

Factors of Consumers Perceptions & Purchase Intentions towards Green Products

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Abstract: *Over the last decade environment has become one of the critical issues in product marketing. The concern for environmental issues have emerged a new group of consumers who are demanding healthy and environmental friendly products. Purchase decision of products depends on consumers' perception and intentions towards products. This study aimed at identifying the factors of perception and purchase intentions towards green products that influence consumers' purchase decisions. The result revealed that "Health issues" and "environmental issues" were the two main factors linked to perception. In addition to these the result also showed that factors of consumers purchase intentions were "Accessibility", "Quality" and "Familiarity". This study also found that there were significant differences between male and female consumers in perception and purchase intention factors regarding "Health issues", "Accessibility" and "Familiarity".*

Keywords: *Climate change, green product, factor analysis, consumer perception, purchase intentions*

1. Introduction

Due to climate change the consumers and manufacturers concern for environmental degradation is gradually increased over the past decades. The Environmental degradation such as resource exhaustion, solid waste, ozone depletion, pollution and global warming are the main causes of this climate change. It is observed that different activities of manufacturers like extracting resources, manufacturing, generating waste, logistic and marketing have negative impact on the environment and considered to be the source of environmental problems (Eltayeb, et. al., 2010). Since 1980s, environmental concern has become one of the most important issues.

Due to this realization consumers and manufacturers have started to change their lifestyles. The consumers' have started demanding environment friendly products known as green product and they pay more attention to the environment, wealth and health.

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These consumers have been identified as green consumer. The manufacturers have started to respond to these consumers' environmental needs and adopting green marketing practices in their activities.

In recent times, many encouraging indications show that the demand for greener products is increasing rapidly. Like, according to Natural Marketing Institute reports, more than 200 billion \$ market of Lifestyles, Health and Sustainability is expected to become double by 2010 and quadruple by the end of 2015 (Widger, 2007). Therefore, understanding consumers' green buying behavior is important for marketers, and it is especially critical for environment friendly businesses.

There are significant studies on consumer purchase decision models in the literature, however, consumer purchase decisions vary greatly depending on the product to be purchased. Researchers reported that demand and attitudes for green products is likely to be uneven across different market segments and cultures (Ottman, J. 1992, Peattie 1992). Therefore, studies are needed to delineate factors affecting consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions toward green product in various product markets. As a result, research on identifying factors of consumers' perception and purchase intentions towards green product in rising South Asian markets particularly in Bangladesh is considered to be appropriate. This study aimed to identify factors influencing consumers' perception and purchase decision regarding green products in Dhaka city of Bangladesh.

The paper is arranged as following: Section 2 of this study contains a brief review of recent literature about consumer perception and purchase intentions towards green product. Section 3 contains methodology including research design, data collection technique, sampling design, questionnaire design and statistical techniques to be used. Section 4 includes data analysis results and interpretation of consumers' demographic profile, perceptions and purchase intentions towards green products. Section 5 includes conclusion and recommendations which is followed by a list of references.

2. Literature Review

Green marketing term appeared at the end of the 1980's. Green marketing is also known as environmental marketing, sustainable marketing and ecological marketing; which is inevitable for any type of organization to make our planet sustainable. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA) "Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. It incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising". The concept has been defined by many researchers such as Mintu and Lozanda (1993) and Polonsky (1994) in a broad sense it is the marketing

activities which facilitate exchanges to satisfy consumer needs and wants by minimizing the impact of these activities on the physical environment. According to Chen and Chai (2010) green marketing is defined as the activities taken by firms concerned about environmental problems or green problems, by delivering the environmental sound goods or services to create customers' and society's satisfaction. Green marketing has been developing because even if the human wants are unlimited the natural and artificial resources are limited (Kumar, 2011).

Several researches have been conducted on green purchasing intentions. Among these, many researchers have identified the determinants of consumers' green purchase behavior, majority of them have been conducted in industrialized countries (Bleda and Valente, 2008; Chatterjee, 2009; Chan, 2004), but the findings often contradict each other (Elham, et. al. 2011; Ottman, 1992 and Peattie, 1992). For that reason, the findings may only be relevant in certain cultural, demographical and geographical context, and time. Because of complexity in green purchasing behavior of consumers', generalization is often not meaningful under different cultural, social and demographical contexts.

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception is defined as the way that customers usually view or feel about certain services and product. It can be related to consumer satisfaction which is the expectation of the consumer towards product. Consumer behavior trends towards green perception have been increasing. According to a survey made by the Co-operative Bank in the UK, in 1999, 17% of respondents "felt guilty about unethical purchase" and in 2005 there were 44% (Grant, 2007). Consumers who have positive attitude towards the environment are more willing to purchase green products (Balderjahn, 1988). In 2007, research outcome indicated that individuals are aware of environmental issues and want to develop green purchase behaviors (Chitra, 2007). Finisterra pointed out a paradoxical result of knowledge about environmental issues towards green purchase behaviors (Finisterra do Paço et al., 2009).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is willingness of a person to give preference to products having desirable features over other products in their purchase considerations. Consumer purchase intentions play an important role in marketing strategies (to implement four P strategies) because they permit companies to evaluate how many products could be produced according to the demand. According to Beckford et al., (2010) and Chan (2001) research studies, green purchase intention is a significant predictor of green purchase

behavior, which means that purchase intention is positively affecting the probability of a customer decision that he will buy green products. Chan and Lau (2002) conducted a cross-cultural research study in China and America, wherein consumers in Shanghai and Los Angeles were surveyed, concluded that the asymmetric influence of green purchasing intention on green purchasing behavior warrants further attention.

3. Methodology

Research Design:

The study is empirical in nature and the city of Dhaka has been selected purposively. The study is carried out with a survey through a structured questionnaire.

Data collection Technique:

Collection of data for the purpose of the study is in the form of primary data as the study being empirical in nature. Primary data is collected through the face to face interview with the help of structured questionnaire.

Designing the Questionnaire:

Questionnaire is designed in such a way that there are several questions included for studying the objectives of the research. The first part of the questionnaire includes question on the demographic factors of the respondents. The main objective of the study was to identify important factors of consumer perception and purchase intentions towards green product. For that purpose, a list of questions on consumer perception towards green products included in the second part and questions regarding consumer purchase intention towards the product included in the final part. The questions are designed on the basis of close ended and Likert Scales which have five scales like strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree is used for the study.

Sampling Design and Sample Size:

The consumers have been selected by adopting convenient sampling. Convenience Sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility proximity to the researcher. This technique is used because it allows the researcher to obtain basic data and trends regarding his study without the complications of using a randomized sample. The sample size considered for the study is 160.

Statistical Techniques

Descriptive statistics were used to understand socio-economic characteristics of consumers. In order to examine differences between male and female regarding perception and intentions towards green product, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been applied. In order to identify important factors about perception and purchase intention of consumers towards green product, the factor analysis has been employed with principal component extraction with varimax rotation. The generalized factor analysis model can be expressed as (Malhotra, 2006):

$$X_i = A_{i1}F_1 + A_{i2}F_2 + A_{i3}F_3 + \dots + A_{im}F_m + V_i U_i$$

Where $X_i =$ *ith* standardized variable

$A_{ij} =$ standardized multiple regression coefficient of variable *i* on common factor *j*

$F =$ common factor

$V_i =$ standardized regression coefficient of variable *i* on unique factor *j*

$U_i =$ the unique factor for variable *i*

$m =$ The number of common factor

The unique factors are uncorrelated with each other and with the common factors. The common factor themselves can be expressed as linear combination of the observed variables.

$$F_i = W_{i1}X_1 + W_{i2}X_2 + W_{i3}X_3 + \dots + W_{ik}X_k$$

Where $F_i =$ Estimate of *ith* factor

$W_i =$ Weight or factor score coefficient

$k =$ number of variables

It is possible to select score coefficients so that first factor accounts for the highest variance in the data, the second factor the second highest, and so on subject to being uncorrelated with each other.

4. Data Analysis Result and Interpretation

4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of the respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents of the study carried out were analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage and the result presented in

Table 1. Of the 160 respondents, approximately 57% were male and 43% were female. The survey showed that majority of the respondents 54 (33.75%) were in middle age group 36 to 45 years whereas approximately 53% were under the age of 36 years and the rest were above 36 years.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of consumer perception on green Products

Variable	Category	Frequency	%	Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	91	56.88	Marital status	Single	70	43.75
	Female	69	43.13		Married	90	56.25
Age	18-25 years	45	28.13	Income	below 15000 BDT	48	30
	26-35 years	40	25		15000-30000 BDT	75	46.88
	36-45 years	54	33.75		30001-45000 BDT	29	18.13
	46 and above	21	13.13		Above 45000 BDT	8	5
Education	Secondary	12	7.5	Occupation	Business	19	11.88
	Higher Secondary	30	18.75		Govt. Service	34	21.25
	Graduate	66	41.25		Private Service	44	27.5
	Post Graduate	47	29.38		Students	26	16.25
	Others	5	3.13		Others	37	23.13

In addition, more than 41% of the respondent declared that they had graduate degree, approximately 30% had post graduate degree and the rest had college or other degree. The result also showed that occupation of 12%, 21%, 28%, 16% and 23% respondents are business, govt. service, private service, student or others respectively. Table 1 also shows that near about 47% earned monthly income between 15000 BDT (Bangladeshi

Taka) and 30000 BDT whereas only 5% earned more than 45000 BDT. Near about 44% respondents were single and the rest 56% were married.

4.2 Consumers' Perception on Green Products

The result of consumer perception towards green products is shown in Table 2. The result shows that about 50% of the consumers are strongly agreed that the green products are healthy and 43% of consumers are strongly agreed that the green products have high nutrition value. Products are grown in harmony with nature agreed by 52% of the consumers.

Table 2: Distribution of consumer perceptions on green products

Perception	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Green product are healthy	2	2	16	60	80
	1.25%	1.25%	10%	37.50%	50%
High nutritional value	3	2	32	54	69
	2%	1%	20%	34%	43%
Grown in harmony with nature	3	6	43	83	26
	2%	4%	27%	52%	15%
Free from chemical pesticides	1	10	65	62	22
	0.50%	6%	40.50%	39%	14%
Free from genetically modified organism (GMO)	2	5	65	74	14
	1%	3%	40.50%	46.50%	9%
Environmentally/animal friendly techniques	5	9	49	61	36
	3%	5.50%	31%	38%	22.50%
when buy green product everyone should consider environmental issues	3	0	28	58	71
	2%	0%	17.50%	36%	44.50%

Table 2 also shows that 40.5% of the consumers are neutral with green products are free from chemical pesticides and 46.5% agreed with free from genetically modified organisms. The result further indicates that 38% consumers are agreed with green products are produced by environmental friendly techniques and 44.5% consumers are strongly agreed with consumers should consider environmental when they buy green products.

Factors of Perception towards Green Product

To identify important factors of perception that influence consumer purchase decision factor analysis model has been employed. The most important aspect of the factor analysis is the extraction of key factors from a set of interrelated variables by a smaller set of variable which are uncorrelated and interpretable, but not directly observable. Consumers were asked 7 questions about their perception towards green product to rate on 5 point scale. We have considered these perception variables for factor analysis.

Testing of Appropriateness of Factor Model

To test appropriateness of factor model we need to check measure of sampling adequacy. In addition to this we also need to test whether variables are correlated or not. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy index and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are used for sampling adequacy and correlation test respectively. The test result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.875
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	891.719
	df	21
	Sig.	0.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy index is 0.875 indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate for the surveyed data set. High values (between 0.5 and 1.0) indicate factor analysis is appropriate and values below 0.5 imply that factor analysis may not be appropriate. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a statistic used to examine the hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated i.e. the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix. A large value of the test statistic will favor the rejection of null hypothesis. The result shows that Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-Square statistics is 891.719, which would mean that the 7 statements are correlated and hence we can conclude from both The KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity that the factor analysis is appropriate for the surveyed data set.

Identification of Appropriate number of Factors

In order to determine the appropriate number of factors a Scree plot has been used. The shape of the plot has been observed to identify the point at which elbow occurs (Figure 1). It is observed that an elbow occurs at component number “2” which indicates 2 sample principal components effectively summarize the total sample variance. Hence a model with two factors appears to be reasonable. We have used principal component method of factor analysis for identification of the factors.

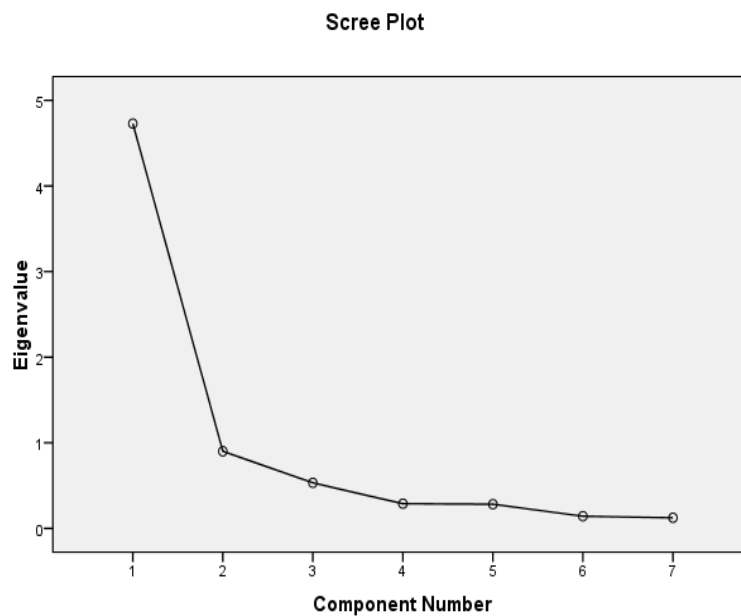


Figure 1: Scree plot for determination of number of factors of consumers' perception towards green products

Rotation of factors of Perception

In this study we have used rotation component matrix because it is simpler one that is easier to interpret. The most commonly used method for rotation is the Varimax. Here we have used Varimax with Kaiser Normalization as rotation method. The results of rotated component matrix are shown in Table 4. From the table it is seen that 7 perception variables were grouped under two independent factors which account for a total of 80.42% of variations. The each of the two factors contributes 46.11% and 34.31% respectively.

Table 4: Rotated component matrix

Perception	Component	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Green product are healthy	.7045	
High nutritional value	.706	
Grown in harmony with nature	.817	
Free from chemical pesticides	.889	
Free from GMO	.916	
Environmentally/animal friendly techniques		.838
when buy everyone should consider environmental issues		.778
Eigen Value	4.73	0.98
% of Variance	46.11	34.31
Cumulative % of Variance	46.11	80.42
Cronbach's Alpha	0.913	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 4 shows that out of 7 perception variables, first five variables have their high, relatively tightly grouped factor loading on Factor 1 and last two variables have high factor loading on Factor 2. This factor is termed as “**Health issues**” and “**Environmental issues**”. The perception variables are measured using a five point scale and the reliability coefficient of the Cronbach's Alpha of the scale is 0.913 indicating that each measure shows internal consistency.

Differences between Male and Female on Perception towards Green Product

After determining the factors of consumers' perception towards green product, an ANOVA analysis is conducted to find out whether there are differences between male and female regarding these factors. The ANOVA result is presented in Table 5. The result shows that there is a significant difference in perception between male and female regarding health issues at 1% level of significance. The result also shows that male and female do not differ significantly in perception towards green products regarding environmental issues.

Table 5: Differences between male and female regarding perceptions towards green products

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Health Issue	Between Groups	20.421	1	23.283	0.000
	Within Groups	138.579	158		
	Total	159	159		
Environmental Issue	Between Groups	2.044	1	2.057	0.153
	Within Groups	156.956	158		
	Total	159	159		

4.3 Consumers Purchase Intention towards Green Products

The result of consumer purchase intention towards green products is shown in Table 6. The result shows that about 45% of the consumers are agreed that the green products are of standard quality and 28% of consumers are disagreed that the green products available & accessible. Products have better appearance & test agreed by 45% of the consumers. 27.5% of consumers disagreed that they have more trust on green product. The result also shows that 45.6% of the consumers are disagreed that they have more information on green and 37.5% disagreed with green products are reasonably priced. The result further indicates that 43.8% consumers are agreed with green products take more time to recognize and 38% consumers are disagreed with green products have less packing material.

Table 6: Distribution of consumers purchase intention towards green products

Perception	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Standard quality	1	3	37	72	47
	0.6%	2.0%	23.0%	45.0%	29.4%
Availability & accessibility	20	45	57	31	7
	12.5	28%	35.5%	19.5%	4.5%
Better appearance & test	2	9	49	72	28
	1.3%	5.6%	30.6%	45%	17.5%
More trust	12	27	60	44	17
	7.5%	17%	37.5%	27.5%	10.5%
More information	28	73	42	13	4
	17.5%	45.6%	26.4%	8%	2.5%
Reasonably priced	21	60	42	31	6
	13.0%	37.5%	26.3%	19.4%	3.8%
Take more time to recognize	8	15	46	70	21
	5.0%	9.4%	28.8%	43.8%	13%
Less Packing Material	14	61	46	32	7
	8.8%	38%	28.8%	20.0%	4.4%

Factors Influencing Consumers Purchase Intentions towards Green Product

The dimensionality of purchase intention towards green product was examined using the factor analysis based on 9 different statements of the questionnaire and the reliability of the subsequent factor structure for the internal consistency of the grouping of the items.

Testing of Appropriateness of Purchase Intentions Factor Model

Table 7 shows that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy index is 0.775, which indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate for the surveyed data set. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-Square statistics is 496.558, which is significant at 1% level. This result indicates that the 9 statements are correlated and hence we can conclude from both The KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity that the factor analysis is appropriate for the surveyed purchase intentions data set.

Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.775
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	496.558
	df	36
	Sig.	0.000

Identification of Appropriate number of Factors of Purchase Intention

In order to determine the appropriate number of factors of purchase intentions a Scree plot has been used as before. It is observed that an elbow occurs at component number “3” which indicates 3 sample principal components effectively summarize the total sample variance (Figure 2). Hence a model with three factors appears to be reasonable. We have used principal component method of factor analysis for identification of the factors.

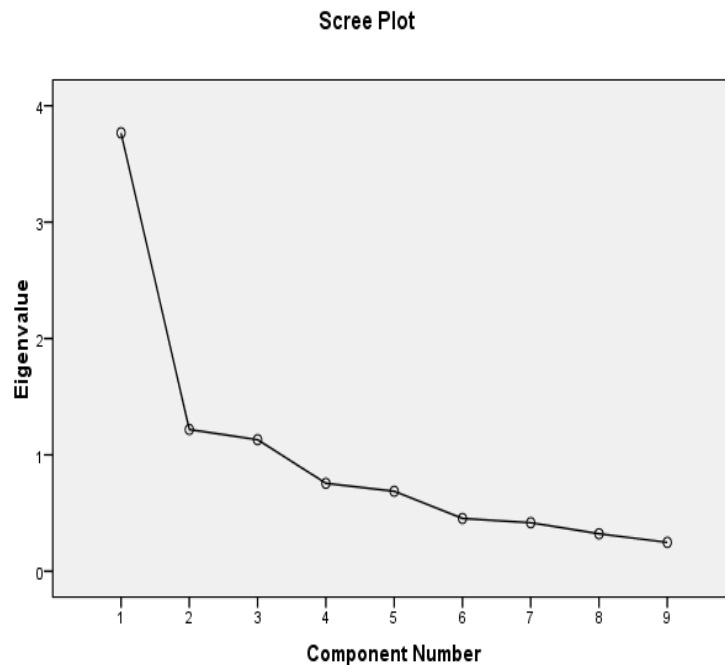


Figure 2: Scree plot for determination of number of factors of consumers' perception towards green products

Rotation of factors of Purchase Intentions

Again, rotation component matrix produced through Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method has been used to identify factor components. The results of rotated component matrix are shown in Table 8. From the table it is seen that 9 purchase intentions variables were grouped under three independent factors which account for a total of 67.95% of variations. The each of the three factors contributes 33.79% and 20.56% and 13.60% respectively.

Table 8: Rotated component matrix

Purchase intentions	Component		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Standard quality		.842	
Availability & accessibility	.836		
Better appearance & test		.612	
More trust	.731		
More information	.811		
Reasonably priced	.700		
Take more time to recognize			-.848
Recognizable label			.607
less packing material		.902	
Eigen Values	3.04	1.85	1.22
% of Variance	33.79	20.56	13.60
Cumulative % of Variance	33.79	54.36	67.95
Cronbach's Alpha	0.794		

Table 8 shows that out of 9 perception variables, four variables such as availability & accessibility, More trust, More information and Reasonably priced have their high grouped factor loading on Factor 1. These variables can be named as “**Accessibility**”. Factor 2 includes variables Standard quality, Better appearance & test and Less packing material which can be termed as “**Quality**”. Two variables such as Take more time to recognize and Recognizable label have high factor loading on Factor 3 which can be

named as “**Familiarity**”. The purchase intentions variables are measured using a five point scale and the reliability coefficient of the Cronbach’s Alpha of the scale is 0.794 indicating that each measure shows internal consistency.

Differences between Male and Female on Purchase Intentions towards Green Products

Table 9 shows the ANOVA analysis of consumers purchase intentions towards green products to find out whether there are differences between male and female regarding these factors.

Table 9: Differences between male and female regarding purchase intentions towards green products

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Accessibility	Between Groups	11.032	1	11.78	0.001
	Within Groups	147.968	158		
	Total	159	159		
Quality	Between Groups	2.31	1	2.329	0.129
	Within Groups	156.69	158		
	Total	159	159		
Familiarity	Between Groups	5.062	1	5.195	0.024
	Within Groups	153.938	158		
	Total	159	159		

The result indicates that there are significant differences in purchase intentions between male and female regarding factors “Accessibility” and “Familiarity” at 1% and 5% level of significance respectively. The result also shows that there is no significant difference between male and female in perception towards green products regarding factor “Quality” of green products.

5. Conclusion

Demand for green products have been substantially increased in the last decade and will grow at this higher rate in future. The above study has provided an empirical glimpse into the minds of consumers and indicated that consumers of Dhaka city are aware about the green products and they have more concern for green products. The findings revealed that two independent factors were extracted from consumers' perception towards green products. These findings imply that health issues and environmental issues are important to consumers of green product. The study also showed that three independent factors were extracted from purchase intentions variable which influence consumers' purchase decision. These factors can be stated as follows: accessibility, quality and familiarity. On the other hand, male and female consumers demonstrate a significant difference in factors of perceptions and purchase intentions towards green products like health issues, accessibility and familiarity. For the marketers the results imply that when they offer green products to the consumers they should consider customers' characteristics. Along with environmental and health aspects manufacturers should consider the quality, availability & accessibility and familiarity of green products to attract these customers.

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