

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR KENYAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The trend today in Universities is emphasizing reputation and key performance indicators including ranking of universities as the population at large, goes for education in this technology driven orientation. New trends of education are directing towards this change and Vice Chancellors and Presidents of the universities strive hard to realize such aspirations. To fulfill such purposes universities need to transform and issues involving transformation and shift sphere around leadership. This paper analyzed the significance of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership in public universities in Kenya. A survey was carried out in four public universities in Kenya using a questionnaire. Stratified random sampling was used to collect data from all cadres of staff obtained both quantitative and qualitative data. The results showed that emotional intelligence is significant in transformational leadership.

Key words: Self awareness, social awareness, social management, relationship management, Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration.

Introduction and Literature Review

Higher education institutions, the world over, are facing new challenges which require reforms in their management and governance styles. The rise of new stakeholders, internal factors, together with globalization and the rapid pace at which new knowledge is created and utilized, growth in student enrolments and in the number of higher education institutions are among the recent developments which challenge higher education institutions (Jowi, 2003). The rapid expansion of university education has led to a number of challenges. According to UNESCO World Conference on higher education (1998), low funding from the exchequer, increased enrolment, limited access compared to the population level, increased enrolment without commensurate improvement in available facilities, gender inequality and a low research capacity, are some of the problems facing universities in the region.

The institutions of higher learning have, therefore, been forced to rethink their strategy and possibly look for extra sources of financing including establishing income-generating activities. They are caught in a fix between severe budget cuts and a flood of students in search of useful degrees resulting in overcrowding, low budgets and staff retention problems Ngome (2003). The change in funding requires employees to be fully engaged so that the organization can obtain its monies worth. Further public universities in Kenya face competition as they seek to offer university education to the public. The private sector is also competing for the same students and employees. According to Mwiria et al (2007) by the year 2002 the number of students undertaking degree programs in private universities was 17% of the total number of the total number of university students in Kenya. Currently, there are seven public universities with various constituent colleges and campuses as compared to more than seventeen private universities. It is, therefore, necessary to have a competitive strategy which is cost effective to enhance performance bearing in mind the budget constraints (Mwiria et al 2007).

Governance is perhaps the most critically needed area of reforms because higher education in Kenya has been the subject of much political manipulation and intervention. Partly as a consequence the public universities have experienced numerous strikes and closures over the past decade, prolonging the time required for graduation, disrupting academic years and driving prospective students and resident staff to private and overseas institutions. Governance is important too because it involves the recruitment of the individuals managing the higher education institutions and determines relevance and whether management structures are more or less open. Steps have already been taken to enhance the democratization of decision-making within the universities by promoting wider representation of staff and students in key university governing bodies and allowing staff a greater say in selecting senior university administrators.

Any reform package requires a determined leader whose vision and support make possible the success of reform strategies (Mwiria et al 2007). One variable that has recently gained much popularity as a potential underlying attribute of effective leadership is the construct of emotional intelligence (EI) Sosik and Mererian (1999). EI is described as a set of abilities that refer in part to how effectively one deals with emotions both within oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It has been proposed that in leadership, dealing effectively with emotions may contribute to how one handles the needs of individuals, how one effectively motivates employees, and makes them feel at work (Goleman, 1998b). Today's effective leadership skills have been described to depend, in part on the understanding of emotions and the abilities associated with EI (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1998a).

Transformational leadership has been found to be consistently related to organizational and leadership effectiveness in well over 100 studies Bryman, 1992; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996 as quoted by Reeds (2005). Transformational leaders believe in the need for change. They, then articulate a vision of the future of the organization, and provide a model that is consistent with the vision. They then foster the acceptance of group goals and provide individualized support afterwards. As a result, followers of transformational leaders often feel trust and respect towards the leader and are motivated to do more than they are expected to do. Therefore, leaders change the beliefs and attitudes of their followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organization (Aziz, Ishak, Ghair & Othman, 2009).

1.1 Problem statement

The dawning of the age of accountability wrought by reform movements beginning in the 1980s, necessated reforms in the educational sector and universities were not exempt. Today universities the world over attempt to advance themselves in academic programs, research and innovation, towards academic excellence in the wake of the competitive era, toward world class university. Therefore, the trend today is emphasizing reputation and key performance indicators including ranking of universities as the population at large, goes for education in this technology driven orientation. New trends of education are directing towards this change and Vice Chancellors and Presidents of the universities strive hard to realize such aspirations. Therefore universities are aspiring to be recognized for their prestige in programs, research, publications, faculties, students, innovations, collaborations, industry linkages and entrepreneurship through certifications like ISO and other relevant recognitions. To fulfill such purposes universities need to transform and issues involving transformation and shift sphere around leadership. Leadership is a critical factor in Universities to steer the direction and implementation of processes towards reforms.(Aziz, Ishak, Ghair & Othman, 2009).

Burns 1978 as cited by Reed (2005) introduced the concept of transformation leadership describing it as not a set of specific behaviors but rather a process by which leaders and followers encourage one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. There must be a connection made between individuals and groups and how emotional intelligence improves the workplace, which translates into improved performance and organization's ability to acquire, develop, and retain human capital in order for it to be meaningful in the University setting. Exactly how, and to what extent EI accounts for effective transformational leadership is currently unknown. Despite much interest in relating EI to effective TL there is little research published that has explicitly examined this relationship. This study sought to address this. The reseach was guided by two objectives

a) To establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. b)To examine how emotional intelligence impacts transformational leadership. The two research questions were i) is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership ? and ii) Does emotional intelligence impact transformational leadership ?

Transformational Leadership Literature review

A review of leadership literature reveals an array of definitions concerning its nature and application. Burns J. M. (1978) as cited by Reeds (2005) suggested that leadership is one of the most often observed and least understood phenomenon on earth. Beyond defining leadership, studies consistently centre on the question: What makes a leader effective or ineffective? Yukl (2002) asserted leadership effectiveness is not conveniently quantified by organizational outcomes and results. Many definitions have been given on leadership but according to Bass (1997) leadership has been conceived as the focus of group process, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as particular behaviors, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as an initiation of structure, and as many combinations of this definition. In the past leadership studies focused on trait and situational approaches.

Current developments in leadership have focused on transformational and transactional approaches. Bass and Avolio (1994) defined TL as leadership that occurs when the leader stimulates the interest among colleagues and followers to view their work from a new perspective. The TL generates an awareness of the mission or vision of the organization, and develops colleagues and followers to higher levels of ability and potential. Top performing managers are seen as more TL in their leadership style than ordinary managers. There were no gender differences for TL scores of male and female managers Mandell & Pherwani (2003). In the past leadership studies focused on trait and situational approaches. Current developments in leadership have focused on transformational and transactional approaches. Bass and Avolio (1994) cited by Reeds (2005) defined TL as leadership that occurs when the leader stimulates the interest among colleagues and followers to view their work from a new perspective. Top performing managers are seen as more TL in their leadership style than ordinary managers. There were no gender differences for TL scores of male and female managers Mandell & Pherwani (2003). Hackett & Hortman (2008) state that concept of transformational leadership is a change orientated framework comprised of a list of behaviours that contribute to change.

Dimensions/ elements of TL: Bass and Avolio (1994) as cited by Reeds (2005) point out that TL comprises of four dimensions the “Four Is” Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and Individualized consideration which may be defined as follows: a) Individualized influence: This dimension is as a result of trust and respect of followers to the leader for doing right. This done through stories and symbols to communication the vision and mission and serving as role models. The TL operate out of a deeply held personal value system that includes qualities like justice and integrity which in turn unite their followers changing their goals and beliefs for the better. b) Intellectual stimulation. This element promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving abilities as TL make employees seeks their own answers. c) Individual consideration: The TL leaders treat employees as individuals and not just members of a group. This is done through compassion, appreciation and responsiveness to employee needs alongside recognition and celebration of achievements. d) Inspirational motivation: TL inspire their followers to achieve greatly through high expectations. They have power and influence giving employees a high degree of trust and confidence in them.

Influence of Transformational Leaders on followers. TL boosts intrinsic motivation and provides intellectual stimulation thus encouraging followers to challenge the status quo and the old ways of doing things. TL is said to be multifaceted, complex and dynamic in that leaders can affect followers by highlighting different aspects of their follower’s social self concept and change their focus from one level to another. Through individualized consideration, a leader addresses issues of competence, meaningfulness and impact with each team members and encourages continued individual development. Intellectual stimulation increases the followers feeling of self worth. TL influences followers to transcend self interests for the sake of the welfare of the organization. TL affect development as well as performance. Modassir & Singh (2008). According to Dvir et al (2002) TL exert additional influence by broadening and elevating their follower’s goals. Thus they exhibit Idealized Influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and Individualized consideration which in turn arouse admiration, inspire motivate, provide intellectual stimulation and treatment of their followers with idealized consideration. The followers in turn reach full potential generating enhanced performance. TL is also seen as enabling as their leader follower relationships are transformed into one where both players are partners. The universities going through transformation then, require transformational type of leadership.

Emotional Intelligence

Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) carried out research based on these earlier works in order to establish Emotional intelligence and a genuine intelligence based on the concept and definition of intelligence. According to them intellect and emotional intelligence are two different constructs and they use different parts of the brain. Therefore as a term, emotional intelligence first made its first appearance in 1989 in an article by two American academic psychologist, John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey. They defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.” They came up with an ability model with four separate elements of Emotional intelligence namely identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (1998).

Daniel Goleman (1995) developed further the work of Mayer, and Salovey and in association with the Hay Group developed the following models of competencies. Personal competences which determine how we manage we manage ourselves including self-awareness, emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-management, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement orientation and initiative.

Social competencies are the competences that determine how we handle relationships including social awareness, empathy, organizational awareness, self orientation, social skills, developing others, leadership, communication, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds and teamwork and collaboration. He argues further that the traits are human qualities that every person has access to and it is merely a case of developing these skills to increase emotional intelligence. He came up with one hundred and thirty seven item Emotional Quotient to measure the five dimensions of Emotional intelligence. IQ by itself is not a very good predictor of job performance. Hunter and Hunter (1984) estimated that the best IQ accounts for about 25% of the variance. Sternberg (1996) has pointed out that studies vary and that 10% may be a more realistic estimate. Bar-On (1997) also developed an EI model using fifteen conceptual constructs in the operationalization of the model. He developed one hundred and thirty three item questionnaires with a rating of five points.

Importance of emotional intelligence

In a world of work where people are increasingly expected to be the competitive edge, any theory that seems to offer the possibility of enabling them to work together more co-operatively and productively is likely to raise a great deal of interest. Such was the case when the concept of emotional intelligence first came to public prominence in 1995. Higgs and Dulewicz (1999) identified seven elements of emotional intelligence broken down into three areas. Drivers, which include motivation and decisiveness, traits that energize people and drive them towards achieving goals. Constrainers: Conscientiousness, integrity and emotional resilience, factors that control and curb the excesses of the drivers. Enablers: Sensitivity, influence and self-awareness, traits that facilitate performance and help individuals to succeed.

Goleman (1999) on emotional intelligence in the workplace argues that emotionally intelligent managers are better able to resolve workplace conflict and are better negotiators and leaders. Emotional intelligence is also an effective way of identifying leadership potential because the qualities that constitute good leadership such as decisiveness, empowering others and openness to change all reflect aspects of emotional intelligence. Therefore there are aspects of management, leadership and teamwork in which competencies owing their origin to emotional states are at least as important as technical abilities. Managing personal emotions and adapting them to circumstances and understanding others' emotions, is an important aspect of leadership and teamwork. Emotional intelligence has become a vital part of how today's leaders meet the significant challenges they face. Emotional intelligence can help leaders in an evermore difficult leadership role. In the middle of the "Talent War", especially at the highest level in organizations, emotional intelligence can give developing leaders a competitive edge. A certain level of emotional intelligence is necessary to learn the emotional competencies (Gowing, in Press). Emotional competencies are linked to and based on emotional intelligence.

Methods

The research design was quantitative and the designs, techniques and measures produced discreet numerical or quantifiable data. The target population was the seven public universities namely, Nairobi University, Kenyatta University, JKUAT, Egerton University, Moi University, Maseno University and Masinde Muliro university. The study was a survey of four public universities namely: Nairobi University, Kenyatta University, JKUAT and Egerton University which accounts for over 50% of the Kenyan public universities. The four public universities were purposively selected taking into consideration age and the geographical convenience. Also the study included all staff cadres in the four public universities which formed four strata (Management, teaching, middle level and junior level staff). Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample from the four public universities.

Data Collection Methods

The main research tool was a structured questionnaire, which was preferred as it would provide a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study. The questionnaire was constructed using Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Short Version for workplace applications) for the four domains and the elements of TL. Likert scale questions were used to obtain quantitative data and semi-structured questions used for qualitative data. The research instrument was pre-tested using a sample of 1.5% as per Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) that a successful pilot study would use 1% to 10% of the actual sample size. The respondents used for pretesting were similar to the sample under study using procedures similar to those of the actual study. The data had a minimum target sample of 384 according to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999). The sampling frame consisting of about 10% of the total population had a response rate of 548 questionnaires which accounts for 55% response rate.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data was both qualitative and quantitative. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used in the analysis to execute quantitative data.

Descriptive statistics such as percentages were used to analyze the qualitative data. The findings suggest that the four elements of transformational leadership correlated with the four domains of emotional intelligence.

1.2 Research Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to examine how emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership may be used to enhance employee engagement in public universities.

Table 13: EI and TL relationship

	Idealized Influence	Idealized influence	Inspiration Leadership	Inspiration Leadership	Intellectual Stimulation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individual Consideration	Individual Consideration
Self Awareness								
Emotional self-awareness	.163**	.076	.079	.097*	.096*	.173**	.125**	.102*
Accurate self-assessment	.121**	.074	.115*	.107*	.073	.106*	.038	.074
Self Confidence	.057	-.052	.111*	.006	-.034	.076	-.020	-.026
Self Management								
Self Control	.101*	.073	.097*	.094*	.077	.178**	.055	.014
Trustworthiness & Conscientiousness	.097*	-.015	.132**	.055	-.063	.133**	.031	.000
Adaptability	.020	.045	.060	-.046	-.032	.045	-.020	-.032
Optimism	.026	.015	.146**	.062	-.010	.051	.044	.029
Initiative	.115*	-.012	.145**	.049	.004	.085	.079	.059
Achievement drive	.038	-.053	.098*	-.030	-.035	.030	.034	.001
Social Awareness								
Empathy & Service Orientation	.095*	.016	.149**	.042	-.004	.113*	.057	.079
Organizational awareness	.064	.169**	.104*	.129**	.237**	.099*	.145**	.229**
Relationship Management								
Developing others	.153**	.117**	.146**	.070	.109*	.183**	.066	.122**
Leadership & Building Bonds	.078	.023	.084	.063	.007	.141**	.110*	.059
Influence & Change Catalyst	.132**	.098*	.098*	.149**	.078	.197**	.159**	.111*
Communication & conflict management	.046	.079	.043	.129**	.104*	.099*	.113*	.069
Teamwork & Collaboration	.081	-.025	.121**	.011	-.009	.123**	.087	.057

(* 0.01 level of significance and ** 0.05 level of significance)

The self awareness domain had emotional self awareness (.163) and accurate self assessment (.121) significantly related to trust and respect for leadership . Also for self management, self control (.101), trustworthiness & conscientiousness (.097)and initiative (.115) were related to trust and respect. The social awareness domain had empathy and service orientation (.95) connected to trust and respect while relationship management connected developing others (.153) and influence and change catalyst (.132).

Employees being treated as individuals was related to social awareness domain in organizational awareness (.169), developing others (.117)for relationship management and influence and change catalyst (.098).

Employees being encouraged to achieve the university mission had the most significant link as it was related to accurate self assessment (.115), self confidence (.111), almost all the self management domain namely self control (.097), trustworthiness & conscientiousness (.132), optimism (.146), initiative (.145) and achievement drive (.098). It was also connected to the social awareness domain on empathy and service orientation (.149) and organizational awareness (.104). The relationship management domain had developing others (.146), influence and change catalyst and teamwork and collaboration.

Celebrating individual and team accomplishments was linked to self awareness domain on emotional self awareness (.097), accurate self assessment (.107), and self management domain and the self management domain had self control (.094), social awareness linked organizational awareness (.129) and the relationship management had influence and change catalyst (.149) and communication and conflict management (.129). Openness to change and new ideas was connected to emotional self awareness (.096), organizational awareness (.237), developing others (.109) and communication and conflict management (.104).

Anticipating and meeting customer needs was connected to emotional self awareness (.173), accurate self assessment (.106), self control (.178), trustworthiness and conscientiousness (.133), empathy and service orientation (.113), organizational awareness (.099), developing others (.183), leadership and building bonds (.141), influence and change catalyst (.197), communication and conflict management (.099) and teamwork and collaboration (.123). Employees encouragement to get involved in goal setting was significant to emotional self awareness (.125), organizational awareness (.145), leadership and building bonds (.110), influence and change catalyst (.159) and communication and conflict management (.113).Development of employee skills, knowledge and abilities was connected to emotional self awareness (.102), organizational awareness (.229), developing others (.122) and influence and change catalyst (.111).

The factor analysis for transformational leadership resulted in one component. Therefore there was no iteration because only one component was extracted.

Table 12: Transformational leadership factor analysis

Component Matrix ^a	
	Component
	1
Openness to change and new ideas	.804
Individual treatment and valuing of views	.769
Employees involvement in goal setting	.766
Development of employee skills	.751
Celebration of accomplishments	.751
Anticipating and meeting customer needs	.696
Employees encouraged on university mission	.632
Trust and respect for leadership	.631

A factor analysis of transformational leadership extracted one factor with loadings from .804 for openness to change and new ideas and .631 for trust and leadership being the lowest. Individual treatment and valuing of views, employees involvement in goal setting , development of skills, celebration of accomplishments range between .769 and .751 indicating closeness in similarity where loading is concerned. Anticipating and meeting customer needs, employees being encouraged to achieve university mission and trust and respect for leadership loadings are from .696 to .631. The factor analysis results indicate that all the elements of transformational leadership were perceived to be highly significant by university employees.

Table 7 EI factor analysis

	Component		
	1	2	3
Teamwork and Collaboration	.702	.030	.296
Trustworthiness & Conscientiousness	.676	.323	.001
Optimism	.667	.293	.020
Initiative	.625	.306	.191
Leadership & Building Bonds	.597	.022	.475
Empathy & Social Orientation	.496	.164	.425
Accurate self assessment	-.007	.712	.223
Emotional self awareness	.161	.669	.133
Self confidence	.401	.614	.042
Self control	.169	.538	.221
Adaptability	.307	.498	.210
Achievement drive	.364	.422	.238
Organizational awareness	-.053	.167	.725
Communication & conflict management	.131	.243	.645
Influence and change catalyst	.277	.174	.597
Developing others	.306	.193	.592

Rotated Component Matrix^a

Factor analysis was done to examine emotional intelligence. Normally for less than 30 variables with more than 250 cases, then variables explaining above 60% of the variability are retained and the others discarded. The extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis and the Rotation Method employed was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. The rotation converged in five iterations for EI with 9 variables remaining out of 16. Goleman (1998) conceptualized emotional intelligence as a four factor structure with components as Self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management. According to this four factor model the emotional intelligence competencies should cluster into to four domains. However factor analysis of emotional intelligence in this study resulted in three components with loadings between .712 and .614. This shows that the emotional competencies that are highly significant in this study are , teamwork and collaboration, trustworthiness and Conscientiousness, optimism, initiative, emotional self awareness, self confidence, organizational awareness, accurate self assessment, and communication & conflict management.

There is a clear establishment of correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Specifically, most of the emotional intelligence competencies were significantly correlated to the transformational leadership. The self awareness competency correlated with transformational leadership except in the statement that employees are treated as individuals and their views and ideas are sought and contributions valued of idealized influence. It is worth noting that employees encouragement to achieve the university mission correlated with all the attributes of self management. The social awareness competencies significantly correlated with transformational leadership at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance. The five competencies of relationship management also correlated significantly.

Discussion

The universities clearly established a relationship exist between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. The findings are in agreement with various research studies carried out in the past . Studies conducted by Barling et al 2000 as cited by Modissor and Singh (2008) found that EI is associated with TL in three aspects idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. Analysis by Sivanathan and Fekken 2002 as cited by Modissor and Singh (2008) showed that the followers perceived leaders with high EI as more effective and transformational. They found that EI conceptually and empirically related to TL behaviours. Hence they concluded that having high EI increased one's TL behaviours.

Gardner and Stough (2002) found that leaders with a high EI component of understanding emotions were able to perceive accurately the extent to which followers' expectations can be raised. This related the TL's subcomponent of inspirational motivation. They also found that a major component individualized consideration is the capacity to understand followers' needs and interact accordingly. With emphasis on empathy and the ability to manage relationships positively, leaders having EI are likely to manifest individualized consideration. Palmer et al (2001) as cited by Modassir & Sing found that the inspirational motivation and individualized consideration components of TL are significantly correlated with the ability to both monitor and manage emotions in oneself and others.

Research by Hackett and Hortman (2008) on the relationship of emotional competencies to transformational leadership on education leaders clearly indicated that emotional competencies are related to transformational leadership. Further, Kerr, Garvin, Heaton and Boyle (2005) conducted studies on emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness which showed EI as a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness. Research carried out by Palmer, Walls, Burgess and Stough (2008) EI correlated with several components of TL suggesting it may be an important component of effective leadership. Research carried out by Naeem and Saif (2008) on the Pakistani Banking sector, empirical analyst revealed that EI is a strong predictor of service quality in case of foreign banking in Pakistan. Research by Modassir and Singh (2008) on the relationship between EI with TL and Organizational citizenship behaviour involving 57 leaders and 114 respondents found that EI of leaders enhances OCB of followers. Research carried out by Chrusciel (2006) on considerations in dealing with change decision management shows that EI may be a predictor of success, in cognitive based performance. Thus one can conclude that transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are positively related and that they affect the performance of leaders/

Conclusions and recommendations

It was also established that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. The relationship between EI and TL is most significant where organizational awareness is concerned which involves understanding emotional currents and power relationships in the university which linked all elements of TL except for trust and respect for leadership. Also influence and change catalyst is linked to all except for openness to change and new ideas.

This is followed by developing others though it does not connect with celebration of individual and team accomplishments and employees encouragement to get involved in goal setting. Emotional self awareness which involves recognition of self emotional and their effect on self and others is linked to the TL elements except for employees being treated as individuals and their views and ideas sought and contributions valued. It is also not linked to employees being encouraged to achieve the university mission. It is worth noting that at least each elements of TL showed a relationship with at least one competence of EI except for adaptability which requires working with ease within a variety of change situations and this is an individual alone display of competence.

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