%) were returned and

used for data analysis. Data were analysed using means and standard deviations, with any item attaining a mean of 2.50 or above regarded as accepted (high extent/agreed) and any item below 2.50 regarded as rejected (low extent).

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent do lecturers deposit content in institutional repositories?

Table 1: Mean Analysis of Lecturers' Responses on the Extent of Content Deposited in Institutional Repositories

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I deposit my published journal articles in the institutional repository	2.18	0.70	LE
2	I deposit conference papers and seminar presentations	2.08	0.66	LE
3	I deposit teaching materials (lecture notes, slides)	1.59	0.70	LE
4	I deposit theses, dissertations or supervised students' works	2.01	0.72	LE
5	I deposit datasets or research reports	2.16	0.96	LE
6	I deposit book chapters or monographs	2.09	0.70	LE
7	I deposit unpublished manuscripts or preprints	1.86	0.65	LE
8	I deposit departmental or faculty publications	2.08	0.71	LE
9	I deposit institutional newsletters or bulletins	2.11	0.47	LE
Cluster Mean		2.02	0.70	LE

Note. LE = Low Extent (real limit 1.50–2.49); HE = High Extent (real limit 2.50–3.49).

Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of lecturers on all nine items ranged between 1.59 and 2.18, falling within the real limit of 1.50–2.49, indicating low-extent responses. The cluster mean of 2.02, which also falls within this range, indicates that lecturers deposit content in institutional repositories to a low extent. Specifically, lecturers agreed that they

deposit published journal articles, conference papers and seminar presentations, teaching materials, theses and dissertations, datasets or research reports, book chapters or monographs, unpublished manuscripts, departmental publications, and newsletters or bulletins, all to a low extent. The cluster standard deviation of 0.70 indicates that the responses were not far from the mean and from one another.

This low extent of deposit implies that most lecturers in South-East Nigerian public universities hardly make use of their institutional repositories to archive their scholarly outputs, so that a substantial proportion of what they produce continues to reside outside their institutions' repositories. This result corroborates Ukwoma and Ngulube (2019), who attributed low content submission to vague or absent institutional policies on content depository, and aligns with Ezema (2013), who similarly found that although lecturers are integral to the content depository process, their actual contributions of research articles, theses and dissertations to repositories remain very low. Read together with the literature on institutional policy reviewed earlier, this finding suggests that South-East Nigerian universities have yet to translate the availability of repository infrastructure into an active culture of deposit among their academic staff.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of lecturers' perception of depositing content in institutional repositories?

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Lecturers' Responses on Perception of Depositing Content in Institutional Repositories

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
10	Depositing content in the institutional repository is beneficial to me as a researcher	2.18	0.77	LE

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Depositing content increases my research visibility	1.67	0.89	LE
12	Depositing content is safe and reliable	2.10	0.72	LE
13	Depositing content is easy and requires little effort	1.56	0.63	LE
14	The institutional repository is more advantageous than traditional storage	1.59	0.80	LE
15	The institutional repository supports knowledge sharing	2.02	0.76	LE
16	The institutional repository ensures long-term preservation	2.23	0.70	LE
17	The institutional repository brings recognition to lecturers	2.15	0.69	LE
18	I feel confident depositing materials in the institutional repository	2.06	0.65	LE
Cluster Mean		1.95	0.73	LE

Note. LE = Low Extent (real limit 1.50–2.49); HE = High Extent (real limit 2.50–3.49).

Table 2 reveals that the mean ratings of lecturers on all nine items ranged between 1.56 and 2.23, falling within the real limit of 1.50–2.49, indicating low-extent responses. The cluster mean of 1.95, which also falls within this range, indicates that lecturers' perception of depositing content in institutional repositories is low. Specifically, lecturers did not fully agree that depositing content in the institutional repository is beneficial to them as researchers, increases their research visibility, is safe and reliable, is easy and requires little effort, is more advantageous than traditional storage, supports knowledge sharing, ensures long-term preservation, or brings them recognition. The cluster standard deviation of 0.73 indicates that the responses were not far from the mean and from one another.

This low perception suggests that lecturers attach limited value to content depository, in the sense that they do not fully recognise its practical benefits for their own

research careers. This finding supports Tmava (2017) and Manchu and Vasudevan (2018), who linked lecturers' low perception and negative attitude toward content depository to a lack of awareness, low digital literacy, and perceived workload. It also aligns with Jayakananthan and Jeyaraj (2023), who found that despite high sensitisation levels, academic staff content submission remained limited and low, and with Lazarus and Ogunbote (2022), who reported only occasional use of institutional repositories by lecturers. Because perception and deposit behaviour are closely linked, this result reinforces the pattern already observed in Table 1 and points to awareness and sensitisation as an area requiring urgent institutional attention.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of lecturers' preference for institutional repositories compared with traditional publishing models in South-East Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Lecturers' Responses on the Extent of Preference for Institutional Repositories over Traditional Publishing Models

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
19	I prefer depositing my work in institutional repositories over traditional publishing platforms like journals, databases, etc.	1.53	0.69	LE
20	I prefer institutional repositories because they offer quicker access compared to traditional publishing platforms	1.63	0.81	LE
21	I prefer institutional repositories because they provide open access more easily than most traditional models	1.50	0.80	LE
22	I prefer institutional repositories because they reduce publication delays compared to traditional models	1.60	0.64	LE
23	I prefer institutional repositories because they increase citation possibilities	2.02	0.77	LE
24	I prefer depositing my work in institutional	2.07	0.82	LE

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
	repositories for visibility			
25	I prefer depositing my work in institutional repositories for wider dissemination	1.92	0.76	LE
	Cluster Mean	1.75	0.76	LE

Note. LE = Low Extent (real limit 1.50–2.49); HE = High Extent (real limit 2.50–3.49).

Table 3 indicates that the mean ratings of lecturers on all seven items ranged between 1.50 and 2.07, falling within the real limit of 1.50–2.49, indicating low-extent responses. The cluster mean of 1.75, which also falls within this range, indicates that lecturers' preference for institutional repositories over traditional publishing models in South-East Nigeria is low. Specifically, results show that, to a low extent, lecturers prefer depositing their work in institutional repositories over traditional publishing platforms such as journals and databases, and do not strongly perceive institutional repositories as offering quicker access, easier open access, reduced publication delays, increased citation possibilities, greater visibility, or wider dissemination compared with traditional publishing platforms. The cluster standard deviation of 0.76 indicates that the responses were not far from the mean and from one another.

This low preference indicates that most lecturers continue to favour journals, databases and other traditional outlets, without fully appreciating the institutional repository's advantages in access speed, open access, publication delay, citation, visibility and dissemination. This low preference may itself stem from the low perception lecturers hold of institutional repositories relative to traditional platforms, as already seen in Table 2. This result aligns with Okhakhu (2015), who found that a lack of infrastructure and resources makes it difficult for universities to maintain functional repositories, pushing

lecturers toward traditional publishing platforms, and corroborates Omeluzor (2014), who attributed continued reliance on traditional publishing to limited awareness and understanding of institutional repositories among academic staff. Taken together, the three sets of results point to a single, coherent picture: low deposit behaviour, low perception and low preference for institutional repositories reinforce one another among lecturers in South-East Nigerian public universities.

Recommendations

Arising from these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. University management should make it compulsory for lecturers to deposit their research outputs in institutional repositories.
2. University management, through university librarians, should organise regular workshops for lecturers on the need for, and procedures of, depositing content in institutional repositories.
3. University librarians should discourage continued reliance on traditional publishing models through regular sensitisation on the comparative advantages of institutional repositories.
4. Library associations should organise training programmes, as part of community service, to help lecturers understand the various purposes for which institutional repositories can be used.
5. The National Universities Commission should incorporate, into its accreditation benchmarks, modalities that encourage lecturers to fully harness the usefulness of institutional repositories.

6. Relevant stakeholders — including the National Universities Commission, university management, university librarians, and library associations — should jointly apply strategies that encourage greater use of institutional repositories and reduced reliance on traditional publishing models.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that lecturers in public universities in South-East Nigeria deposit content in institutional repositories to a low extent, hold a generally low perception of the value and benefits of depositing content in these repositories, and demonstrate a low preference for institutional repositories compared with traditional publishing models. Collectively, these findings suggest that institutional repositories in the region remain underutilised relative to their potential, with implications for the visibility of lecturers' scholarly output and the international research profile of their institutions. Addressing this underutilisation will require sustained institutional commitment to policy, infrastructure and sensitisation rather than reliance on the goodwill of individual lecturers alone.

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