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POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES AND THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION TO REACH YOUNG VOTERS (QUALITATIVE STUDY ON DPRD CANDIDATES IN HULU SUNGAI UTARA REGENCY)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the political communication strategies implemented by young parliamentary candidates, especially the millennial generation, in reaching young voters in the 2024 Election in Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. The method used is descriptive qualitative with direct observation approaches, in-depth interviews, document studies, and participatory observations. The results of the study show that millennial parliamentary candidates utilize mass and digital media, such as social media and mobile devices, as the main means to reach young voters. The uses and gratifications theory emphasizes that millennials actively choose media that suits their needs, making digital media the main instrument in political communication. However, major challenges arise from low historical literacy and the prevalence of fake news (hoaxes), which can damage the credibility of candidates and parties. To overcome these obstacles, a community-based strategy is needed, both physically and online, to build trust through offline discussions and positive literacy. With this approach, millennial candidates are expected to be able to convince young voters of their ability to bring change and progress in regional development.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Millennial Generation, Youth Election

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi komunikasi politik yang diterapkan oleh calon parlemen muda, khususnya generasi milenial, dalam meraih pemilih muda pada Pemilu 2024 di Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Utara. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan observasi langsung, wawancara mendalam, studi dokumen, dan observasi partisipatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa calon parlemen milenial memanfaatkan media massa dan digital, seperti media sosial dan perangkat handphone, sebagai sarana utama untuk menjangkau pemilih muda. Teori uses and gratifications menegaskan bahwa generasi milenial secara aktif memilih media yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan mereka, menjadikan media digital sebagai instrumen utama dalam komunikasi politik. Namun, tantangan besar muncul dari rendahnya literasi sejarah dan maraknya berita bohong (hoaks), yang dapat merusak kredibilitas calon dan partai. Untuk mengatasi hambatan ini, diperlukan strategi berbasis komunitas, baik secara fisik maupun online, guna membangun kepercayaan melalui diskusi offline dan literasi positif. Dengan pendekatan tersebut, calon milenial diharapkan dapat meyakinkan pemilih muda akan kemampuan mereka membawa perubahan dan kemajuan dalam pembangunan daerah.

Kata Kunci : Strategi Komunikasi, Generasi Milenial, Pemilihan Muda



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INTRODUCTION

Young voters currently play an important role in determining the direction of politics in Indonesia, including in Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. Based on data submitted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, the total population of Hulu Sungai Utara Regency in 2023 is 234.52 thousand people consisting of the millennial generation and the strawberry generation reaching a proportion of 67.645 thousand people from the total. The number of registered permanent voters is 168,603 people. Of the existing number of permanent voters, 57% are young voters, this shows that around 96,104 people are voters from the millennial group.¹

The millennial generation is known to be critical, dynamic,² and very close to technological developments such as social media and the like³ is a very potential group to be embraced. However, reaching this community group is not an easy job. The right communication approach is needed so that political messages can be well received by them.

The communication process according to Suprapto is the delivery of information or messages transmitted by the sender of the message as a symbol for the recipient of the message as the communicator. The main essence of this procedure is an effort to achieve mutual understanding between the two parties involved in the interaction.⁴

The term millennial generation has become a widely accepted term. The roots of this term can be traced to two famous American historians and authors, William Strauss and Neil Howe. 5 Among other names that encompass this concept are "Generation Me" or "Echo Boomers", which refer to the same entity as the millennial generation or what is often referred to as generation Y. The millennial generation according to Strauss and Howe is a group of people who started their lives in the early decades of the twenty-first century. However, this message is not only valid in Indonesia, but has spread throughout the world. The identity of this generation, often referred to as generation Y, is characterized by a deep attachment to the world of technology. In this context, they can take on the role of Generation Y or the Smart Generation who are the driving force of the nation's movement.

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¹ Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Utara, "Statistik Daerah Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Utara 2024," diakses 13 Januari 2025, https://hulusungaiutarakab.bps.go.id/id/publication/2024/12/30/31c347a4004b7239a4b4a917/statistik-daerah-kabupaten-hulu-sungai-utara-2024.html.

² Ayuningtias Yarun dan Nur Aeni Khayati, "Relevansi Pendidikan Kritis Dengan Metode Pengajaran Ibnu Khaldun Pada Generasi Milenial," *Al Ghazali* 1, no. 2 (31 Desember 2018): 103–27.

³ Amar Ahmad dan Nurhidaya Nurhidaya, "Media Sosial Dan Tantangan Masa Depan Generasi Milenial," *Avant Garde* 8, no. 2 (18 Desember 2020): 134–48, https://doi.org/10.36080/ag.v8i2.1158.

⁴ Tommy Suprapto, Filsafat dan Teori Komunikasi: sebuah pengantar teori, konsep dan filsafat komunikasi (Jakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), h. 10.

⁵ Neil Howe and William Strauss, Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation (United States of America: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2009), p. 20.

⁶ Howe and Strauss, p. 20.

Based on the very large population of young voters in Indonesia, political parties certainly face their own challenges in building communication channels by prioritizing effectiveness and efficiency comprehensively. Communication channels or media like this are how political parties can maximize their function to approach and educate the millennial generation, who will be potential voters in the 2024 Election.⁷

Several political parties clearly target young people in Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. In fact, the party claims that 30% of its cadres are Millennials. In addition, young people also participate in the process of selecting legislative candidates. In Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, Democrats and Golongan Karya are developing party support that involves young people.⁸

On the other hand, young legislative candidates bring new hope with an age that is not too far from the millennial generation, they have a great opportunity to build closer relationships with young voters. These young legislative candidates are considered more capable of understanding the aspirations of millennials, both in terms of education, technology, and job opportunities. However, their success is not only based on age, but also on the political communication strategies they use.

Given their strategic role as the successors to the development of the Indonesian nation, the large population of the millennial generation is crucial. Considering this number, the role played by the millennial generation will be very important in determining both current and future political conditions. In other words, the millennial generation plays a vital role in ensuring the success and progress of democracy at the local and national levels. The types of communication used by the millennial generation are evolving because of their relationship with digital information and communication.⁹

The urgency that is a problem for the millennial generation as legislative candidates is the fact that candidates from political parties are currently viewed negatively by the public because they bring political practices such as "deviation", "fraud", and "political corruption" into their parties. In addition, the concerning performance of previous legislative institutions has eroded public trust, causing low public participation in legislative contests. Furthermore, young voters from the millennial generation are still plagued by apathy towards the world of politics, and the millennial generation in Indonesia is not yet accustomed to political dynamics. So, the millennial generation believes that political parties are still controlled by political elites who feel unable to embrace young

⁷ Nina Andriana, "Pandangan Partai Politik Terhadap Media Sosial Sebagai Salah Satu Alat Komunikasi Politik Untuk Mendekati Pemilih Muda (Gen Y Dan Z): Studi Kasus PDI-P Dan PSI," *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* 19, no. 1 (2022): 51–66.

⁸ Ahrujani, Ketua DPD Partai Golkar Kab. Hulu Sungai Utara, Wawancara Pribadi, 30 Oktober 2023.
⁹ Diah Fatma Sjoraida dkk., "Sosialisasi Dan Literasi Politik Bagi Generasi Milenial Jawa Barat," *J-ABDI: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 2, no. 9 (28 Januari 2023): 6079–86, https://doi.org/10.53625/jabdi.v2i9.4821.

voters. This is the main reason why the millennial generation is reluctant to get involved in the political arena.

In order to overcome the problems that have hit, the party needs a high-caliber candidate, especially from the millennial generation who are proficient in technology and mass media. It is important that they are able to continue to monitor the current political developments, so that it becomes a plus for the millennial generation to listen and voice the aspirations of the community which are crucial for progress. With the presence of such quality legislative candidates, it is hoped that in the next 5 to 10 years, the party will not lack creative and innovative leaders who carry fresh ideas that are applied in society. Having qualified legislative candidates, the party will not have difficulty in choosing their own leaders, and they will have a great opportunity to nominate regional leaders.

The millennial generation is considered an important asset in recruiting political cadres, because they provide greater opportunities for political parties to expand their membership reach. In legislative elections, the millennial generation is expected to play a role as representatives who defend and fight for the interests of their generation. The significant presence of the millennial generation in legislative institutions is expected to bring a positive influence in formulating more responsive development policies.

Therefore, the public has high hopes that representatives of the millennial generation can present the best solutions when they occupy parliamentary seats in the future. To realize these hopes, the millennial generation needs to design a winning strategy that is not only oriented towards personal interests or the candidates they nominate, but also aims to strengthen relations with the community. This strategy includes introducing political products, forming a positive image, implementing effective campaign programs, and implementing extensive marketing tactics. Setting goals and visions that are relevant to the needs of the millennial generation is the main key to achieving this success.

Talking about the millennial generation and its relationship to the general election, it should be remembered that gaining support and sympathy from modern society is not an easy task. The current generation uses various methods to research the history of the characteristics of the political candidates they want to choose as representatives in parliament. Finally, the probability of success of legislative candidates for young parliamentary candidates in Hulu Sungai Utara is around 50 to 50. This condition arises because the millennial group is considered to have a more rational and intelligent view compared to the previous generation. Experience during the 2019 presidential election shows that the millennial generation tries to understand concepts with a simpler approach. Therefore, legislative candidates, especially those in elite political positions, need to seriously consider how they can win the sympathy of the millennial generation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was taken from previous research, including: first, from Devi Arianti with the research title ""Legislative Nomination of Youth (Political Communication Study on the Regional Leadership Council of the Indonesian Solidarity Party of South Kalimantan)". This study reveals several political communication strategies implemented by the Regional Leadership Council (DPW) of the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) of South Kalimantan. One of them is the use of social media to attract the attention of legislative candidates and share ideas and concepts with other political parties. DPW PSI South Kalimantan also holds regular events by greeting "Bro and Sis". The recruitment process is carried out transparently, with an assessment system carried out directly by independent judges, which is based on the principle of openness and independence from political participation. This party adopts a millennial style by using online applications in each of its programs.¹⁰

Second, from Linawati with the research title "Political Communication of Muhammad Dwiki Ramadhani in Gaining Support from the Millennial Generation in the 2019 Election". The findings of the study stated that Muhammad Dwiki Ramdhani implemented a political communication strategy using a political communication management theory approach through segmenting, targeting, and positioning steps.¹¹

Third, from Morissan with the research title Political and Social Participation of Younger Generation as Social Media Users in Indonesia. This study explains that young generation is the largest user of social media and is often considered less concerned with social issues, including politics. The study shows that 80% of first-time voters (aged 17-22 years) are interested in voting in the 2019 Election, indicating high political participation. However, their involvement is mostly limited to light discussions about politics, while other campaign activities are still low.¹²

The fourth of Mohamad Ikrom Arasid, et al with the research title "Political Communication Strategy to Obtain Youth Support in the Serang City Pilkada: A Study of the Candidate Pair Syafrudin-Subadri". Research resultThe political messages delivered to the Syafrudin-Subadri pair used persuasive tactics directly or face to face, with media selection based on the era and conditions of society. The Syafrudin-Subadri duo was then able to attract the

¹⁰ Devi Arianti, "Pencalonan Legislatif Kaum Muda (Studi Komunikasi Politik) pada Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah Partai Solidaritas Indonesia Kalimantan Selatan)." Skripsi." (Skripsi, Banjarmasin, Universitas Islam Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari Banjarmasin, 2019).

¹¹ Linawati Linawati dkk., "Komunikasi Politik Muhammad Dwiki Ramadhani Dalam Merebut Dukungan Kalangan Generasi Milenial Pada Pemilu 2019," *Jurnal Pustaka Komunikasi* 5, no. 1 (30 Maret 2022): 177–89, https://doi.org/10.32509/pustakom.v5i1.1922.

¹² Morissan, "Political and Social Participation of Younger Generation as Social Media Users in Indonesia | The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies," accessed January 13, 2025, https://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/theijhss/article/view/142901.

audience, especially the younger generation, by absorbing ambitions from various levels of society conditionally and dominantly.¹³

Fifth from Kuncoro Bayu Prasetyo with the research title Political Education of the Young Generation Through the Millennial Community Voluntarism Movement and the results are:Based on the principle of "from the young, by the young, and for the young" and the principle of "learning by doing", the digital media-based political education model is the most suitable for the millennial generation, which is considered the net generation. Because its form is similar to volunteer activism, or voluntarism, millennials, who highly value individuals and are independent and not tied to the system. The involvement of volunteers in the millennial community is considered an effective method for spreading political education. REKOM, a volunteerism movement involving young people, is recognized as an optimal political education practice, capable of increasing awareness, involvement, and participation of the millennial generation in the local political realm. This is especially true in the context of the 2020 Simultaneous Pilkada in Semarang Regency.¹⁴

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method, initially the researcher tries to examine and explore the ins and outs of the situation to be explored. After that, data collection is carried out through various approaches, starting from careful observation to the preparation of detailed reports. This study aims to uncover hidden facts, real conditions, emerging phenomena, and situations that occur during the research. These results are then presented in the form of scientific papers that aim to develop theories based on data obtained from the field. In this study, the researcher examines the perspectives of participants with various interactive strategies. The methods used include direct observation in the field, participant observation, in-depth interviews, document studies, and various other complementary techniques.¹⁵

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher focuses on the Political Communication Strategy of Young Parliamentary Candidates of the Millennial Generation to Attract Young Voters for DPRD Candidates in Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with informants who had credibility to obtain information. In addition to conducting interviews, the

¹³ Mohamad Ikrom Arasid, Yusa Djuyandi, dan Sumadinata R. Widya, "Strategi Komunikasi Politik Untuk Memperoleh Dukungan Pemuda Dalam Pilkada Kota Serang: Studi Pada Pasangan Calon Syafrudin-Subadri.," *Sospol* 8, no. 1 (2022): 62–77.

¹⁴ Kuncoro Bayu Prasetyo, Noviani Achmad Putri, dan Didi Pramono, "Pendidikan Politik Generasi Muda Melalui Gerakan Voluntarisme Komunitas Milenial," *Bookchapter Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Semarang*, no. 3 (13 Mei 2022): 1–29, https://doi.org/10.1529/kp.v1i3.48.

¹⁵ Muhammad Ramdhan, *Metode Penelitian* (Surabaya: Cipta Media Nusantara, 2021), h. 7-8.

researcher also conducted detailed observations of ten informants who were representatives of several DPRD candidate members from Hulu Sungai Utara Regency. In this study, several important things were obtained as findings, namely as follows:

1. Political Communication Strategy of Young Parliamentary Candidates and the Millennial Generation to Reach Young Voters So Far

Most of the approaches taken to involve millennials as legislative members are approaches through kinship and family, currently the millennial group who have entered politics are dominated by families or close relatives of politicians, some even come from Executive families (in this case local government). However, it does not rule out the possibility of opportunities for non-politicians to try to register and get involved in a political party, it does not rule out the possibility of an approach by the party to young figures who already have a good name as activists, religious scholars and entrepreneurs. Several political parties still open opportunities for the public to recruit prospective legislative members through open announcements, such as that done by one of the parties participating in the election, which announced it through social media and gave the opportunity to young people to join their party and were willing to take part in the selection that had been set.

The involvement of these young legislative candidates has clearly provided a significant advantage for the party's vote acquisition considering that millennial voters dominate in number in the elections held in 2024, the view that this millennial group has high creativity, has new and innovative ideas and concepts, accompanied by their youthful spirit still has much greater courage to create a new phenomenon in the world of politics. Moreover, this group masters the digital world. The utilization of this success is what ultimately becomes the entry point to the vote acquisition that every political party hopes for.

2. Instruments Used in Political Communication of Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates to Reach Young Voters

The use of digital media from the results of this study concluded that mobile phones are the most widely used devices by this generation. While social media is the most dominant digital media used. Connecting the millennial generation with the use of digital media is inseparable from the theory of uses and gratifications. The millennial generation as media users plays an active role in choosing and using the media where they try to find the best media sources to meet their needs. The theory of uses and gratifications assumes that users (millennial generation) have alternative choices to satisfy their needs and they are active in determining which media to choose to satisfy their needs.

3. Barriers to Political Communication for Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates in Reaching Young Voters.

Hoaxes or fake news can make it difficult for young people running for office to connect with other young people who might vote for them. Sometimes, people spread lies and fake news about the candidate to make them look bad. This makes it difficult for people to trust the candidate and their political party because they believe the lies without checking the truth. Millennial voters are voters who were born in the 80s to 90s with characteristics that tend not to be ideological voters, have a political attitude that tends to be apathetic and many of them are swing voters, and tend not to have a high level of loyalty to the party.

4. Political Communication Strategy of Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates to Reach Young Voters

Political Communication Strategy of Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates to Reach Young Voters. In order for the younger generation to enter the world of politics, candidates from the Millennial Generation need to connect with them in their communities and online. This means not only meeting in person, but also chatting and sharing ideas on social media. Then reconnecting with reality.

The form of political actors who are activists, who should bridge the interests of the community with the candidates they support, and to achieve a more honest, fair, and transparent democratic process. In general, the millennial generation, through their participation in politics, not only wants change, but also hopes to become agents of change in their own way. Likewise, only in Hulu Sungai Utara Regency, it is hoped that with more millennials directly involved in politics and willing to become legislative candidates, it certainly brings new hope to the world of politics in Hulu Sungai Utara, with high spirits, innovative ideas and thoughts are expected to bring fresh air to the progress of Hulu Sungai Utara Regency.

DISCUSSION

The Political Communication Method of Young Parliamentary Candidates and the Millennial Generation to Reach Young Voters so far is by continuing to build character, involving young figures from the millennial generation. In the modern era like today, mass media has a very important role in political communication strategies, mass media is chosen because it has the power to reach its audience widely and simultaneously. With the support of mass media, it will greatly help the people see the track record of candidates in the political arena.

Political communication is then used by people involved in a country's political activities to establish relationships with other people, certain groups, or the people in a larger context. The

involvement of these young legislative candidates has clearly provided a significant advantage for the party's vote acquisition considering that millennial voters dominate in number in the elections held in 2024, the view that this millennial group has high creativity, has new and innovative ideas and concepts, accompanied by their youthful spirit still has much greater courage to create a new phenomenon in the world of politics. Moreover, this group dominates the digital world.

Instruments used in political communication of millennial generation parliamentary candidates to reach young voters by using digital media. The use of digital media from the results of this study concluded that mobile phones are the most widely used devices by this generation. While social media is the most dominant digital media used. Connecting the millennial generation with the use of digital media is inseparable from the theory of uses and gratifications. The millennial generation as media users plays an active role in choosing and using the media where they try to find the best media sources to meet their needs.¹⁶

Barriers to Political Communication for Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates to Reach Young Voters. The lack of understanding of history and the inability to understand data in a balanced way make this millennial generation an easy target for spreaders of fake news (hoaxes). The spread of fake news and irresponsible character assassination efforts are extraordinary inhibiting factors for Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates to Reach Young Voters, including the spread of fake news spread by political opponents that weaken the credibility of certain parties in the eyes of the public who accept the news without finding out the truth.

The lack of literacy about history or positive literacy on the party or individual concerned makes the threat of character assassination the most frightening specter for prospective members of parliament. The obstacles to the use of social media as a medium for political communication in the online public environment will make young prospective parliaments have less control over the information available about them in cyberspace. ¹⁷ This will make it increasingly difficult for young parliamentary candidates to maintain their positive image as social media users may spread false information. ¹⁸

Political Communication Strategy of Millennial Generation Parliamentary Candidates To Reach Young Voters who are more active in participating in politics requires a community-based approach. It is important to build a community, not only physically but also online. In addition, there must be more concrete efforts and initiatives for offline discussions and on social media,

¹⁶ Hasanuddin Ali dan Lilik Purwandi, *Milenial Nusantara* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017), h. 25.

¹⁷ Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media," Business Horizons 53, no. 1 (2010): 59–68, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.093.

¹⁸ Muzahid Akbar Hayat dkk., "Peran Media Sosial Dalam Komunikasi Politik," *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi* 2, no. 01 (21 Januari 2021): 104–14, https://doi.org/10.59141/jist.v2i01.61.

especially to provide good political education, provide positive literacy to existing parties and legislative candidates. In this case, it is important to convince this millennial generation that by choosing him and his party, there will be progress and a better atmosphere in development in the region and how this can have a positive impact on the line of life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the political communication of millennial generation parliamentary candidates plays an important role in efforts to reach young voters in the 2024 election. By utilizing mass and digital media, such as social media and mobile devices, they can reach a wide audience effectively. The theory of uses and gratifications shows that the millennial generation actively chooses media that suits their needs, so that the use of digital media becomes the main instrument in political communication strategies. However, obstacles such as low historical literacy and the threat of fake news (hoaxes) are major challenges. The spread of false information and character attacks can weaken the credibility of young candidates and their parties in the eyes of the public. In addition, the lack of control over information in cyberspace is also an obstacle in maintaining a positive image. To overcome these obstacles, a community-based strategy (both physically and online) is needed. Offline discussions and positive literacy about candidates and parties are important steps to build trust. With this approach, millennial candidates can convince young voters that their presence brings hope for real change and progress in regional development.

SUGGESTION

This study provides a written description related to the conditions of the 2024 legislative elections, from this study the researcher also provides an important recommendation, namely that the 2024 Election has a fairly large number of voters from the millennial generation. As a generation that has a distinctive character and is very influenced by the internet and social media, this must be utilized as well as possible by members of parliament, government and even parties, in addition to attracting interest and support from this group, all parties also have a responsibility to provide correct, good and healthy political education and maturity of understanding about democracy,

Lack of literacy will result in misunderstandings and accelerate the spread of hoax news that may be immediately believed and believed by this generation. The dissemination of correct and legitimate information must be carried out massively to reduce and win the spread of news, this is very important to do considering that this generation is one of the holders of the baton of Indonesia's demographic bonus 2020-2030 and is the next generation of the nation. Therefore, political participation and support from the millennial generation as the younger generation are very much

needed for the future of the nation and state. The number of millennials in Indonesia in 2020 will reach 35 million people, a very large number. This is good capital for the state and political parties to utilize this generation to actively participate in both political parties and political communities for the benefit of the nation.

The support and political participation of the millennial generation who understand politics and democracy well and correctly will be formed if they are continuously exposed to digital media containing socialization or information/news about campaigns to support positive government policies. Given that this generation is the majority of digital media users (internet, social media and so on). Socialization that is carried out massively and structured by utilizing various media can be in the form of films, interesting text messages and digital videos on social media or other online media that are easy to understand, spread and reach by many parties.

This research can also be one of the basic foundations in more comprehensive research related to politics in the future by involving the millennial generation who have good and qualified capacities as the successors of the country.

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