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Social media agility, customer engagement, and organizational reputation

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the influence of SMA and customer engagement (CE) on OR, and the effect of CE mediation on the relationship between SMA and OR. The relationship is studied with the theory of dynamic capability views. A research hypothesis was developed. This research method uses a quantitative descriptive approach. The sample frame is 130 respondents from private universities in Denpasar City, Indonesia, who use e-learning and social media. The data was processed using SmartPLS 4 to test the proposed hypothesis. The results of this study show a significant positive relationship between high school, CE, and college OR. The results of the study also showed that CE fully mediated the relationship between SMA and OR. This research provides practical implications that allow organizations, especially colleges, to develop strategies and reap the benefits of high school and customer engagement (CE) to gain an organization's reputation. Previously, there had been no attempt to measure the influence of media agility and customer engagement (CE) on an organization's reputation. The novelty of this study is that it provides empirical information about customer engagement and organizational reputation, as well as the role of social media agility. The results of the study helped university managers design social media agility strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Companies have tried to find the best combination of resources in many sectors. Internal and external seize new business opportunities and utilize them efficiently to increase competitiveness. Organizational reputation serves as a reference point for company performance and efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of market incidents (Jeon and Nolan, 2024), stimulating customer attitudes and behaviors towards the company (Jung and Hur, 2024). Companies need to strengthen their reputation. An organization's reputation (OR) is a perception of its past actions, describing its attractiveness to all key constituents compared to major competitors. OR is a reference point for evaluating the company's performance.

To achieve the company's reputation goals, the growing social media marketing with traditional business strategies has become inevitable. Academics (Crammond et al., 2018) found that entrepreneurs in developed countries, such as the UK, use social media agility (SMA) within the knowledge ecosystem to achieve sustainable organizational growth.
It is noteworthy that SMA is included in the scope of capabilities, implying a company with strategic foresight, insights, information, and telecommunications competencies. It also demonstrates internal and external response competencies related to its social media activities inside and outside the organization (Babatunde, 2021). Companies increasingly use social media (Crammond et al., 2018; Tong & Chan, 2020) to strengthen their reputation (Boateng, 2015) and create customer service and competitive advantage. Social media agility involves detecting and addressing customer needs and changes in the social media environment (Gligor and Bozkurt, 2021). It manifests as an organization interacting with individuals who positively affect the company's brand (Lim et al., 2020). With increasing digitalization, marketing professionals are increasingly adopting social media agility (SMA) as a strategic tool to connect with customers and wider stakeholders for reputation enhancement.

In previous empirical studies, many have highlighted the failure of managers to build a strong reputation and maximize company performance, as well as their inability to identify the factors that improve the company's reputation. As a result, many organizations lose old customers and fail to attract new ones. The organization fails to improve the company's reputation.
On the other hand, the impact of social media agility in the face of fierce competition is relatively low. This is because the agile use of social media is not balanced with efforts to manage customer-company relationships. Mereka tidak dapat mengidentifikasi perubahan permintaan dan peluang pasar. The research results on the impact of high school remain unclear, and existing literature and managerial guidelines may be unreliable. The theoretical arguments and empirical evidence supporting the position of SMA's relationship with OR remain vague, making it difficult to understand the causality between SMA and OR.
Furthermore, the marketing management literature recognizes the relationship of social media as a strategic tool with customer engagement (CE) (Lee et al., 2020). Evidence has shown that the intensity of social media use can be strategically leveraged to engage effectively in dialogue with customers, thereby building merek_pelanggan relationships (Lim et al., 2020). A customer-centric approach is suggested to build a long-term and sustainable competitive advantage (Choi & Burnham, 2021). CE represents the company's and the customer's efforts at every stage, demonstrating enterprise-based and customer-based participation (Sashi et al., 2019).

This study aims to investigate SMA, CE, and OR in one comprehensive model. There are several reasons why this research is vital to carry out. While acknowledging the importance of social media agility for companies, it fails to reach a definitive consensus on the proper relationship between social media and reputation. There is still a lack of empirical research investigating the impact of social media use among organizations (Ainin et al., 2015), which often struggles to compete effectively due to cost, interactivity, and trust in the SM platform. Thus, this study expands the framework on market-driven corporate capabilities by using SMA to improve organizational reputation. The importance of this research lies in the strategic adoption of social media, combined with CE and OR research, which is expected to advance understanding of these underexplored relationships. Second, although a company's reputation attracts much attention, empirical studies do not detail the actual effects of social media. These platforms often struggle to compete effectively due to cost, interactivity, and reliance on social media to strengthen an organization's reputation. Furthermore, company-customer relationship management has emerged as an option for fostering long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between buyers and sellers. Third, no research has explored how social media agility affects CE and organizational reputation. Using the theory of reasoned action, this study builds a social media-based corporate reputation model (Hamid et al., 2022). Therefore, we ask whether social media agility, in the context of relationship management, affects customer engagement and organizational reputation. We conceptualize the construct and explore the causal relationship to answer this research question.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational reputation

An organizational reputation is a very valuable intangible asset. A company's online social media activities benefit the company's reputation (Goldring, 2014). On the other hand, advertising on social media builds a company's reputation, fostering an attitude and consumer behavioral response. Ads that show concern for customers make users satisfied and encourage them to recommend to friends and relatives (Boateng and Okoe, 2015). Organizational reputation is represented by stakeholders' perceptions of past actions and prospects, reflecting its attractiveness to key constituents compared to major competitors. This concept refers to a set of attributes in an observer's collective assessment of a company, based on the judgment of the company's actions over time (Agyabeng-Mensah et al., 2022; Jeon, 2024).

Social media agility

Today, Communication practitioners recognize social media agility (SMA) as integrating technology with various applications, functions, and content production. Interactivity is related to the effectiveness of public relations (Tong and Chan, 2020). SMA reflects the ability of communication, transactional, and useful functions to build business relationships that utilize customer and prospect networks to promote value co-creation. SMA is the organization's overall ability to understand market opportunities and threats. On social media, customer needs—expressed and latent (or undisclosed)—can be sought and identified more comprehensively than in traditional contexts, supporting companies' strategies to develop highly innovative products and services for a competitive advantage. Social media agility is demonstrated by the speed with which companies identify, detect environmental changes, and respond to these changing consumer needs.

Customer engagement

Customer management policies have been recognized as a marketing strategy that strengthens customer engagement. This concept refers to the psychological condition and level of interaction and connection between the customer and the focal object (e.g., brand) within the service relationship, creating utilitarian value (Yang et al., 2023). According to the management literature, CE occurs based on experience and the customer's connection with a focus object (e.g., brand) related to the product and/or service (Li, 2022). Today, companies are allocating resources to develop customer engagement beyond separate company-customer transactions. Along with technological developments, companies are shifting promotional resources from traditional media to digital social media (Santini et al., 2020).

Hypothesis development

Since its discovery, users have widely accepted social media platforms, and many companies are revising their communication strategies. The features of online social media platforms allow for agile two-way (or multi-directional) communication, characterized by freedom, control, and user dialogue. Social media is an advertising tool that provides product and service information, making it an important determinant of consumer attitudes and behaviors. On the other hand, customer engagement is a mental condition and a cognitive, affective, and behavioral activity evoked by brand-related consumer interactions and experiences, particularly those involving the brand or customer interaction in focus. Social media agility affects customer engagement (Gligor dan Bozkurt 2021). According to studies by Lee et al. (2020), engaging customers on social media platforms in US hospital services improves the consumer experience. Yang et al. (2023) added that perceived social media value is expected to influence customer response and engagement. *H1. The agility of social media has a positive effect on customer engagement*.

A willingness to listen to social communication on social media can provide valuable results for reputation management. The speed at which customers need to be identified, how quickly they detect changes in the environment, and how quickly the company responds all reflect social media agility (Gligor and Bozkurt, 2021). Research with survey design in Ghana shows that consumer attitudes towards social media advertising are significantly related to an organization's reputation (Boateng dan Okoe. Organizations can use communication strategies with agility on social media to enhance their electronic reputation (e-reputation) (Dutot, 2016). The more social media channels used for customer service, the higher the organization's reputation score. The quality of social media information directly influences trust and reputation (Hamid et al., 2022). *H2. Social media agility has a positive effect on organizational reputation.*

An organization's reputation encourages individuals to pursue behaviors that support the company and promote cooperation. On the other hand, social media facilitates customer engagement, connection efforts, and interaction to foster customer commitment and loyalty (Sashi et al., 2019). Strategies and initiatives to develop customer engagement encourage customers to become more loyal, maintain relationships more cost-effectively, and recommend more businesses, thereby increasing the company's profitability in the long run. Having the opportunity to engage intensely and positively with brands improves the organization's reputation. From this perspective, value creation and customer engagement contribute to a stronger reputation for the company (Baber, 2023; Royo-vela, 2024). *H3. Customer engagement has a positive impact on o*rganizational reputation

A positive attitude towards the sustainable use of social media platforms manifests customer engagement. Attitudes towards social media, image, and social media usage already consider these sites essential and beneficial, making customers more likely to continue engaging with these platforms (Hussein and Hassan, 2017). Furthermore, creating shared value in educational services (Survilaite et al., 2024), which reflects customer engagement, reinforces the organization's reputation. In addition, the company's reputation provides feedback on the cooperative attitude between customers and the company (Jung and Hur, 2024) and positive financial performance (Jeon and Nolan, 2024). *H4: Customer engagement mediates the relationship between SMA and an organization's reputation.*

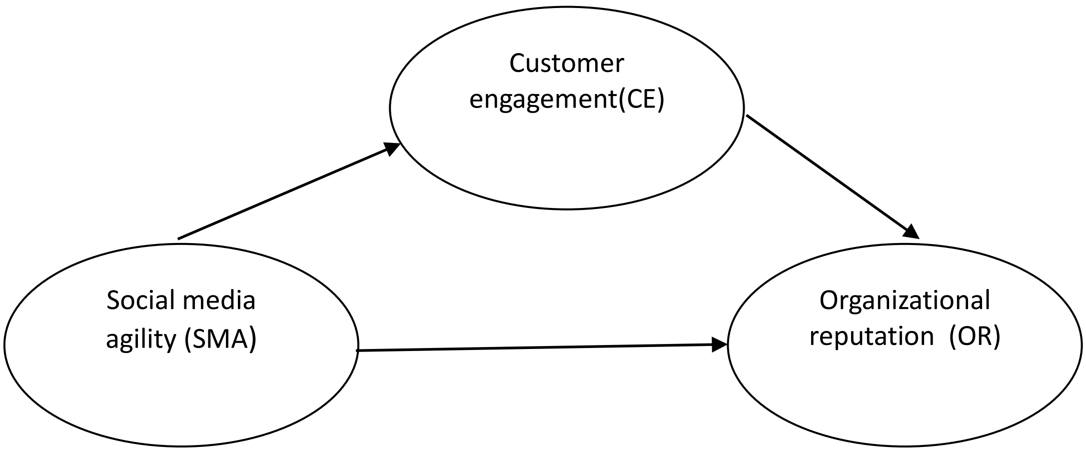

Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

We applied a quantitative approach to test the hypothesis and explore the correlation between social media agility and corporate reputation through customer engagement.

3.1 Population and sample

The research population is students who use social media. In Indonesia, e-learning at universities has grown rapidly since the internet became widespread and restrictions on people were imposed when COVID-19 hit the world. The research sample was obtained using a random sampling procedure to reach the target sample. The research participants are seventh-semester students of private universities who have used services at private university campuses in Denpasar City, Bali, Indonesia.

3.2 Data collection

We used survey methods to collect data by distributing face-to-face questionnaires and conducting face-to-face interviews, in harmony with the culture in Bali. Three research assistants helped distribute the questionnaire. Students are invited to take part in the survey. Before sharing the questionnaire with customers (students), the research assistant asked if they had seen a college ad on Instagram (IG). The self-filled survey questionnaire is only given to those who answered "Yes" and are willing to participate in the survey. This approach has been followed by previous studies (Gligor and Bozkurt, 2021). Furthermore, statement items were measured using the Likert scale, which assesses respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the social media advertising phenomenon.

The questionnaire is distributed and returned directly to the researcher. The data collection period is July-August 2025. An invitation letter to participate in this study has been submitted to the respondents. In total, we received 200 survey responses. However, some incomplete responses were answered, so 130 questionnaire responses were tabulated and further analyzed, revealing that the proportion of key respondents consisted of men (55.8%) and women (44.2%). In addition, it was revealed that 76.3% of respondents spent less than 6.5 hours per day on social media, while 23.7% spent more than 6.5 hours per day.

Measurement items

The first part of the questionnaire contains information related to demographics, and the second part includes the measurement items of each construct. Social media agility measurement items were modified from previous research instruments (Baber, 2023; Gligor and Bozkurt, 2021) to match the current research, resulting in 3 items. Customer engagement measurement items are based on research (Yang et al., 2023) and include a total of 5 measurement items, such as "I am enthusiastic about accessing the organization's website" and "I am intensely interacting with the brand". The items used to measure a company's reputation are adapted from research by Agyabeng-Mensah et al. (2022). The organization's reputation measurement is five items, such as "I say positive things about the organization's image to others." Participants were asked to agree on statements related to perceptions of social media agility, perceptions of customer engagement, and organizational reputation on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

Statistical Analysis

The main benefit of PLS is that it does not require normally distributed data and supports smaller sample sizes for analysis. The statistical technique used is inferential statistics to evaluate hypotheses using PLS software, consisting of two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Measurement Models

This study modeled the measurement model with reflective indicators using PLS using SmartPLS 4.0 software. To ensure model suitability, we investigated internal consistency reliability, namely construct reliability and validity, which includes outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability (CR).

The convergent validity test can be checked by looking at the factor loading value for each construction indicator. Table I and Figure 1 show the payload values for each item. And all indicators meet their loading objectives in their respective constructions, with a value range from 0.702 to 0.895. To ensure the validity of the indicator, the loading factor must be greater than 0.70. Convergent validity is observed from AVE values with a recommended threshold of 0.50. Furthermore, AVE exceeds the 0.5 limit for all variables, indicating that all constructs meet the valid requirements convergently (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, the convergent validity of the constructs is checked by checking the values for average variance extracted (AVE).
In addition, a measurement model must have internal consistency and reliability. The model's measurements were evaluated by observing Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability (CR). Apparently, each construct's Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values exceeded the threshold value of 0.70, indicating evidence of the reliability of the measurements used (see Table I).

Table I: Measurement model (Factor loading, validity, and reliability)

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	CR
Social media agility	SMA1	0.895	0.624	0.722	0.857
	SMA2	0.702			
	SMA3	0.760			
Customer engagement	CE1	0.885	0.657	0.872	0.904
	CE2	0.789			
	CE3	0.783			
	CE4	0.824			
	CE5	0.768			
Organizational reputation	OR1	0.770	0.659	0.872	0.891
	OR2	0.824			
	OR3	0.807			
	OR4	0.890			
	OR5	0.759			

Note(s): SMA=social media agility; CE=customer engagement; OR=organizational reputation

CR and Cronbach values α greater than 0.70 have internal consistency (see Table 1). Similarly, the reliability of the indicator is checked by analyzing the factor's loading value. Overall, the results in Table 1 show that loading, internal consistency, and convergent validity have corresponding values.

Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criteria are used to ascertain the validity of the discriminator. In this study, the validity of the discriminator was evaluated through the assessment of the Fornell-Larcker criteria. In Tables II and III, we present the results of discriminant validity. The validity of the discriminator was according to the Fornell–Larcker criteria, and all HTMT values were lower than 0.9. These results allow us to continue statistical analysis to assess the structural model. These results allow us to continue statistical analysis to assess the structural model.

Table II: Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criteria)

Constructs	Customer engagement (1)	Organizational reputation (2)	Social media agility (3)
Customer engagement (1)	*0.811*		
Organizational reputation (2)	0.721	*0.812*	
Social media agility (3)	0.464	0.533	*0.790*

Table III shows that the HTMT between different latent factor pairs was lower than the cutoff level (0.85), which provides additional evidence of discriminatory validity (Henseler et al., 2015; Truong et al., 2024).

Table III: Discriminant validity: heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	Customer Engagement	Organizational Reputation	Social Media Agility
Customer Engagement			
Organizational Reputation	0.750		
Social Media Agility	0.482	0.559	

Note(s): The square root values of AVE were in italic

Source(s): Created by the authors

Structural Model Evaluation

The following sub-section evaluates the validity of the structural model by analyzing the determination coefficient (R^2) and the path coefficient. The β value determines the magnitude of the variance of the dependent variable, which is then explained by the independent variable. Greater R2 values result in better predictive capabilities of structural models. The R2 of the CE variable is 0.215, suggesting that the SMA construct can explain 21.5 percent of the variance in customer engagement. The rest was contributed by other variables outside of this study model.

Furthermore, the OR variable shows an R2 of 0.570, which indicates that these two constructs can explain 57.0 percent of the variance of the organization's reputation. Together, social media agility (SMA) and customer engagement (CE) explain 57% of the variance in organizational reputation (OR). In summary, the results show that an adequate level of variance (R2) is described by the dependent variable, thus indicating medium and high predictive power.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2 and the illustration in Table IV, the empirical results found that the relationship between SMA and CE (β=0.464, P-value$\leq$0.05) is positive, supporting H1. Table IV illustrates the relationship between SMA and OR (β=0.253, $p < 0.05$). Empirical results found that SMA was significantly positively correlated with OR, supporting H2. Furthermore, Table IV illustrates the relationship between CE and OR ($\beta = 0.604$, $p < 0.05$), which is significantly positively correlated, supporting H3. Finally, Table IV shows the positive relationship between social media and organizational reputation with customer engagement mediation (β = 0,280, p < 0,05), supporting H4. Thus, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported. Our research has explored social media, customer engagement, and organizational reputation in a comprehensive model, thereby enriching management literature.

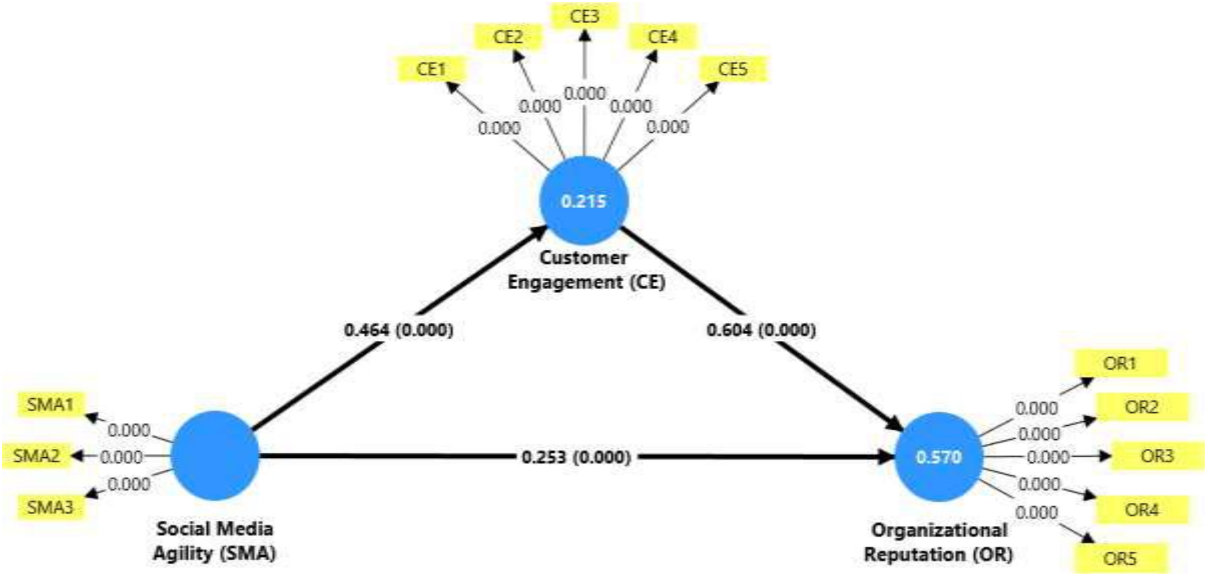

Figure 2. Structural Model Evaluation

Table IV: Path coefficient (Results of the structural model)

Path relationships	Beta	T statistics	P-value	Decision	R^2
H1: SMA→ CE	0.464	8.727	0.000	Significant	0.215
H2: SMA→ OR	0.253	5.000	0.000	Significant	0.570
H3: CE → OR	0.604	12.489	0.000	Significant	
H4: SMA → CE → OR	0.280	7.968	0.000	Significant	

Note(s): SMA=social media agility; CE=customer engagement; OR=organizational reputation

Since the hypothesis leads to a positive outcome, a one-sided test, specifically the right side with α=0.05, is used. The hypothesis is considered significant if the statistical value is greater than 1.65 or the p-value is less than 0.05. If the t-value is greater than 1.65 (*p < 0.05).

Source: Author's own creation

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

Social media agility and customer engagement

The correlation coefficient is β=0.464, and the t-statistical value is 8.72, greater than the t-table value of 1.65. It has a p-value of 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating that H1 is accepted. These results show that SMA positively and significantly affects customer engagement. These findings validate hypothesis 1, which states that SMA positively and substantially influences CE. Findings support previous research (Gligor and Bozkurt, 2021; Lee, 2020; Yang et al., 2023). Yang et al. (2023) argue that improving the psychological condition of the customer allows them to engage with the company to create shared value and enhance the customer experience.

The influence of social media agility on organizational reputation

The coefficient of the SMA and OR pathways is β=0.253. The t-statistical value is 5.000, greater than the t-table value of 1.65. It has a p-value of 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating that H2 is accepted. These findings mean that SMA is positive and significantly affects OR. These results show that the better the SMA, the stronger the organization's reputation. The results of our research are consistent with those of Boateng and Okoe (2015), which state that advertising on social media contributes to consumer attitudes and company reputation. The results validate hypothesis 2: when high school students are satisfied, they speak positively about the organization to others. Communication strategies on social media can affect an organization's reputation.

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The effect of customer engagement on an organization's reputation
The value of the correlation coefficient is β=0,604. The t-statistical value is 12.489, greater than the t-table value of 1.65. The p-value is 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating that H3 is accepted. This means customer engagement is positive and significantly affects the organization's reputation. The findings of this study align with Baber's (2023), which state that when customer engagement increases, the company's employees strive to treat customers with care and kindness. Increased customer engagement on websites and e-commerce tends to create an organization's reputation.

The relationship between social media and an organization's reputation, as mediated by customer engagement variables, is positive and significant.
The value of the correlation coefficient is β=0.280. The t-statistical value is 7.968, greater than the t-table value of 1.65. The p-value is 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating that H4 is acceptable.
This study is the first to explore the relationship between high school, CE, and organizational reputation. First, social media agility is a key factor in influencing an organization's reputation, which has been overlooked in previous research. Second, the study found social media agility indirectly correlated with an organization's reputation through customer engagement. With managerial implications, this research can guide college (e.g., university) marketing practitioners and marketing consultants in managing social media marketing. Decision-makers, such as college leaders, can create programs using social media and technology to enhance customer engagement in creating shared value, thereby impacting the organization's reputation. Therefore, leaders should focus on SMA, which will affect users' willingness to create shared value and build reputation.

Limitations of the study
This research focuses only on students; that is, it is homogeneous. The larger sample provides a more general picture of the effects of social media agility as a marketing strategy. Limitations: our research is limited to just one country; Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other countries. In the future, expanding research to Asian countries (e.g., Malaysia and Vietnam) focusing on consumer trust variables will be the direction of future research.

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