Role of Social Media in Enhancing Information Seeking and Sharing Behaviour Among Postgraduate Students in KSAWU, Vijayapura.

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Abstract

The study examined the role of social media in enhancing information-seeking and sharing behaviours among postgraduate students at KSAWU, Vijayapura. This study explored students' use of social media for seeking and sharing academic information. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data via a survey, using a simple random sampling technique. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 179 were returned. The study examined how various platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, WhatsApp and Twitter, are used for academic interaction, collaboration and information sharing. The findings revealed that students frequently use social media not just for social interaction but also as a vital tool for academic engagement, search collaboration and information exchange. The Study concludes that integrating social media into academic practices can enhance practical learning, digital literacy and collaborative research among postgraduate students.

Keywords

Social media; information seeking behaviour; information sharing behaviour; Postgraduate students

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Introduction

Social media has become a widely used tool for communication, seeking, and sharing information among students. Knowledge sharing remains an area of ongoing academic inquiry, with research examining the effects of social media on students' performance, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Beyond their entertainment value, these platforms play a crucial role in facilitating academic interaction and intellectual engagement, particularly among students who are actively involved in research, learning, and professional development. Students increasingly rely on social networking platforms to seek access and share academic information.

Information seeking behaviour involves researching for relevant knowledge data or academic resources that support learning and research activities. Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, WhatsApp, and Twitter have changed the way students locate and access scholarly information by enabling instant communication with peers, faculty members, and researchers across the globe. Similarly, information sharing on social media promotes collaborative learning, as students exchange research findings, academic materials, and ideas within online communities.

The integration of social media into academic practices has not only simplified access to information but also created new opportunities for participatory learning and knowledge co-creation. Investigating their patterns of information seeking and sharing can provide valuable insight into their digital literacy, research engagement and collaborative learning behavior. Information seeking and sharing are fundamental human activities that influence learning, decision-making, and knowledge creation. Traditionally, these behaviours were largely mediated through formal information systems such as libraries, databases, and print resources. However, the emergence of social media has significantly expanded the information environment by offering user-generated content, real-time updates, peer-to-peer interaction, and personalised information flows. As a result, social media has blurred the boundaries between information consumers and information providers, allowing users to actively participate in the creation and dissemination of information. Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping information-seeking behaviour by providing multiple access points to information, including hashtags,

decision groups, multimedia content, and algorithm-driven recommendations. Users increasingly rely on social media for academic information, professional updates, health-related content, and current affairs due to its convenience, speed and social validation mechanisms such as likes, comments and shares. At the same time, information sharing on social media fosters social capitals communities' engagement and collaborative knowledge constructions, particularly among students, researchers, and professionals.

However, the use of social media for information seeking and sharing also presents challenges including information overload, misinformation privacy concerns and varying levels of information credibility. These issues highlight the need to examine users' information literacy skills, trust perceptions, participation patterns and evaluation strategies within the social media environment.

Review of literature

The expanding role of social media in higher education is influencing students' learning behaviours, information sharing, decision making and psychological well-being. Early research by Kim, J, Lee, C., & Elias, T. (2015) and Eid, M. I., and Al-Jabri, I.M. (2016) laid the foundation by explaining how personal, social and environmental factors encourage information sharing and learning through social networking sites. These studies established that interaction, enjoyment and perceived benefits significantly enhance knowledge sharing among university students. Hamid, S. et al. (2016) highlighted a broader shift in students' information-seeking behaviour, showing increased reliance on social media as a primary information source and a gradual move away from traditional library resources. This transition is further supported by Gora, A. D., and Sisodia, S. S. (2021), who demonstrated that platforms such as YouTube play a major role in academic content sharing, particularly in mobile-based learning environments. More recent studies emphasise the academic professional dimensions of social media use. Le Basque, B., and Mingoia, J. (2023) and Kumar, V. and Nanda, p. (2024). confirmed that platforms like Instagram and Twitter facilitate academic networking, collaboration and informal learning, reinforcing the idea that social media support both formal and informal educational practices. Similarly, Lopez- Carril et al. (2025) provided empirical evidence of LinkedIn's effectiveness as a structured teaching tool, strengthening students' employability and professional skills. During and after the pandemic, the role of social media in education became more pronounced. Brahma et al. (2025) observed significant changes in teacher-student interaction and learning patterns, emphasising social media's influence on students' learning needs and sustainable educational practices. Extending this perspective beyond learning, Siji and Prasad (2025) demonstrated how social media content shapes students' perceptions and institutional choice, highlighting this strategic importance in higher education marketing and admissions. While most studies underline the positive academic and professional benefits of social media, Piko et al. (2025) introduced a critical psychological dimension by examining fear of missing out (FoMO). Their findings connect intensive social media use with social comparison, loneliness and addiction, indicating that excessive engagement may negatively affect students' well-being. This study complements earlier research by balancing the benefits of social media with the needs for digital resilience, mindfulness or social skills development.

Objective of the study

1. To assess the extent to which postgraduate students use social media platforms for academic purposes.
2. To identify the type of information that postgraduate students seek and share through various social media platforms.
3. To analyze the social media platforms preferred by students for academic interaction, collaboration and information exchange.
4. To examine the role of social media in promoting students' academic engagement, digital literacy and research collaboration.
5. To identify the challenges faced by postgraduate students in using social media for academic information seeking and sharing.

Methodology

The present study aims to examine the role of social media in enhancing information-seeking and sharing behaviour among postgraduate students at KSAWU, Vijayapura. Data were collected from postgraduate female students using a descriptive survey method. The study employed a structured closed-ended questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed through simple random sampling and 179 valid responses

were received. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods using MS Excel and SPSS software version 20.

Need for the study

The study examines the Role of Social Media in Enhancing Information-Seeking and sharing behaviour among postgraduate students at KSAWU, Vijayapura. The increasing importance of social media in academic contexts. Although social media is widely used, research on its specific academic use among postgraduate students remains limited. Understanding students' perceptions of its benefits, challenges, and approaches to evaluating information credibility is vital for developing strategies that enhance academic engagement and promote effective knowledge sharing.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents

Sl. No	Demographic information		Frequency	Percentage
1	Faculty	Science	76	42.5%
		Commerce& Management	103	57.5%
2	Semester	IInd	77	43%
		IVth	102	57%
3	Category	GM	28	15.6%
		OBC	117	54.4%
		SC/ST	34	19%
4	Domicile	Rural	51	28.5%
		Urban	128	71.5%

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents. A majority of 57.5% (N=103) belong to the commerce and management faculty, while 42.5% (N=76) belong to the science. In terms of academic level, 57.0% (N=102) of the respondents are in the 4th semester, and 43.0%(N=77) are in the 2nd semester. With regard to social categories, more than half of the respondents 54.4% (N=117) belong to the OBC category, followed by SC/ST at 19 % (N=34), and GM at 15.6% (N=28). Regarding domicile, 71.5% (N=128) of respondents are from urban areas, while 28.5% (N=51) are from rural areas.

Table 2: Social media usage for academic purposes

Sl. No	Social media use for academic purposes	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	172	96.1%
2	No	7	3.9%
	Total	179	100%

Table 2 shows that social media is used for academic purposes. The majority of respondents, 96.1% (N=172) use social media for academic purposes, while only 3.9% (N=7) do not use it for this purpose.

Table 3: Usage Frequency of Social Media Platforms

Sl. No	Social media for academic	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Total
1	You tube	9(5%)	10(5.6%)	26(14.5%)	43(24%)	91(50.8%)	4.10	179(100%)
2	Google +	25(14%)	8(4.5%)	20(11.2%)	25(14%)	101(56.4%)	3.94	179(100%)
3	Academic social network	61(34.1%)	20(11.2%)	25(14%)	25(14%)	48(26.8%)	2.88	179(100%)
4	WhatsApp	12(6.7%)	24(13.4%)	29(16.2%)	27(15.1%)	87(48.6%)	3.85	179(100%)
5	Instagram	54(30.2%)	37(20.7%)	29(16.2%)	27(15.1%)	32(17.9%)	2.70	179(100%)
6	Academia	69(38.5%)	21(11.7%)	34(19%)	19(10.6%)	36(20.1%)	2.62	179(100%)
7	LinkedIn	71(39.7%)	31(17.3%)	39(21.8%)	21(11.7%)	17(9.5%)	2.34	179(100%)
8	Research Gate	83(46.4%)	29(16.2%)	28(15.6%)	23(12.8%)	16(8.9%)	2.22	179(100%)
9	Facebook	96(53.6%)	22(12.3%)	29(16.2%)	13(7.3%)	19(10.6%)	2.09	179(100%)
10	Skype	107(59.8%)	30(16.8%)	17(9.5%)	14(7.8%)	11(6.1%)	1.84	179(100%)
11	Blogs	116(64.8%)	17(9.5%)	20(11.2%)	12(6.7%)	14(7.8%)	1.83	179(100%)
12	Pinterest	103(57.5%)	37(20.7%)	22(12.3%)	8(4.5%)	9(5%)	1.79	179(100%)
13	Twitter (x)	116(64.8%)	18(10.1%)	24(13.4%)	14(7.8%)	7(3.9%)	1.76	179(100%)
14	Edutopia	114(63.7%)	24(13.4%)	26(14.5%)	9(5%)	6(3.4%)	1.71	179(100%)

Table 3 shows that different social media platforms are used for academic purposes. The highest mean score of 4.10 for YouTube indicates that respondents always use this platform for academic activities. This is followed by google + (3.94), academic social network site (3.89), WhatsApp (3.85), Instagram (2.70), Academia (2.62), LinkedIn (2.34), ResearchGate (2.22), and Facebook (2.09), lower mean score was recorded for skype (1.84), blogs (1.83), Pinterest (1.79), twitter(X), (1.76) and lowest mean score of 1.71 Edutopia. The study clearly shows that YouTube and Google+ are the most frequently used social media platforms for academic purposes.

Table 4: Purposes of students to use social media platforms

Sl. No	Academic purpose	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Mean	Total
1	To know job and career opportunities	15(8.4%)	20(11.2%)	40(22.3%)	48(26.8%)	56(31.3%)	3.61	179(100%)
2	To video lectures and tutorials	16(8.9%)	29(16.2%)	45(25.1%)	38(212%)	51(28.5%)	3.44	179(100%)
3	To know about online courses and webinars	10(5.6%)	33(18.4%)	57(31.8%)	42(23.5%)	37(20.7%)	3.35	179(100%)
4	To know academic networking and collaboration opportunities	24(13.4%)	29(16.2%)	53(29.6%	41(22.9%)	32(17.9%)	3.16	179(100%)
5	To discussions with experts and researchers	24(13.4%)	39(21.8%)	57(31.8%)	35(19.6%)	24(13.4%)	2.98	179(100%)
6	To Research articles and papers	29(16.2%)	24(13.4%)	26(14.5%)	9(5%)	6(3.4%)	1.23	179(100%)

Table 4 shows that social media is used for academic purposes. Information related to job and career opportunities received the highest mean score of 3.61 indicating that most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with this type of information. This is followed by video lectures and tutorials (3.44), online courses and webinars (3.35). academic networking and collaboration opportunities (3.16), and discuss with experts and researchers (2.98). The lowest mean score of 1.23 was recorded for research articles and papers.

Table 5: Collaborative information networks

Sl. No	Collaborative information networks	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Total
1	Library networks	27(15.1%)	50(27.9%)	53(29.6%)	23(12.8%)	26(14.5%)	2.84	179(100%)
2	Online forums	41(22.9%)	36(20.1%)	48(26.8%)	32(17.9%)	22(12.3%)	2.77	179(100%)
3	E database	37(20.7%)	32(17.9%)	66(36.9%)	32(17.9%)	12(6.7%)	2.72	179(100%)
4	Digital repositories	36(20.1%)	39(21.8%)	61(34.1%)	26(14.5%)	17(9.5%)	2.72	179(100%)
5	Consortia	60(33.5%)	35(19.6%)	44(24.6%)	25(14%)	15(8.4%)	2.44	179(100%)

Table 5 shows respondents perceptions of collaborative information networks. Library networks received the highest mean score of 2.84 indicating that respondents generally hold a neutral view toward this network. Followed by online forums (2.77), e-database and digital repositories both have a mean score of 2.72, and the lowest mean score of 2.44 is consortia. The study clearly shows that respondents are generally neutral in their perception of collaborative information networks.

Table 6: Importance of information sharing for academic purposes

Sl. No	Importance of information sharing	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Important	Very important	Mean	Total
1	Learning and skill development	14(7.8%)	18(10.1%)	28(15.6%)	65(36.3%)	54(30.2%)	3.71	179(100%)
2	Educational benefits	13(7.3%)	20(11.2%)	32(17.9%)	59(33%)	55(30.7%)	3.69	179(100%)
3	Career opportunities	14(7.8%)	20(11.2%)	25(14%)	68(38%)	52(29.1%)	3.69	179(100%)
4	Language and cultural diversity	13(7.3%)	20(11.2%)	33.(18.4%)	60(33.5%)	53(29.6%)	3.67	179(100%)
5	Communication and connectivity	7(3.9%)	22(12.3%)	47(26.3%)	62(34.6%)	41(22.9%)	3.60	179(100%)
6	Global perspective	14(7.8%)	16(8.9)	49(27.4%)	58(32.4%)	42(23.5%)	3.55	179(100%)
7	Social responsibility	18(10.1%)	20(11.2%)	46(25.7%)	43(24%)	52(29.1%)	3.51	179(100%)
8	Positive and negative impacts	20(11.2%)	21(11.7%)	39(21.8%)	65(36.3%)	34(19%)	3.40	179(100%)
9	Information access and updates	38(21.2%)	30(16.8%)	45(25.1%)	41(22.9%)	25(14%)	2.92	179(100%)

Table 6 shows the importance of information sharing for academic purposes through social media. The highest mean score of 3.71 for learning and skill development indicates that respondents considered this the most important aspect of information sharing. This is followed by educational benefits and career opportunities, both with a mean score of (3.69), language and cultural diversity (3.67), communication connectivity (3.60), global perspective (3.55), social responsibility (3.51), positive and negative impacts (3.40), and the lowest mean score of 2.92 for information access and updates. The study clearly shows that among the various aspects of information sharing, learning and skill development and educational benefits are considered the most important by respondents

Table 7: Satisfaction with social media

Sl. No	Satisfaction with academic purpose on social media	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Mean	Total
1	To know about online courses and webinars	11(6.1%)	14(7.8%)	49(27.4%)	62(34.6%)	43(24%)	3.63	179(100%)
2	To know job and career opportunities	16(8.9%)	9(5%)	52(29.1%)	54(30.2%)	48(26.8%)	3.61	179(100%)
3	To video lectures and tutorials	16(8.9%)	17(9.5%)	38(21.2%)	70(39.1%)	38(21.2%)	3.54	179(100%)
4	To search for research articles and papers	14(7.8%)	20(11.2%)	58(32.4%)	60(33.5%)	27(15.1%)	3.37	179(100%)
5	To discussions with experts and researchers	10(5.6%)	30(16.8%)	69(38.5%)	44(24.6%)	26(14.5%)	3.26	179(100%)
6	To know academic networking and collaboration opportunities	16(8.9%)	30(16.8%)	60(33.5%)	50(27.9%)	23(12.8%)	3.19	179(100%)

Table 7 shows the level of satisfaction with information sharing for academic purposes on social media. The highest mean score of 3.63 was recorded for information related to online courses and webinars, indicating that most respondents were satisfied and very satisfied with this type of information. This is followed by Information about job and career opportunities (3.16), video lectures and tutorials (3.54), research articles and papers (3.378), and discussion with experts and researchers (3.26). The lowest mean score of 3.19 was observed for

academic networking and collaboration opportunities. The study clearly shows that respondents were more satisfied with the information about online courses and webinars

Table 8: Accuracy level of information seeking

Sl. No	Accuracy level of information seeking	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Total
1	Using fact-checking websites or tools	20(11.2%)	16(8.9%)	54(30.2%)	59(33%)	30(16.8%)	3.35	179(100%)
2	Assessing the consistency of information across platforms	14(9.5%)	17(9.5%)	59(33%)	70(39.1%)	19(10.6%)	3.35	179(100%)
3	Checking the authors credentials and expertise	14(9.5%)	20(11.2%)	61(34.1%)	67(37.4%)	17(9.5%)	3.30	179(100%)
4	Evaluating the data and relevance of the information	15(8.4%)	21(11.7%)	56(31.3%)	69(38.5%)	18(10.1%)	3.30	179(100%)
5	Reviewing references and citations in the source	27(15.1%)	13(7.3%)	43(24%)	76(42.5%)	20(11.2%)	3.27	179(100%)
6	Using peer-reviewed or scholarly databases	17(9.5%)	24(13.4%)	57(31.8%)	63(35.2%)	18(10.1%)	3.23	179(100%)
7	Relying on social media comments and likes	21(11.7%)	15(8.4%)	66(36.9%)	58(32.4%)	19(10.6%)	3.22	179(100%)
8	Cross-verifying with multiple credible sources	19(10.6%)	23(12.8%)	63(35.2%)	59(33%)	15(8.4%)	3.16	179(100%)

Table 8 shows the accuracy level of information seeking among respondents. The highest mean score of 3.35 was recorded for both using fact-checking websites or tools and assessing the consistency of information across platforms, indicating that respondents agree with these practices. Followed by checking the author's credentials and expertise and evaluating the data and relevance of the information both with a mean score of 3.30, reviewing references and citations in the source (3.27), using peer-reviewed or scholarly databases (3.23), relying on social media comments and likes (3.22), and the lowest mean score of 3.16 was for cross-verifying with multiple credible sources. The study clearly shows that respondents are most consistent in using fact-checking tools and assessing information consistency across platforms.

Table 9: Challenges faced in evaluating the credibility of academic information

Sl. No	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	160	89.4%
2	No	19	10.6%
	Total	179	100%

Table 9 shows that the majority of respondents, 89.4% (N=160), face challenges in evaluating the credibility of academic information shared on social media, while only 10.6% (N=19) of the respondents do not face such challenges.

Table 10: Determination of credibility

Sl. No	Determination of credibility	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always	Mean	Total
1	Checking if the information is cited in research papers	33(18.4%)	25(14%)	64(35.8%)	47(26.3%)	10(5.6%)	2.87	179(100%)
2	Reading comments and discussions	28(15.6%)	33(18.4%)	71(39.7%)	42(23.5%)	5(2.8%)	2.79	179(100%)
3	Using the fact-checking tool	35(19.6%)	31(17.3%)	67(37.4%)	40(22.3%)	6(3.4%)	2.73	179(100%)
4	Credibility of websites	37(20.7%)	37(20.7%)	53(29.6%)	47(26.3%)	5(2.8%)	2.70	179(100%)
5	Assessing the authority of the sites	42(23.5%)	24(13.4%)	63(35.2%)	48(26.8%)	2(1.1%)	2.69	179(100%)
6	Cross-referencing with other academic sources	32(17.9%)	36(20.1%)	73(40.8%)	34(19%)	4(2.2%)	2.68	179(100%)
7	General features of websites	40(22.3%)	31(17.3%)	65(36.3%)	38(21.2%)	5(2.8%)	2.65	179(100%)
8	Checking the authors credentials and source	45(25.1%)	39(21.8%)	54(30.2%)	30(16.8%)	11(6.1%)	2.57	179(100%)

Table 10 shows that respondents assess the credibility of information when seeking and sharing it. The height means score of 2.87 was recorded for checking whether the information is cited in research papers, indicating that respondents often rely on this method to access credibility. This is followed by reading comments and discussions (2.79), using the facet checking tool (2.73), credibility of websites (2.70), assessing the authority of sites (2.69), cross-referencing with other academic sources (2.68), and examining the general features of websites (2.65), and the lowest mean score of 2.57, checking the author's credentials and source. The study shows that respondents primarily determine credibility by checking if the information is cited in research papers.

Discussion

The results clearly indicate that social media has become an integral part of postgraduate students' academic lives. A majority of respondents (96.1%) use social media for academic purposes, suggesting that these platforms have evolved from optional tools to essential components of learning. This finding is consistent with previous studies, such as Hosen et al., which highlighted that social media is emerging as a powerful tool for teaching and learning in higher education through student engagement and facilitating knowledge exchange. Students primarily use social media to seek information to job and career opportunities, online courses, webinars, and video tutorials.

This indicates that postgraduate students utilise social media not only to support their academic coursework but also to enhance professional skills and career preparedness. Similarly, Eid et al. reported that social media use in education promotes content creation, file sharing, and student engagement. While some studies report extensive academic discussions on social media, the present study revealed limited use of social media on these platforms for accessing research articles and engaging with experts in scholarly discourse. This difference may be attributed to students' preference for traditional academic databases and libraries when conducting formal research.

The study shows that YouTube and Google+ are the most commonly utilized platforms for academic activities followed by WhatsApp and academic social networking sites. YouTube emerged as the most preferred platform, highlighting students' strong preference for video-based learning resources, including lectures, tutorials and recorded webinars. The findings support provision studies that emphasise the role of visual and interactive content in improving comprehensive and information retention. This result aligned with earlier research emphasising the effectiveness of visual and interactive content in improving understanding and retention. This result differs from the finding Zanele Hedebe, who observed that Facebook and Twitter were predominantly utilized for online chatting instead of academic purposes. This difference may be attributed to changes in platform features, greater availability of educational content and the evolving learning behaviours of students over time.

The study reveals that students perceive learning and skill enhancement, educational advantages and career-related opportunities as the most significant outcomes of sharing academic information on social media. This highlights students' understanding of how social media can contribute to their academic learning

as well as personal and professional growth. The study found that students maintained a neutral stance toward collaborative information platforms such as library networks, online forms, e-databases and digital repositories. This may indicate limited awareness or inadequate training in the effective use of these academic resources highlighting the need for enhanced institutional support and digital literacy initiatives. Although social media is widely used the study identifies difficulty in accessing the credibility of academic information as a major challenge. A large majority of respondents (89.4%) are facing challenges with the reliability of online content. The study shows that students frequently use fact-checking tools, compare information across sources 4oss platform consistency checks and verification of author credentials. However, overall accuracy practises were found to be moderate as students continue to depend on general indicators, such as comments, likes, and website popularity, rather than verified scholarly sources. While many students determine credibility by checking whether information is cited in research papers, reflecting some awareness of academic validation, lower reliance on across verifying with multiple credible sources indicates gaps in information literacy.

Consistent with Abbas et al., this study confirms the importance of knowledge creation, document sharing, and student interaction in digital information sharing, while also acknowledging potential drawbacks, such as distraction and poor time management. The findings suggest that when used effectively for academic purposes, social media contributes positively to the development of engagement skills and to access to global knowledge resources.

Recommendations

1. Universities should organize digital literacy program that help students assess the reliability and authenticity of online information.
2. Teachers should motivate students to utilize social media as a tool for academic learning and research.
3. Universities can use official social media groups to share verified academic content and collaboration.
4. Institutions should provide easy access to digital library scholarly resources through social media links.
5. Social media platforms can be used to encourage collaborative learning knowledge exchange and research cooperation among students.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that postgraduate female students use social media platforms not only for social interaction and entertainment but also for information seeking and sharing and academic purposes. The present study highlights the frequency with which students use different social media platforms as well as the type of information they seek and share. The findings suggest that students are actively engaged across various social media platforms, sharing and distributing information in the form of photographs, videos, and text. Social media has become an integral part of their daily lives, influencing both their personal and academic activity. These platforms can be effectively integrated into educational practice to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Therefore, universities should adopt policies that support the use of social media as a supplementary learning tool rather than discourage its use among students.

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