

Assessment of the Influence of Radio Listenership among Edwin Clark University Students

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Abstract

The study sought to access the influence of radio listenership among today youth, with a focus on Edwin Clark University. The objectives were to find out the extent to which Edwin Clark students are expose to radio programme, ascertain the level of satisfaction students of Edwin Clark University derive from programmes on radio, determine the programmes that students of Edwin Clark University prefer on radio and to find out the factors that influence the attitude of students of Edwin Clark University towards listening to radio. The study anchored on both the uses and gratifications theory and individual differences theory. This necessitated the use of survey, with a population of 1080 respondents and a sample size of 278. Findings from the study reveal that both male and female students were well represented, findings also reveal that the critical age brackets needed for a study of this nature were equally represented. Again, findings show that some of the students found some of the programmes on radio to be boring, though others found them to be entertaining, informative as well as educative. Findings further showed that their preferred programmes were musical programmes, followed by drama before discussion and interview programmes which are the dominant formats in radio stations. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that majority of the students in Edwin Clark University should expose themselves to the programmes on radio, knowing too well that it is avenue through which information is gotten and culture learnt.

Keywords: Programmes, Radio, Radio Listenership, Edwin Clark University, Students

Introduction

Radio is an essential mass medium that virtually every member of the society benefits from. Kuewumi (2009) asserts that Radio has radicalized the face of human communication and ultimately become a fixed point in the daily lives of humans whereby people are informed, taught, nurtured and reformed by way of relaxation, re invigoration and resuscitation. This he argued, makes radio as a medium of mass communication being constantly sought after by its ardent listeners. Radio is the wireless transmission of signals through free space by electromagnetic radiation of a frequency significantly below that of visible light, in the radio frequency range, from about 30 kHz to 300GHz.(<http://www.historyofradiowiki.org>).

Egbuchulam (2002) defined radio as: a mobilizer and a formidable factor in the new world order in economy, technology and politics. Radio is best described as the cheapest, safest and the most effective medium of communication available to man. According to Onabajo (1999), in the developing world as in Asia and Africa, radio is cheap; it does not cost much compared to television which is expensive. It is also portable i.e. it can be easily transported from one place to

another. It is credible as it transmits messages that its listeners hold important.

Radio can also present news as it happens, brings the voices of news makers and artists into the homes of listeners. It also provides dramatic shows and other entertainment, which listeners can visualize even in the absence of visuals. For that reason, radio enjoys the advantage of simultaneity (Nkwam-Uwaoma et al., 2024). It requires little effort of its consumers to comprehend its message. It is a good companion that entertains and informs its listeners. Kuewumi (2009, p.148) has this to say about radio: “imagine a world without radio; it will be like a garden without flowers and trees. Radio daily feeds us with information, teaches us and calms our nerves. If radio is well understood and its potentials realized, hardly will there be any one that will live without a radio. Many anxious moments will be healed.” Radio is a vehicle for projecting personality through which it attracts and holds an audience. It is an efficient instrument for getting a message to a large number of people at the same time, because it transcends the boundary of space and time, and also leaps across illiteracy barriers (Onabajo, 1999).

Despite the world wide enchantment with the internet and web-based learning, radio still retains the advantage of being able to serve dispersed, isolated, and disadvantaged communities aspiring to overcome the barriers of illiteracy and physical distance in many countries. Listeners use and relate to radio in very different ways compared to other media. Listeners use radio for various reasons one of which is for emotional support, to keep their spirits up through programmes, and the result will determine to a large extent the attitude listeners would have to programmes. People listen to radio to be informed, entertained, educated, follow their favourite football team, and follow fashion trends or popular music, among others. Radio generally helps to broaden the knowledge intellectually and morally. Therefore, against this background, this study is designed to examine the radio listening habits of university students and their attitude toward radio programmes, using students of Edwin Clark University as the focus of study.

Statement of the problem

Deregulation of the broadcasting industry in 1992 led to increase in the number of commercial radio stations in Nigeria; this in turn posed a big challenge to radio proprietors, producers and directors to have a well packaged content that will gratify Nigerians, with about 70% of the total population of Nigeria as youths (Ismaila, 2013). The significance of radio in informing, educating, and entertaining students in the educational institution is not in doubt, and it is one way by which they keep in touch with the contemporary world. It can be assumed that before the advent of radio, information on what is happening outside the school premises especially in the educational and social world was difficult to discern by students. Even after the advent of radio and going a step further to establish campus radio stations, there is still doubt as to how many students are aware of what is happening beyond the walls of their school premises, and in the global world. It is imperative also to note that in Nigeria, the youths constitute not only the largest chunk of the population, amounting to 70 percent, but also the most vibrant segment of the population. Development partners and advertisers cannot afford to ignore that important segment of the Nigerian population. The youths have the tendency to place high premium on and preference for pure entertainment, particularly music, news and other entertainment packages on radio. As students, especially of higher institutions, it is imperative that they keep abreast of goings-on around them in the country and the world at large. Therefore, the thrust of this study is to find out the influence of radio listenership among Edwin Clark University students.

Objectives of the study

- 1 Find out if Edwin Clark students are exposed to radio programme
- 2 find out the programmes students of Edwin Clark University prefer on radio
- 3 ascertain the satisfaction students of Edwin Clark University derive from programmes on radio

Literature Review

Nature of radio

Onabajo (1999) describes radio as one of the many ways of getting messages to a large number of people at the same time, because it transcends the boundary of space and time, and also leaps across illiteracy barriers. In supporting this assertion, Asekun-Olarinmoye (2013) explains that radio is the single most important media equipment, because it reaches larger audiences anywhere in the world. This is so because it is fast, as events occur they are related to the potential audience”.

Onabajo (1999) further asserts that radio can persuade and effectively influence a large audience, thereby contributing substantially to the building of a national consensus. Furthermore, it is a powerful instrument in the area of public enlightenment, on health issues, family planning, cultural re-awakening, business improvement and other social development issues. Onabajo went on to say that, radio has the ability to reach millions of people simultaneously, yet it speaks to an individual personally. The listener feels a great companion in his radio especially when it is discussing something so relevant, sensible or personal to him (Nkwam-Uwaoma et al., 2021; Kuewumi, 2009).

It is amazing how radio can reach a large number of people and it's still so personal to each individual who listens. Listeners depend so much on radio to get information, entertainment and education. It is a companion to its listener. Programmes of interest therefore have a strong hold on the listener that if there is power failure or unavailability of batteries, the listener's day seems incomplete. Radio for those who love it, is perhaps more than a friend, because the language of radio is many times soft and gentle, appealing, teaching and persuasive (Kuewumi, 2009).

Radio has the ability to talk back to its listeners when messages are sent, through phone calls, text messages, social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). This (interactive nature of radio) puts members of an audience in touch with one another, and creates a horizontal flow of communication. McLeish (2005) explains that radio is selective. This means that choice for the listener is only in his mental switching-off which occurs during an item which fails to maintain his interest, or when he tunes to another station. Radio allows its listener to consciously or unconsciously select contents, unlike other mass communication media (newspaper, magazine) where the reader has too many contents to decide which to attend to first. Kuewumi (2009) citing McLeish (2005) referred to radio as a blind medium that paints pictures in the mind of the listener. A blind medium, but one which has capacity to stimulate the imagination such that as soon as a voice comes out of the loud speaker the listener attempts to visualize what he hears and to create in the mind's eye the owner of the voice. In essence, listeners many times detect and create scenarios just by hearing sounds, yet it is a blind medium.

Strengths and weaknesses of radio

According to Odetoyinbo, (1998) the most important advantage radio offers is its ability to reach specific audiences through specialized programming. Radio can be adapted for different parts of the world, and can reach people at different times of the day, because its signals are strong and

can reach almost all corners of the world, with an instant message. Radio is not expensive. To obtain a radio set is very cheap, compared to other medium. It could take the form of transistor radio, walkman, and mobile phones. It is portable. It can be easily carried around. Unlike other media of communication which require full attention, radio can be listened to while doing other activities such as, driving, house chores, reading, etc. Radio is faster and flexible in the presentation of news and events more than all other media of mass communication; this is because as events occur, they are related to the audience. It gives listeners opportunity to make informed choices about decisions. It is interactive and allows for immediate feedback from the audience. Listeners are allowed to call in and talk to a radio personality immediately about a subject they are discussing.

This makes the programme more interactive where a variety of listeners can give their opinion. Radio messages can be easily understood. One of the biggest disadvantages to radio communication technology is the limited range of a radio signal. A powerful radio signal is only capable of reaching receivers within a specific geographic region, requiring that a vast network of radio stations be set up to communicate effectively to a large or spread-out group of receivers. According to Hartman (1999) radio signals are also susceptible to interference from atmospheric conditions and other broadcasts. In addition, it can be hard to receive a clear signal from certain locations, such as areas shielded by mountains. A structure's insulation or electrical interference from other appliances can diminish the effectiveness of an individual radio receiver. Like most other forms of electronic communication, radio requires the presence of electricity, both at the point of the transmission and the point of reception. Finally, radio communication relies on a very limited spectrum of bandwidth frequencies. This is why commercial radio stations sometimes seem to overlap or blend together, and why the regulatory radio body National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) strictly regulates the use of all publicly-owned airwaves. Radios require a relatively large amount of bandwidth relative to the amount of data they transmit, leading to more and more air space being allocated for cell phone networks and wireless Internet networks.

Radio listenership

Majority of the population listen to radio regularly especially adults and young ones. Surprisingly, many listeners are loyal to their favourite stations and are often tuned for long periods to a station (Iheanacho et al., 2024; Ismaila, 2013). Listeners use and relate to radio in a very different way to other media. Ninety percent of listeners are actually doing something else while listening to radio. Typically, this will be routine tasks for example, driving, chores, housework (Radio Advertising Bureau, 2013). The majority of people are listening to radio on their own. Even if they are listening when other people are around, it is still very rarely a group experience: they will have their own personal experience of the output which is not shared with other people. Their inner eye, and their feelings, is doing the work (Radio Advertising Bureau, 2013). This possibly explains why individuals have preferences amongst the radio stations at their disposal. According to Chesstango (2012), Nigeria's top radio stations that people listen to are: 99.9 – Beat FM (Keffi street, Ikoyi, Lagos) — 95.1 – Wazobia FM (Lagos) 96.9 – Cool FM (Lagos) – urban music 97.3 – Classic FM (Lagos) , 93.7 – Rhythm FM – (Lagos). According to a latest report by the Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAMS), about 90% youngsters in Nigeria tune in to radio at least once in a week. The statistics show that youngsters over the age of 15 follow this kind of listening habit.

Advantages of listening

According to Oyelade (2006), listening is the ability to perceive information adequately. It is a receptive communication skill, which allows the audience to receive information. It is also a skill that enhances the growth of knowledge and development of students either morally or intellectually. Most people want to be heard, but very few people are good at listening. People tend to spend more time evaluating what is being said or mentally composing their responses than they do actually listening (Sekouri, 2013). Judging by the fact that few people are good listeners means that people who possess this rare skill have some advantages which include: Obtaining Information: Attentive listening helps an individual to learn more about people, things and the society at large. In essence, it creates a forum for awareness on various issues and increases the volume of knowledge of a person.

Attitude towards radio listenership

Daramola (2003) defines attitude as a mixture of beliefs and emotion that predisposes a person to respond to other people, object or institution in a positive and negative way. According to Odetoynbo (1998), attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all object and situation with which it is related. Attitude according to Daramola (2003) can be characterized in three ways: (1) They tend to persist unless something is done to change them. (2) Attitudes can fall anywhere along a continuum, from very favorable to unfavorable. (3) Attitudes are directed toward some object about which a person has feelings and beliefs. Daramola (2005) citing Katz (1960) propounded three components of attitude as: (1). Cognitive component (2). Effective component (3). Connative component. The cognitive component refers to the thoughts, beliefs and idea about objects. This involves the way we think about people, situation, institutions and event. For example, talking about Edwin Clark's University students' attitude towards radio listenership, some may be indifferent while others may have a bad attitude towards radio listenership. The connative component refers to the predisposition to behave in a particular way towards an object or an individual. This could be as a result of the other two components of attitude, example, the thought and feeling one holds about listening to a particular radio programme will act either positively or negatively towards the programme. Attitudes are formed through: (1). Socialization (interaction with others) (2). Direct contact with object of attitude (3). Group membership.

Theoretical framework

The study was built around two theories which are: Uses and gratification theory and individual differences theory.

Uses and gratification theory

The theory falls under the Active Audience theories which focus on the effects of the media on the audience. Active audience explains what people do with the media as opposed to source-dominated theories which focus on the effects of the media on people. The assumption is that individuals influence the effects that the mass media have on them. The theory is based on the premise that the audience uses the media to gratify certain identified needs (McQuail, 1994). The audience selectively chooses, listen to, perceive and retain the media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, and more (Agbim et al., 2023).

Applying the uses and gratification theory to this research, Edwin Clark's students listen to radio

to meet contained needs. They have the power to shape any aspect of the radio sector, and they are also a resource which can ensure a long or short term sustainability of the medium. Edwin Clark's students will make decisions about which content to choose based on their expectations of having some needs met; but the efforts required in meeting the needs will eventually influence the decisions they make. They select the content that will likely satisfy their needs, they selectively consume the content and there may not be any effect. Therefore, their listening pattern is based on their needs, which could be to get informed, educated, entertained, and more.

Individual differences theory

The individual difference theory was propounded by Melvin De Fleur (1970). The theory postulates the individual perceptive way in psychological endowment. No two individuals are the same and this is due to the way they were individually brought up in their environment and social life. Humans are biologically, physically, psychologically and genetically different. The theory based its assumption on the fact that the audience of mass media is heterogeneous, it is made up of people with different disposition, characteristics, personality, experiences, demographics, psychographics. These socio-psychological factors determine how an individual reacts towards media content. In relating this theory to the study, the students of Edwin Clark's University are a segment of an audience; they constitute people with different characteristics, age, sex, feelings, dispositions, etc. Therefore, this theory shows that the attitude Edwin Clark's University students will have to radio programming will differ due to differences in individuals. If a particular student finds pleasure in a radio programme, it is very possible that another student will detest it and prefer another programme.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey method. The survey method was most appropriate for this study because "survey is an excellent method for the measurement of attitude and opinion of people within a large population (Iheanacho et al., 2023; Babbie, 2010). The descriptive survey method was also considered very appropriate in this study due to the fact that it is a study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enables a researcher to make generalization concerning his population of interest. The justification of the adoption of the survey research was therefore premised on the capacity to provide a platform on which the researcher can ascertain the impact of the radio messages from being exposed to radio. The population of this study consist of students of Edwin Clark University. This was premised on the fact that the students are the ones directly involved and are the universe of this study. The population of the study according to the registry as at 2022/2023 admissions was 1080. Sample size according to Ihejirika and Omego (2011) is a subset of the entire population. Therefore, the sample size of the study was 278 students of Edwin Clark University. The sample size was determined because it was practically impossible to study the entire population of Edwin Clark University students. The sample size was determined using Philip Meyer and Stacks (1992) sample size determination template which states that for a population of 1000 to 1999, a sample size of 278 is appropriate. For the sampling procedure, the stratified random sampling procedure was adopted for this study. According to Ihejirika and Omego (2011), stratified random sampling involves separating the population elements into non-overlapping groups, called strata, and then selecting a simple random sample from within each stratum. Therefore, in line with stratified random sampling, the sample were divided into five faculties.

The study adopted the stratified random sampling technique. This was because, based on the fact

that the respondents were more knowledgeable about the subject matter under study and users were in the right position to provide the information needed to achieve the research objectives, which was to access the influence of smart phone use among the students of Edwin Clark University. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. The questionnaire was used because of the capacity to facilitate the collection of a large amount of data in a short period of time. The instrument contained two sections structured to elicit psychological and demographic data from respondents. It was made up of multi-choice, closed ended questions and a few open-ended questions. The self-administered instrument was subjected to a pilot test to ensure its adequacy, clarity and appropriateness as well as coherence thus, the instrument was found both valid and reliable to measure what it set to measure by the supervisor. In order to collect data for this study, the researcher employed the services of two research assistants who were trained on how to administer the instrument on the respondents. Two weeks was used in both administering and retrieval of the questionnaire. The study analyzed data collected through the questionnaire using frequency tables and percentages.

Results

Here, data were presented, analyzed and discussed. 278 copies of the questionnaire were administered on respondents from which 262 were duly returned for analysis.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Faculty

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage
Humanities	100	38
Sciences	50	19
Law	80	31
Basic medical sciences	20	8
Agricultural science	12	4
Total	260	100

Data on the distribution of respondents by Faculty, reveal that majority of the participants were Humanities, followed by those from Law, followed by sciences, basic medical sciences and finally by those from Agricultural sciences

Table 2: Respondents level of exposure radio messages

Response	Number of response	Percentage
Very high (4 times daily)	60	23
High (2-3 times daily)	120	46
Low (Once a day)	50	19
Very low (weekly)	32	12
Total	262	100

Data presented above were obtained to determine the level of exposure of students to radio messages. As shown from the table, the majority of the respondents (46%) were exposed to radio messages 2-3 times daily and 60%(23%respondents) were exposed to messages 4 times or more daily. Thus, 46%of the respondents had at least high exposure to these messages being investigated. However, 19% of the respondents had daily and weekly exposure to radio messages. It is therefore, evident that all the respondents were exposed to the radio messages but their level of exposure varies from very high, high, low to very low.

Table 3: Preferred programmes by students on radio

Programme type	Number of respondents	Percentage
Drama	60	23
Musical	120	46
Discussion	20	8
Interview	26	10
News	34	13
Others	2	0.7
Total	262	100

From the above table presented, responses reveal that majority of the respondents prefer music on radio, followed by those who prefer drama, followed by those whose preference is on news, followed by those who prefer interview and finally by those who prefer discussion and other preferences that may not have been listed here.

Table4: Extent to which students derived satisfaction from programmes on radio listenership

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very large extent	26	10
Large extent	34	13
Little extent	120	46
Very little extent	60	23
No extent	22	8.3
Total	262	100

The data presented in table 4 above show that majority of the respondents don't believe that radio programmes which they exposed themselves does not satisfied their need as envisaged, though some of them still believe that these programmes have gratified their needs as students to a large extent

Table 5: Reasons for respondent's attitude towards radio listenership

Options	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Boredom	120	46
Entertaining	60	23
Informative	34	13
Educational	26	10
Indifferent	22	8
Total	262	100

As shown in the table, most of the respondent believes that their attitude toward radio listenership is that is boring, followed by those who attest that the programmes are entertaining, followed by those who claimed that these programmes are informative, followed by those who see these programmes to be educational except for a little percentage that claimed not to say anything about these programmes

Discussion of Findings

In discussing findings from the study, reference is made to research questions. From the data presented in the preceding pages, both male and female students were well represented. The critical age brackets needed for a study of this magnitude were also represented. Students from

Edwin Clark University were adequately exposed to the radio medium and it happened quite often as shown in table 1. The data **Research question One:** To what extent do students of Edwin Clark University listen to radio programmes?

In response to this question, reference is made to table 5, where students were regularly listening to radio programmes in order to keep abreast of the happening within and outside the university community. These findings corroborate the idea of Oyelade (2006) who believes that listening is the ability to perceive information adequately. It is a receptive communication skill, which allows the audience to receive information. It is also a skill that enhances the growth of knowledge and development of students either morally or intellectually. Most people want to be heard, but very few people are good at listening. People tend to spend more time evaluating what is being said or mentally composing their responses than they do actually listening (Sekouri, 2013).

Research question Two: To what extent do students of Edwin Clark University derive satisfaction from radio programmes? In responding to this question, reference is made to table 7, where majority of the respondents believed that their programmes are boring, but for those that are regular listeners of radio programmes believed that radio gives satisfaction to a good extent, hence, these group of students sees radio as a potent weapon that has permeated all facets of their leaning. This is in consonance with the word of McLeish (2005) that radio has the ability to talk back to its listeners when messages are sent, through phone calls, text messages, social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). This (interactive nature of radio) puts members of an audience in touch with one another, and creates a horizontal flow of communication. McLeish (2005) explains that radio is selective. This means that choice for the listener is only in his mental switching-off which occurs during an item which fails to maintain his interest, or when he tunes to another station. Radio allows its listener to consciously or unconsciously select contents, unlike other mass communication media (newspaper, magazine) where the reader has too many contents to decide which to attend to first.

Research question Three: What programme do students of Edwin Clark University prefer on radio? Responses to this question is made to table 6, where respondents attest that it is relative as some of the students do not prefer some of the programmes while listening to radio while they are still some of them that preferred musical programmes they are exposed to on radio. This agree with the idea of Daramola (2003) who sees attitude as a mixture of beliefs and emotion that predisposes a person to respond to other people, object or institution in a positive and negative way. According to Odetoyinbo (1998), attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all object and situation with which it is related.

Research question Four: What factor(s) influence the attitude of students of Edwin Clark University towards radio listenership?

In responding to this question, response is made to table 8, where majority of the respondents sees these programmes to be boring, those some others sees it to be entertaining, informative as well as educative. This corroborate the idea of Usua and Paul (2014) that From around the 1920s when radio was invented, the medium has remained a very important medium of communication and its use in societies for entertainment, information dissemination, persuasion and advocacy has not been denied. It has since then remained a dominant force for exchange of culture and

opinion (Usua and Paul, 2014). According to these scholars, its very nature of being ubiquitous and personal medium coupled with simplicity of operation, advantage of cost effectiveness as well as adaptability and portability gives this medium the advantage that no other medium of mass communication has enjoyed.

Summary

The study sought to access the influence of radio listenership among today youth, with a focus on Edwin Clark University. The objectives were to find out the extent to which Edwin Clark students are exposed to radio programme, ascertain the level of satisfaction students of Edwin Clark University derive from programmes on radio, determine the programmes that students of Edwin Clark University prefer on radio and to find out the factors that influence the attitude of students of Edwin Clark University towards listening to radio. The study anchored on both the uses and gratifications theory and individual differences theory. This necessitated the use of survey, with a population of 1080 respondents and a sample size of 278.

Findings from the study reveal that both male and female students were well represented, findings also reveal that the critical age brackets needed for a study of this nature were equally represented. Again, findings show that some of the students found some of the programmes on radio to be boring, though others found them to be entertaining, informative as well as educative. Findings further showed that their preferred programmes were musical programmes, followed by drama before discussion and interview programmes which are the dominant formats in radio stations.

Conclusion

The logical conclusion to draw from this study is that students of Edwin Clark University do not listen to radio the way it ought to be as students because they do not have in their programme schedules, formats that give them pure entertainment. This position is in line with the respondents regarding the fourth research question which sought to know why students behave the way they did towards radio programmes. The result of this shows that they find radio programmes to be boring since it is a blind medium, and because students gave musical programmes as their preferred programme type, so any station on radio that do not have music as part of its offerings end up being boring to students in Edwin Clark University.

Again, while craving to stay in business, every media organization performs basic functions to the society. Both of these can only be achieved when a media organization has an audience to serve. Based on this, radio as a broadcast medium come up with strategic programmes and innovations to interest their audiences. While some organisations come up with heavy dose of pure entertainment, as do all music stations, others adopt of serious talk programmes and good measure of music programmes and variety shows, as shown in the study, most of the radio programmes were all-talk programmes in an environment where students were used to musical entertainment, along with drama and other formats. The study also concludes that a mixture of beliefs and emotion that predisposes a person to respond to other people, object or institution in a positive and negative way. According to Odetoynbo (1998), attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all object and situation with which it is related

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that

1. Majority of the students in Edwin Clark University should expose themselves to the programmes on radio, knowing too well that it is avenue through which information are gotten and culture learnt.
2. Radio stations should ensure that their programmes are audience oriented and these programmes interesting to catch their audience attention.
3. Radio stations should consider the introduction of music and drama into their programme schedules. This is critical the youths constitute 70 percent of the Nigerian Population., and sacrificing the size of listenership is certainly not in the interest of radio stations.

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