



The Relationship of Peer Interaction and Social Media Access with FoMO Levels in Adolescents

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Abstract

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has emerged as a growing phenomenon that influences adolescents' psychological well-being and social behavior. FoMO reflects a perceived gap between direct social interactions with peers and indirect engagement through social media, often leading to anxiety and dissatisfaction with one's life. This study aims to examine the relationship between peer interaction, social media access, and FoMO levels among adolescents. A survey method was employed, and the research was conducted at a senior high school in Purwokerto involving 210 students. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicate a positive relationship between peer interaction and FoMO, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a product-moment correlation coefficient of 0.41, suggesting a low association. Social media access also shows a positive relationship with FoMO ($p = 0.003 < 0.05$), with a correlation coefficient of 0.28, indicating a weak relationship. Regression analysis reveals a constant of 1.479, with regression coefficients of 0.41 for peer interaction and 0.31 for social media access, demonstrating that peer interaction has the more dominant influence. Overall, peer interaction and social media access are weakly associated with FoMO levels, indicating that adolescents' engagement with peers and social media does not necessarily increase anxiety.

Keywords: Peer Interaction, Social Media Use, Fear of Missing Out, Teenager

Paper Type: Research paper

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INTRODUCTION

Fear of Missing Out or often referred to as FoMO is a growing phenomenon in society. FoMO is a feeling that makes individuals want to always be connected and not left behind with other people's social activities (Azizah and Baharuddin 2021). The definition later evolved; FoMO is a term that refers to psychological anxiety that arises due to the fear of missing out on information that is being discussed (Syawal 2023). FoMO can affect a person's behavior, such as the tendency to often check notifications on *smartphones* and experience stress if they don't follow things that are crowded (Syafitria 2022). The FoMO phenomenon has actually existed since the 2000s (Carolina & Mahestu 2020), but its impact has expanded as technology develops. FoMO in adolescents is a relevant object in communication studies, for example understanding digital anxiety that can affect social participation and media literacy levels in society.

FoMO can have both positive and negative impacts, but most references more often discuss its negative impacts. Most of the literature describes the negative impact of FoMO as the desire to avoid the unlikeable. The negative impact of FoMO can be experienced by individuals when they feel unable to keep up with trends, so they experience anxiety and choose not to interact directly as a form of avoiding something unwanted (Aristiani 2023). But on the other hand, FoMO can also have a positive impact if managed by individuals properly (Rahman et al. 2024). FoMO can increase the productivity and involvement of individuals in social activities. The fear of missing out on information or trends can be a driver for them to continue to develop and make optimal use of existing opportunities (Nisa and Erawati 2025). FoMO can also motivate individuals to achieve certain goals and become better than they are now (Panggabean 2024).

There are several factors that cause individuals to experience FoMO, including interaction with peers, and access to social media. Social determinant theory emphasizes the social structures, group norms, and communication systems that shape individual behavior and psychology (Ghai, et al. 2022). Interaction with friends can give rise to a sense of wanting to always be involved in these activities or chats (Intan, et al. 2024). Feelings of worry about losing valuable experiences can also arise when individuals find out that their friends or social groups have had memorable experiences without them, so they feel they have lost the opportunity to join (Sutarmin 2024). Peers are a

source of information on activities or experiences that are being discussed (May 2022). The role of peers becomes positive or negative depending on who and where the individual is (Muharam 2024, Franciska, et al. 2018). Research conducted by Verdiyanti (2023) shows that there is a fairly high positive relationship between peer interaction and children's social behavior. The research is supported by research by Febrian, et al. (2025) which states that there is a positive relationship between individual interaction with peers, when individuals do not participate in activities with their friends, it gives rise to anxiety.

Social media is an online communication channel to convey or provide information and communicate (Mustofa 2024). Social media provides space for individuals to see other people's activities in *real-time* (Fauzy and Ratnawati 2025). This started from a habit that has been carried out for some time for the sake of feeling comfortable when accessing social media and supported by interesting features on the site (Pratiwi, et al. 2020). When individuals see other people's activities on social media about achievements, vacations and more, it causes anxiety and becomes a FoMO to do the same as everyone else. Social media often displays content that is interesting and satisfies the satisfaction desired by the viewer, thus creating a desire to follow the views of the content constantly (Tamonob , et al. 2023). Dependence on social media refers to a condition when individuals have a tendency to spend excessive time on social media, thereby interfering with daily activities (Mahardhika et al. 2024). This is due to the ease of interacting with others passively such as liking , *reacting*, or commenting (Nadzirah, et al. 2022). Social media is a place to express oneself, interact with other users and form bonds virtually (Maza and Apriyanty 2022). Kusumaisna's research (2023) shows that the relationship between social media use has an effect of 18% on FoMO, and 81.2% of FoMO is influenced by other factors. This data is strengthened by research by Augusta and Putri (2023) which shows a positive relationship between social media use and FoMO in adolescents. The higher the tendency of adolescents to access social media, the stronger the level of FoMO behavior.

The relationship between peer interaction and social media access with FoMO levels has become attractive among adolescents. Teenagers today are a generation that from birth, they grow and develop in the era of social media (Ghai, et al. 2022) and the interaction of their social environment that causes FoMO. Globally, adolescents are

individuals aged 10-19 years (Erskine, et al. 2020). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, adolescents are individuals aged 10-18 years. This study uses the definition of adolescents in Indonesia, because the age range of high school students in Indonesia is 15-18 years. This study examines peer interaction and social media access with FoMO levels in adolescents, especially high school students in Purwokerto. As one of the small cities in Indonesia, Purwokerto has a teenage lifestyle that is not growing as fast as other big cities in Indonesia, and is often known as a city *slow living*. However, the population is growing rapidly as students increase and growth *cafe* and shopping centers, so it's interesting to explore. The hypothesis that was operationalized was "There is a positive relationship between interaction between peers and the level of FoMO in high school students", "There is a positive relationship between social media access and the level of FoMO in high school students".

METHODS

This study uses a survey method. Surveys are a type of research that uses questionnaires as a source of data (Martono and Isnania 2023). This research was conducted by giving a questionnaire to respondents, namely students at one of the high schools in Purwokerto, the identity of the school was disguised because it was related to research ethics. The school was chosen because it has various achievements, both academic and non-academic. Sampling uses a simple random sampling technique, which is a technique without considering strata in the population (Timamah, et al. 2025). The procedure in the study used a list of grade 11 students who were randomized through the Student Identification Number.

The number of samples used with a simple random sampling technique was 210 students (50.51% of the population i.e. 396 students) with a maximum sampling error of 5%. This research was carried out for 6 months, starting in early 2025. The variables tested in this study were the variables of peer interaction (X1), social media access (X2) and FoMO variable (Y).

The operational definition of peer interaction refers to all activities carried out by respondents with peers, which are described by quantitative indicators, namely the frequency of respondents doing activities together with their peers, and qualitatively, which is the form of activities carried out by respondents together with peers. Social media includes all activities carried out by respondents using social media that can cause

disturbing feelings, explained quantitative indicators, namely the frequency of social media use and the type of content viewed, qualitatively, which causes curiosity after seeing content, and causes feelings of wanting to follow. FoMO is the desire or feeling of the respondent to participate in all activities carried out with their friends directly and indirectly (social media). It is explained that the indicators are quantitatively the frequency of respondents looking for information that is trending, qualitatively, namely what is felt when they cannot follow what is trending.

The operationalized hypothesis is that there is a "positive relationship between peer interaction and the FoMO level of high school students", and a "positive relationship between social media access and the FoMO level of high school students". The data collection methods used in this study were questionnaires and interviews. This study used structured interviews.

Interviews prepared by researchers in the form of questionnaires contain questions related to data obtained in direct research (Rudini and Khasanah 2022). Qualitative data processing is carried out in steps: preparation of interview transcripts, coding, and analysis of interview data, as with quantitative data. Quantitative data processing is carried out in steps: first, collecting questionnaire data; second, processing questionnaire data using SPSS, presenting data using frequency distribution and cross-tables, analyzing data using Product Moment; Third, the analyzed data produces correlation values as proof of hypotheses.

Table 1.

Sig. Value Per Indicator		
Peer Interaction	Social Media Access	FoMO
X1: 0.000	X2:0.000	Y1: 0.000
X2: 0.000	X3:0.000	Y2: 0.000
X3: 0.000	X4 :0.000	Y3: 0.000
X4: 0.000	X5 :0.000	Y4: 0.000
X5: 0.000	X7 :0.002	Y5: 0.000
X7: 0.000	X8: 0.001	Y6: 0.000

X9: 0.000

Y7: 0.000

X10: 0.000

Y10 : 0.000

X11: 0.000

Validity Test Results

Table 2.

Reality Value Per Indicator		
Peer Interaction	Social Media Access	FoMO
0.707	0,594	-0.049

*Results of realism***RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Peer Interaction Variables**

Close friends are a place to share experiences, provide support and a means of learning in the process of individual interaction. Respondents who had a lot of close friends showed a wide range of friendship relationships, respondents who had close friends showed limited friendship relationships, and respondents who did not have close friends showed isolation from social groups. Table 3 shows the ownership of close friends with the social pattern of the respondents.

Table 3.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Have, a lot of	102	48.6
Have, a little	105	50.0
No close friends	3	1.4
Total	210	100.0

Close friend ownership

Most respondents had few close friends. Respondents prefer to spend their time learning rather than interacting with their friends so that respondents feel they have few friends. Respondents consider that digital media supports their academics rather than interacting with their friends.

The social interactions of respondents encompassed a wide range of environments

formed from diverse backgrounds. Friendly environments, such as school, home or others, certainly offer different social experiences. Table 4 shows the formation of friendships from the social environment, which has a great influence on the respondents' lives.

Table 4.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Schoolmates	183	87.1
Friends at home	3	1.4
Tutoring or tutoring (Tutoring)	18	8.6
Friends I know on social media	2	1.0
Others	4	1.9
Total	210	100.0

Friend scope

Most respondents have close friends at school, meaning that school is not just a place to learn, but the main social environment for social interaction with their friends. The respondent with the initials AU stated: ".. I've been friends since junior high school until now, but now we attend separate schools and are in different classes".

Respondents with ID also stated "I have friends, some from high school, but there are also friends from elementary, junior high to college".

The existence of peers gives meaning to forming social relationships through interaction. The frequency with which they meet is an indicator of individual involvement in friendships. Table 5 shows how often respondents interact with their peers.

Table 5.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Rare	13	6.2
Often, almost every day	93	44.3
Always every day	104	49.5
Total	210	100.0

Frequency of meeting or interacting with friends

Some respondents stated that meeting or interacting with their friends can happen every day. The high frequency of meetings shows that the bond of friendship formed

occurs due to activities at the same school. Media behavior theory shows that direct and daily interactions can strengthen bonds in their social media use.

Peers are not just about quantity and attendance, but about how the quality of the relationship is established. The growth of a strong bond with friends begins with a sense of trust and connection between one respondent and another. Table 6 measures the respondents' perception of their sense of attachment.

Table 6.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Not feeling tied down	1	0.5
A little tied up	16	7.6
Simply tied up	116	55.2
Feeling bound	77	36.7
Total	210	100.0

Have a strong bond with friends

Some respondents stated that they were quite attached to their friends. This is formed through activities carried out with friends such as group work and one organization. Relationships with close friends can happen through interaction. Activities with friends can form strong social bonds. This can be formed through sharing stories and providing emotional support to each other. Table 7 shows the most frequent activities when with friends.

Table 7.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Chat	141	67.1
Sightseeing	30	14.3
Main game	23	11.0
Work on tasks	7	3.3
Watch movies	3	1.4
Others	6	2.9
Total	210	100.0

Most frequent activities with friends

Some respondents stated that the most frequent activity with their close friends was chatting. Chatting can be a link with close friends and avoid conflicts in the environment where they meet every day. The respondent with the initials IF stated "I like to chat with friends the most. The topic of the conversation is random, sometimes even confiding". The AU respondents also stated that "... I often chat, I discuss everything, especially since I'm a girl, there are only things that can be used as material for chatting". Chatting is the most often done activity with close friends.

Social Media Access Variables

Having a social media account is a familiar social phenomenon today. Having social media is a reflection of identities such as the interests we have that we want to be known by others, the networks of relationships we follow, and access to individual information. Table 8 shows the amount of social media that respondents have.

Table 8.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
less than 3 social media	37	17.6
More than 3 social media	173	82.4
Total	210	100.0

Social media owned

Some respondents have at least 3 social media. Social media today has a function such as being entertainment for respondents in the form of interesting content. Social media functions as a tool to find information and as a means of communication with others. The ID respondent stated "if I play *Instagram* and *YouTube* more often. *Instagram* is usually to see *updates* from friends, while *Youtube* usually creates long content such as informative podcasts, tutorials, or vlogs."

The development of digital technology has become an integral part of daily life, digital technology has an impact on the increase in the number of social media. The platform available today does not only serve as a means to connect with close friends, but also as a source of information, entertainment, and the formation of respondents' identities. Table 9 shows the duration of social media use in one day.

Table 9.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 hours	37	17.6
5 hours-less than 7 hours	80	38.1
7 hours- less than 10 hours	68	32.4
10 hours or more	25	11.9
Total	210	100.0

Social media access time

Some respondents stated that the time needed to access social media per day is approximately 5 to 7 hours. It shows that social media is a means of communication in daily life. Respondents want to know the activities of others and show their existence.

Social media has become a tool to carry out various activities indirectly. Each respondent has different activities when using social media. Table 10 describes the most frequent activities respondents do when accessing social media.

Table 10.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Read the news	12	5.7
View content	159	75.7
Like posts	25	11.9
Share a post	5	2.4
Comment on a post	1	0.5
Online shopping	4	1.9
Uploading content	4	1.9
Total	210	100.0

Activities carried out when accessing social media

Respondents stated that the activity when accessing social media was viewing content, showing that respondents preferred to be passive objects. Respondents, when accessing social media, only want to find information and entertainment facilities.

Social media offers a variety of interesting features, including the type of content needed or the interest of respondents. The type of content sought reflects not only the interest of the respondent, but also the influence of the content. Table 11 identifies the types of content that are most frequently searched for when accessing social media.

Table 11.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Trending news	37	17.6
Educational content	28	13.3
Sale	3	1.4
Entertainment content	135	64.3
Friend activity	7	3.3
Total	210	100.0

The most searched types of content on social media

Most respondents stated that they access social media more often and the most searched for is entertainment content. Respondents need entertainment content so they don't get left behind when chatting with friends. ID respondents stated that "I participate more in entertainment, education, and motivational content, for example, talk shows, because it adds *insight* for myself, but I still need entertainment to *refresh* my mind as well". RD respondents also stated, "I follow entertainment content more, because it relaxes the mind and reduces stress."

When respondents access social media, they often see activities carried out by other people, such as friends. Respondents, when they see the activities carried out by friends, have a meaning, one of which is the motivation to follow them. Table 12 shows the feelings of respondents when they cannot follow the trend followed by their friends.

Table 12.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Ordinary	203	96.7
Minder and limit interaction	7	3.3
Total	210	100.0

Feeling when you can't keep up with the trends that your friends follow

Most of the respondents stated that they had a normal feeling when they could not

follow the trend followed by their friends. The trend that friends follow is considered not in accordance with the respondent's interests. The respondent with the initials RD stated: "I rarely feel inferior to people's lives, because I focus more on myself". The IF respondent stated, "I never feel insecure, because I rarely follow my friend's activities, because I think if it's not important, I don't follow".

FoMO

The desire to continue to follow and understand new things that are trending is a social adaptation strategy to stay connected to the surrounding environment. The habit of looking for information shows that respondents do not want to be left behind with the trend. Table 12 aims to identify patterns of trend-related information-seeking behavior.

Table 12.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Never	13	6.2
Rare	87	41.4
Frequent	98	46.7
Very often	12	5.7
Total	210	100.0

Often looking for information on new things that are trending

Some respondents stated that they often look for information on new things that are trending. Respondents consider that looking for information on trending things so as not to be left behind with their friends.

The digital era makes it easier for people to connect with anyone, allowing individuals to learn about others' activities. This creates a desire to follow. When respondents cannot follow trends, it can create social pressure. Table 13 shows the respondents' statements about whether following the trend is a must.

Table 13.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	89	42.4
Disagree	101	48.1
Setuju	19	9.0
Strongly agree	1	0.5
Total	210	100.0

Following trends is a must

Some respondents stated that they did not agree if following the trend was a must. Respondents consider their interests to be different from the current trend, so respondents consider that following trends is not a must, but respondents consider that they only need to know so as not to be left behind with trending information.

When his friend uploads achievements on social media can cause various feelings, one of which is anxiety. The emergence of anxiety arises because respondents make their friends as a standard of achievement. Table 14 shows the feelings of the respondents when they see the achievements of others.

Table 14.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Not feeling	28	13.3
A little feeling	61	29.0
Enough feel	73	34.8
Very felt	48	22.9
Total	210	100.0

Feeling anxious if a friend reaches a target

Most of the respondents felt quite anxious when they saw that their friend had reached the target. Respondents considered that they should have the same achievements as their friends. This happened when the respondent saw his friend buying trending goods. The AU respondent stated, "If you say that I am a FoMO, I feel quite good. For example, if you see a friend buying something that I like and want to buy too, automatically I will want to buy FoMO too, but if it is outside of it, it's just okay".

Correlation Analysis

Peer interaction today not only occurs through direct interaction, but can also be

done indirectly. Friendship interactions include the frequency of meetings and activities carried out so as to form the quality of the relationship. The FoMO phenomenon is formed from social pressure that encourages individuals to always be connected. Table 15 shows the relationship between peer interaction and FoMO in relation to daily life.

Table 15.

FoMO				
Peer interaction	Low	Medium	Height	Total
Low	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	9 (100.0%)
Medium	6 (7.9%)	35 (46.1%)	35 (46.1%)	76 (100.0%)
Height	0 (0.0%)	37 (29.6%)	88 (70.4%)	125 (100.0%)
Total	9 (4.3%)	75 (35.7%)	126 (60.0%)	210 (100.0%)

The relationship between peer interaction and FoMO

Based on the cross-table, it shows that respondents with low FoMO levels are respondents with low peer interaction. The product moment data correlation result is 0.41. The relationship between the two variables was low, and peer interaction was not the dominant factor that caused respondents to do FoMO.

Social media has become a part of life today. Social media teaches individuals to view themselves and the world around them. Social media was created to make it easier for individuals in their daily lives, but those conveniences have made individuals FoMO. Table 15 shows the relationship between social media access and FoMO, knowing the feelings of individuals that arise when interacting on social media.

Table 16.

Social Media Access	FoMO			Total
	Low	Medium	Height	
Low	3 (6.0%)	29 (58.0%)	18 (36.0%)	50 (100.0%)
Medium	5 (3.9%)	38 (29.5%)	84 (66.7%)	129 (100.0%)
Height	1 (3.2%)	8 (25.8%)	22 (71.0%)	31 (100.0%)
Total	9 (4.3%)	75 (35.7%)	126 (60.0%)	210 (100.0%)

The relationship between social media access and FoMO

Based on the cross table, it shows that respondents with FoMO level are respondents with low social media access. The product moment data correlation result is 0.28. The relationship between the two low variables and social media access was not the dominant factor for respondents to experience FoMO.

Based on the regression results, the constant value was 1,479, the value of peer interaction was 0.41, and the social media value was 0.31. This shows that the two variables that have a more dominant influence are the peer interaction variable.

Peer interaction with FoMO has a low role in students. The results of the study showed a positive relationship between peer interaction and FoMO in adolescents. A p-value or significant value of 0.000 indicates that there is a substantial relationship between the two variables because the p-value is $0.000 < \alpha 0.05$, and the product moment data correlation is 0.41. Chatting is one of the activities that is often done with close friends, but chatting is not entirely the cause of FoMO. Topics that tend to be monotonous and repetitive cannot cause curiosity or anxiety. Most students have close friends at school, but the busyness of students at school such as completing their assignments does not cause FoMO.

Most students rarely check the activities of close friends, meaning there is no incentive to check the activities of their close friends because they have their own social

lives. Some students feel quite close to their friends. Students have both academic and non-academic activities, such as tutoring and extracurriculars, so there is no *intense* interaction with their close friends. Most of the students' economic backgrounds are at the intermediate level so their lifestyles are relatively equal. The equality of lifestyle does not cause significant differences so that it does not trigger feelings of being left behind. Some students stated that the feeling caused when seeing their close friends follow the trend is normal. The trend followed by his close friends is not in accordance with the interests of students so it does not cause anxiety. Peer interaction functions as *a support system* to deal with academic pressure, not to cause anxiety (Handayani & Lestari, 2025).

Research by Nurdin, et al. (2024) states that peer conformity is not a moderator in the influence of FoMO. Based on *Social Comparison Theory*, it is explained that peers do not completely trigger FoMO. The uniformity of socioeconomic background cannot cause a comparative attitude with one's peers. When individuals do not see significant material gaps in their environment, they are less interested in following trends or lifestyles. (Rahmadania, et al. 2025).

Social media access with FoMO has a low contribution in adolescents. The results of the study on the relationship between social media access and FoMO had a positive relationship with a p or significant value of 0.003, showing that there was a substantial relationship between the two variables because the p-value was $0.003 < \alpha 0.05$ and the product moment data correlation result was 0.28. Based on the results of the study, most students access social media for approximately 5 to 7 hours per day, but this factor does not trigger FoMO because some students only watch content when accessing social media. Social media is currently used as a tool to recognize and express one's identity (Pasenrigrading, et al. 2025).

Students tend to be passive so that they do not cause FoMO. Most students watch entertainment content as a transition in between academic pursuits. In addition to entertainment content, students also follow *influencer* accounts that lead to motivators about academics so that they do not cause excessive anxiety when accessing social media. Some students follow the accounts of their close friends so that the content they see is still in one social environment so that it does not cause FoMO. This assumption arises due to the content being watched so that individuals want to do the same and build

their self-image on social media (Rizky 2025). Easy access to social media can affect FoMO if students cannot use it appropriately. Social media becomes a FoMO factor if individuals use social media as a place to compare themselves excessively and seek validation with others (Puspitasari 2025). Accessing social media does not completely make teenagers become FoMO, but FoMO can appear if their social needs have not been met. Based on media behavior theory. Through the lens of *Uses and Gratifications Theory*, adolescents tend to use social media as a means of entertainment, not as a tool to monitor the activities of their friends that can trigger FoMO.

CONCLUSION

Peer interaction and social media access are factors that cause FoMO, but there are stronger factors that influence the occurrence of FoMO. Based on the results of the data, peer interaction has a positive relationship with a low relationship rate with a Product Moment data correlation value of 0.41. A p value or significant value of 0.000 shows a significant relationship because the p value is less than 0.05. Respondents with low levels of FoMO had low peer interaction. Some respondents when interacting with peers only do regular chatting activities and enough bonds make the quality of individual relationships with their friends not strong. Based on the results of the study, social media access has a positive relationship with a low relationship level with a correlation value of Product Moment data of 0.28 The p value or significant 0.003 shows a significant relationship because the p value is less than 0.05. Students when accessing social media choose to be passive objects and the content they watch is entertainment and the accounts that are widely followed are their friends' accounts, so they do not cause excessive anxiety and become FoMO.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the study of FoMO among Indonesian adolescents, by explaining that the theoretical framework of FoMO that initially developed in the West can be applied in socio-cultural contexts in Indonesia with different lives. The results of the study that positive relationships tend to be low are an enhancer in science, which indicates that peer interaction and social media access are not fully part of FoMO. For schools and educators, it is recommended to teach digital literacy and mental health education in their curriculum so that they do not focus on the dangers of social media alone, but realize that building meaningful friendships is also important. The researcher realized the limitations in this study, Purwokerto is a small

city so that the character of teenagers is different from the big city. The method in this study also cannot give meaning to the motive of adolescents doing FoMO, therefore it is recommended to the next researcher to be able to find out the meaning of the motives of adolescents doing FoMO.

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