Evaluation of knowledge management components in Asia

Insurance Company, Semnan province

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Abstract

The Knowledge-based era where knowledge is served as an important asset of an organization requires a different management approach to overcome organization and its staff's issues. Changing nature of organizations functions to knowledge function have led to increasing importance trend of knowledge management in organizations. Therefore, the successful organizations adopt various approaches to measure frequently knowledge generation, sharing and application rate among their staffs through various methods to achieve long-term goals of the organization. The main reasons why the organizations take advantage of the knowledge management is to acquire and share knowledge, skill training and organizational

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learning, improving communication with customers, to make competitive advantage, and so on. Asia Insurance Company is no exception, the present research assess the knowledge generation status, sharing ways and its application in staffs professional positions. It is served as a professional necessity in organizations development to taken as solemn duty of the authorities to pursue education and manpower development. This study seeks to answer the basic risen questions as following: what is the present status of knowledge generation, sharing and application in Asia Insurance Company in 2014? To what extent this status is far from the optimal situation? to implement a knowledge management system, what strategies should be adopted? The present study was conducted as descriptive and explanatory study based on survey method. The study population consisted of all staffs and managers of Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province and the survey questionnaire as a data collection tool involved 20 close-questions (5 questions related to the organizational culture and 6 on the organizational structure, 4 questions on information technology and 5 questions on the management) in standard manner.

The findings can be summarized as follow:

Organizational culture in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management
Organizational structure in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

Organizational management in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

Organizational technology in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

In general, in light of above findings it is concluded that to take advantage of this opportunity is of great importance. Certainly, in the next few years knowledge will found as integral part of whole set of organizational categories and those organizations will be success in this field which be able to provide the infrastructure required to implement the appropriate framework design.

1-Introduction

Many organizations in the past applied staffs knowledge only in order to improve individual performance and efficiency, nowadays, nonetheless organizations are trying to share all staffs knowledge in the organization level in order to meet organizations goals more and more. This in turn has led to a new approach so called knowledge management in management context. A main point on importance and knowledge management value is that knowledge management
leads to movement of technology-based economic system towards a knowledge-based society and knowledge-based economy, so that knowledge acquisition is found as one of the major factors of organizations competitive advantage. Knowledge management includes the optimum combination of process knowledge, information and creating the perfect environment for generating, sharing and applying knowledge and training human resources creative and innovative in an organization. Another definition as for knowledge management is the process of discovering, acquiring, developing, maintaining, evaluating and applying the right knowledge at the right time by the right person in the organization through Linking human resources, information technology and communication and the creation of an appropriate structure to achieve organizational goals. In recent years, knowledge management has been found as one of the most interesting and most challenging business issues and topics and its application has been beyond other management areas. Knowledge management is a process assists organizations to identify, select, organize, share important information and skills as part of the organization history and generally in unstructured manner (Hassan Beigi, 2010). Measuring knowledge generation and dissemination in large organizations which play strategic role in community is very important. Therefore, the successful organizations adopt various approaches to measure frequently knowledge generation, sharing and application rate among their staffs through various
methods to achieve long-term goals of the organization. Knowledge management is an integrated, systematic approach to identify, manage, and share all of an organization's information assets, including databases, documents, policies and procedures among others (Hassan Beigi, 2010). At the same time knowledge management is a goal-oriented and systematic application of a measure of direction and control over the tangible aiming use national and international existing organizational knowledge to lead to creation of new knowledge, innovation and progress. Knowledge Management includes a set of technologies and resources allowing transmission, generation and encoding of knowledge in modern business environments and provides organization and the evaluation of requirements and customers and suppliers communication, and supports decision-making processes, assisting forecasts, filtering and storage all organizational knowledge in knowledge template (. Shafie Nick Abadi, 2012). In this context, the present research attempts to shed lights on the KM initiatives and measuring staffs views on generation and dissemination of knowledge in Asian insurance Co in Semnan province. Keywords: knowledge management, organization, technology, decentralization, organizational culture, organizational structure
2 - Theoretical studies:

1.2- Literature Review in Iran

Rastgar (2009) studied relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management in the National Refining Company, and Daniel Denison's cultural model consisted of four components of commitment to collaboration, compatibility, adaptability and national Iranian oil products distribution. The main question risen in this research is that given the importance of knowledge management, what is the the status quo? In order to address this question, the cultural factors related to the system are discussed following evaluating mission factors and statements. To evaluate present knowledge management the basic knowledge management structure model involving eight components (The target skill, knowledge assessment, identification, knowledge acquisition, knowledge development, knowledge sharing and distribution of knowledge, application of knowledge, knowledge storage) was considered. The standard questionnaire for these two variables included knowledge management as dependent variable characterized with 21 questions and organizational culture consisted of 29 questions as independent variable. Since the best source available to answer questions was viewpoints of National Iranian Oil Refining and national Iranian oil products distribution managers, so they were selected based on random sampling.
Finally, number of 95 questionnaires consisted of two separate parts of the administrative staff i.e. division of research and combined planning with 38 and 57 questionnaires were collected respectively. Data were analyzed according to Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and data normality was approved. In light of foregoing model, hypotheses were investigated including four hypotheses i.e. one primary and four secondary ones. The Spearman correlation test was used to confirm hypotheses and significance. Then, using data multivariate analysis, the multiple correlation was found between the independent variables to explain the variance in the dependent variable e.g. knowledge management, and by calculating standardized coefficient, the net contribution of each variable in explaining the variance in knowledge management were identified and component of commitment to participation showed significant relationship in variance knowledge management and Other related component, i.e. the components of consistency, adaptability and mission were not significant and accounted for very small percentage of the variance (Rastegrari, 2,2009). Rabiee et al (2009) carried out a study titled as developing a model to implementation of knowledge management in public organizations (Case Study :Tehran Municipality). It was an applied and descriptive research. Evaluation of some indicators including structure, culture, technology, human resources, process knowledge and leadership in Tehran municipality for future knowledge management was continued by data obtained
from the questionnaire following tested by Friedman test (the highest mean). The results of this study suggest that the leadership index is in the highest priority and best position in the organization followed by human resources, structure and process technologies, respectively. Through hypothesis evaluation and test, it was found that the dominant culture in Tehran municipality is not suitable for suitable knowledge management. Non-acceptation the second hypothesis denotes on weakness in relation to the culture, so that can supporting managers and incentives to make improvements in these areas, and the importance of culture in the organization, the success of knowledge management application is warranted (Rabiei et al, 159, 2009).

2-2 literature review in other countries

MC Keen & Zack research:

This research was titled as the impact of knowledge management on organizational performance conducted by Mc Keen in 2005 from the Business School of the Crane in Canada and Zac from Business Administration in North America. In this study, the effect of knowledge management on organizational performance in 19 organizations belonged to Canada's private sector were examined. The main question raised is that how knowledge management affects organizational performance? Findings showed that there is a relation between knowledge

Another study was conducted by Gould in 2002. The aim of this study was to design a model for effective KM. His study showed that customer satisfaction has been highest contribution in market factors, organizational culture, organizational infrastructure and the ability to apply knowledge processes in knowledge management.

3- Definitions and Conception of Knowledge Management

In recent years, knowledge management has been found as one of the most interesting and most challenging business issues and topics and its application has been beyond other management areas. Knowledge management is a process assists organizations to identify, select, organize, share important information and skills as part of the organization history and generally in unstructured manner (Hassan Beigi, 2010). Davenport and Prvsak (1998) defined Knowledge Management as an attempt to do something useful with the knowledge to organizational goals through the people, technology and knowledge content, (Singeh et al, 2006). Van Kroog (1998) has pointed to Knowledge management as identifying and leveraging the collective knowledge in an organization to help the organization competitiveness (Singeh et al, 2006). Knowledge management is an integrated, systematic approach
to identify, manage, and share all of an organization's information assets, including databases, documents, policies and procedures among others (Hassan Beigi, 2010). At the same time knowledge management is a goal-oriented and systematic application of a measure of direction and control over the tangible aiming use national and international existing organizational knowledge to lead to creation of new knowledge, innovation and progress. Knowledge Management includes a set of technologies and resources allowing transmission, generation and encoding of knowledge in modern business environments and provides organization and the evaluation of requirements and customers and suppliers communication, and supports decision-making processes, assisting forecasts, filtering and storage all organizational knowledge in knowledge template (. Shafie Nick Abadi, 2012).

4-knowledge management aspects

The study conducted by "Alavi and Lydnr" (1999) to illustrates the concept of knowledge management, Three aspects appears. As for information aspect, rather than serving knowledge management as a system to conserve their knowledge, managers adopted them as a means keep track of who and how transfers it. In terms of technology, management links knowledge management to their existing technology. This technology is underpinning of organizational technologies such as datasets, intranets, and Web tools include search engines, multimedia materials
and tools for decision making as well. The Known technology capabilities include infrastructure of global information technology, database integration, interoperability of existing systems, expert systems, and a common set of web products and email. As with the culture, the authors identified organizational learning, communication and development as elements of knowledge management. Cultural features included framework and knowledge sharing, despite the fact that many technologies such as email, social settings, and the World Wide Web serve as catalyst of cultural change in the sharing of information (Wilde, 2008). Aspects of knowledge management in Figure 2.1 are plotted. Applying advanced information technology, enables organizations to benefit from their intellectual advantage (Amanati, 2002). It is believed that knowledge management is system entailing for special expertise and the expertise not found in most organizations and technology not able to do it alone. KM technologies are considered to be a single plan that will work for every organization. The reason is that complementary technologies to support knowledge management in project units are rarely available and most companies are so reliant on particular areas of the knowledge management that in case plan is fully replaced, will be indistinguishable. Unfortunately, this has led to a situation where many firms take knowledge management through sheer excess and new tools and technologies into account. In addition, most companies and more importantly their knowledgeable staffs have
made large investments in technology, the objectives and roles of knowledge management. The technology used to support knowledge management should meet the new demands (Gholinejad and Sadeg Zade 2008).

5 - Decentralization and Knowledge Management

Decentralization implies that to what extent decision-making power is spread out throughout the organization. However, centralization refers to the degree to which decision-making power is concentrated. Power distribution promotes freedom of expression. Power concentration prevents innovative solutions which can be important for knowledge creation (Lee et al, 2011). Many researchers have proven that the creation of knowledge is difficult in centralized organizations. Because the association can be achieved on organizations when there is an inter-departmental relationships preventing sharing theory. This can lead to distorted views and opinions. (Stone House and Pemberton, 1999). Within competitive environments, decentralization is necessary to obtain information about the behavior of markets and competitors allowing quick action. For these reasons, researchers insist that centralization of decision-making power should be relaxed in a knowledge-based organization. Sharing and cooperation intra-boundaries, inter-organization and among organizational processes can be facilitated if organizational structures are designed for flexibility (Lee et al, 2011). Learning
culture: a learning culture is defined as the degree to which organizations learn through different means such as: education, training and counseling, encourage. All organizational learning is based on individual learning that occurs in human brains (Lee et al, 2011). The emphasis on individual learning leads to an increasing expectation on knowledge creation in organizations. Therefore, the Organizations must focus on individual learning and collaborative learning to improve organizational performance through learning (Hausman and DeWitt, 2003).

6-Knowledge management and Technology

For some authors, information management is the same knowledge management and it over time this theory loses its supporters and given hierarchy, ((data-Information-Knowledge)) and importance and role of each and other unfortunate experiences in relation to managing information is obtained regardless of the organizational structure and culture (Afrizah, 2011). Knowledge management is much beyond the just technology, but undoubtedly ((knowledge Technology)) is a part of knowledge management. The important point is that knowledge management issues typically cannot be solved using technology solutions. The results of a survey showed that the main knowledge management issue ((changing people behavior)) and the biggest barrier to knowledge transfer ((Culture)) will be very limited. The highest value of technology in knowledge management is
increased availability and speed of knowledge transmission. Information technology enables the eliciting of knowledge from scholars minds. The technology can be used integrate them in the form of regular frameworks and transfer it to internal users and commercial partners. Technology helps knowledge encoding and sometimes knowledge creation. Application of technology in the process of implicit to implicit knowledge, is the most common way by which tacit knowledge is formed and be shared through face to face meetings and shared experiences and usually occurs informally. The simultaneous meetings at a time rather than a substitute for face to face meetings complement conferences internal voices and current cooperative systems. another tool to share this type of knowledge is to use space systems specific expert. Using technology to reveal an implicit knowledge process: Given experience Nonaka, tacit knowledge to explicit conversion including a common intellectual framework and then study and scrutiny through dialogue including information and communication technology tools that can help in this area used include simultaneous databases are another potential tool to absorb implicit knowledge. When the implicit knowledge was perceived and interpreted, converting it into explicit knowledge, its acquirement in permanent form, such as reports, email and web page providing accessibility in all organizations. In fact, technology is involved style in capturing knowledge by creating electronic documents which is easily accessible via the web, e-mail or a
document management system in shareable manner. Outcome of development of knowledge capture technology is that it helps improving people's motivation. This technology association with the reduction of barriers and the creation of electronic documents and giving the perfect tool for searching strengthen incentives.

7-Trust and Knowledge Management

Knowledge can be a source of strength, as it allows different hierarchical positions in the organization (Lee et al, 2011). Thus, knowledge sharing may endanger the employees hierarchy positions since they can lose their competitiveness in organizations (Hindez and P. phefer, 2003). High trust may help reduce the risk of losing the competition for knowledge sharing. Trust is defined as keeping mutual belief in terms of behavior and intentions (Lee et al, 2011). As knowledge sharing within an organization can increase a person's risk for loss of competitive success, lack of confidence is main barrier to knowledge transfer. Trust can may alleviate the fear and risk of knowledge sharing in turn leads to disadvantages in competing staffs. When people communicate with the highest level of trust more likely tend to participate in knowledge sharing and social interaction (O'Dell 1999). Efforts to increase trust among organizational members is essential for knowledge transfer. Because mistrust encourages employees should keep their knowledge secret recourse.
So, fostering trust among members in the performance or the International Organization is the foundation for knowledge creation (Lee et al, 2011).

8 Corporation and knowledge management

Corporation is defined as a circle in which people to work together in a group actively to assist together. When people are willing to share information and knowledge, knowledge management entails for an effective and common culture (Gould et al, 2001). Organizations emphasize on reflective and supportive communication and are purposeful to foster interaction among organizational members and share their different perspectives. Common culture affects knowledge as positive knowledge creation through increased communication and exchange. For example, knowledge is important to make explicit knowledge when staffs share practical experience and knowledge. Corporation is a common understanding of the internal and external collaboration through communication and exchange of individual manufacturers. Cooperation in research, development, technology, transferring and sharing knowledge arises in communities based on important technologically in inter-organizational relationships. Many studies have proved that cooperation is a key determinant for knowledge transferring process (Lee et al, 2011).
9- Knowledge management and organizational performance

The relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance in some definitions of knowledge management is denoted implicitly. Assuming that knowledge management is needed to store the knowledge to develop organizational performance, probably derived from the fact that researchers have different perspectives on the impact of knowledge on organizational performance (Singeh et al, 2006). In terms of the knowledge-based view, the positive relationship between knowledge and practice is emphasized. It is expected that a certain level of knowledge that is valuable, rare, inimitable and non-exchangeable, resulting in a performance (Barney, 1991), on the other side of the discussion, the authors do not see a direct relationship between knowledge and performance. Always organizations can gain knowledge that may not lead to intelligent behavior (Singeh et al, 2006). This viewpoint is complemented by the description of Leonard (1992) characterized with a rigid core with respect to the embedding depth knowledge of how the previous innovation. Arthur (1989) substantiated increasing returns laws and uncertain relationship between knowledge and performance protection. Empirical studies supported a direct effect of knowledge on the performance (Singeh et al, 2006). Vera & Crossan stated that the results obtained from these studies is not that more knowledge, the bigger and better performance is, but the knowledge that may be linked may impose unknown
impact on organizational performance. It assumes that organizational knowledge management (knowledge management) had a positive impact on organizational performance. A careful literature review indicates that only a small number of papers trying to assess the relationship between knowledge management and performance (Vera & Crossan 2003). The paper published in the field of knowledge management, and most of them lack conceptual foundations of the theory. Chakravarthy et al (2003) pointed out that knowledge management may influence organizational performance negatively. The authors stated that there are three knowledge management processes. Knowledge accumulation and storage (actions through which the organization acquires a new understanding and support the activities of an organization to maintain the proprietary nature of knowledge) and leveraging knowledge (activities to use existing knowledge for commercial terminal). While each of these processes is important, it is possible that these knowledge management processes, interact together (Chakravarty et al, 2003).

10-Research Methodology

The present study was conducted as descriptive and explanatory study based on survey method. The study population consisted of all staffs and managers of Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province and the survey questionnaire as a data collection tool. To measure reliability, Cronbach alpha was used to calculate the
internal consistency of the instrument used evaluate various attributes. To calculate alpha coefficient variance of questionnaire scores for each subset and total variance should be calculated. The alpha coefficient is calculated using the following formula:

\[ r_\alpha = \frac{J}{J-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} s_j^2}{S^2}\right) \]

Where

- J = Number of subsets in questionnaire questions or test
- \( s_j^2 \) = variance of jth subtest
- \( S^2 \) = Total questionnaire variance

Therefore, in order to measure reliability, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS SPSS18. For this purpose, initial samples of 30 questionnaires were pre-tested among the target population.

Then using the data obtained from the questionnaire and SPSS software, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is calculated. If the amount is more than 70%, it indicates that the questionnaire used is reliable where Cronbach alpha reliability was 0.830.
11 Descriptive Statistics

Using frequency tables and frequency percent of descriptive indicators we describe the components of the research.

Table 1 shows the genera distribution of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cumulative percent</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above table, 70.3 and 29.7 percent of participants were found to be female and male respectively.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents according to work experience
As results of the above table showed, on average respondents had work experience between 10-20 years.

**Table 3** - Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents in terms of education level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table suggests that the majority of respondents, 43.2% had degree lower than bachelor's degree and 35.1% B.s.c and 21.6% accounted for higher degree.

12 descriptive data expression

Table 1 shows that scores related to variable organizational culture was 3.32 and 3.4 respectively, hence mean and median is greater than 3 which is up to expected value.

Table 4: Mean and median of organizational culture
Table 2 shows that scores 3.06 and 3.16, are related to variable organizational structure hence mean and median scores of 3 would be a much higher than expected mean.

Table 5: Mean and Median of organizational structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3,06</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,16</td>
<td>median</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that scores related to technology are 2.91 and 3 2.91 so it is less than 3 lower than expected value.

Table 6: Mean and Median of technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2,91</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>median</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows that scores related to technology are 2.87 and 3 so it is less than 3 lower than expected value and median is 3 equals to expected median.

Table 7: Mean and median of Variable Management

13 Testing Hypotheses

1-hypothesis 1

To investigate this hypothesis, the binomial method is used. Output from the SPSS software shows that more than 40% responses were related to the average of the higher than options. In other words, it is simply noted that Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province in terms of organizational culture is ready to establish knowledge management.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16/37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The responses less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22/37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>The responses more than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2-Hypothesis 2

To investigate this hypothesis, the binomial method is used. Result from the SPSS software shows that more than 40% responses were related to the average of the higher than options. In other words, it is simply noted that Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province in terms of organizational structure is ready to establish knowledge management.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>The responses less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>The responses more than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3-hypothesis 3

To investigate this hypothesis, the binomial method is used. Result from the SPSS software shows that less than 0.4% responses were related to the average of the higher than options. In other words, it is simply noted that Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province in terms of organizational structure is not able to establish knowledge management.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>The responses less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>The responses more than average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4-hypothesis 4

To investigate this hypothesis, the binomial method is used. Result from the SPSS software shows that less than 0.4% responses were related to the average of the
higher than options. In other words, it is simply noted that Asia Insurance Company in Semnan province in terms of preparing management is not able to establish knowledge management.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14/37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>The responses less than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>The responses more than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14- Concluding Remarks and Future Perspectives

Organizational culture in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management
Organizational structure in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

Organizational management in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

Organizational technology in the Asia Insurance Company has potential to establish knowledge management

The third hypothesis test indicated that the Asian insurance company in terms of technology has not desirable condition and given increasing advances in computer systems, management software for large enterprises in the selection and implementation of infrastructure and implementation of software systems need much more cares. Because it is complex and it is even more important than performance and a mistake may cause to company suffered heavy losses, including the loss of time and fall behind competitors so that through selecting right system and infrastructure costs be several years ahead in the Information Technology. first, companies need to select the appropriate application process to detect and recognize system needs and The future volume growth in the foreseeable manner according to the initial data volume such that after the transition of the current system and the implementation of the new system growth in the coming years
should be in top need for hardware upgrades. Hence, principles of standard election for information volume and geographical distribution should be taken into account.

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