



Remuneration and Engagement: A Study of Catholic Educators

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Abstract

This study examined the organizational engagement of Catholic educators in relation to a rationalized remuneration system. Conducted across six Catholic Higher Education Institutions in Region II, it employed a mixed-method research design. A survey was administered to 164 college faculty members with at least three years of tenure, selected through stratified random sampling. Focus group discussions complemented the quantitative findings. Results showed that Catholic educators had highly favorable assessments of their remuneration in terms of fairness, effectiveness, and conformity. They were fully engaged in instruction, Christian faith formation, community engagement, and financial management, but demonstrated lower engagement in research activities. A significant relationship was found between educators' perceptions of remuneration and their engagement in instruction, financial management, extension, and Christian faith formation. These findings guided the development of a rationalized remuneration system to enhance organizational engagement. The study has practical implications for Catholic school leaders in improving faculty compensation strategies to enhance engagement and retention.

Keywords: *Catholic educators, organizational engagement, remuneration, conformity, effectiveness, fairness, instruction, research, community engagement, Christian Faith Formation, financial management*

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive work environment, inspiring and engaging employees has become crucial for organizational success. Employees with strong emotional and intellectual connections to their work are more likely to stay committed and contribute meaningfully (Hughes & Rog, 2008). Organizations must focus on employee satisfaction and engagement by implementing fair remuneration systems and offering social support, which can enhance employee loyalty and productivity (Pandita & Bedarkar, 2014).

Higher education institutions face increasing competition and must innovate through quality services and technology adoption (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017). Lecturers play a pivotal role in driving institutional competitiveness, and their engagement and satisfaction significantly influence loyalty and performance (Ineson & Laszlo, 2013). Employee engagement fosters psychological well-being, enabling individuals to utilize their talents effectively, thereby improving organizational outcomes (Pandita & Bedarkar, 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2020). Remuneration remains a critical factor in influencing employee engagement and organizational commitment. Studies highlight that fair and transparent compensation systems boost morale, motivation, and job satisfaction (Aliyu et al., 2018). However, some research, such as Kulikowski and Sedlak (2017), suggests that financial incentives alone may not be sufficient to resolve disengagement, highlighting the need for holistic approaches to employee motivation and engagement.

Among teachers, particularly in Catholic schools, financial management and remuneration significantly impact engagement. Many teachers face financial challenges due to low salaries, often resorting to supplementary income through side jobs (Jorilla & Bual, 2020). This highlights the importance of examining how remuneration influences teacher engagement in higher education

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institutions, with a focus on their roles in instruction, research, extension, and financial management

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1996), also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, provides a critical framework for understanding how remuneration influences faculty engagement in Catholic higher education institutions. The theory posits that two distinct sets of factors affect employee motivation and job satisfaction: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as recognition, achievement, and personal growth, contribute to intrinsic job satisfaction and higher levels of engagement. In contrast, hygiene factors, including salary, institutional policies, and working conditions, do not necessarily enhance motivation when present but can lead to dissatisfaction when inadequate or absent (Aliyu et al., 2018).

Applying this theory to the current study, remuneration serves as a hygiene factor that shapes educators' overall job satisfaction and commitment to institutional responsibilities. Furthermore, Herzberg's theory suggests that hygiene factors alone are insufficient to drive sustained engagement. Even when remuneration is viewed favorably, educators may still require motivators such as career development opportunities, research incentives, and professional recognition to maintain high levels of commitment. This insight is particularly relevant to Catholic higher education institutions, as it highlights the need for a comprehensive compensation strategy—one that not only ensures fair and competitive salaries but also fosters a work environment where educators feel valued, empowered, and motivated to contribute beyond their instructional duties. Thus, while remuneration plays a crucial role in faculty engagement, Catholic institutions must also focus on enhancing professional growth opportunities to achieve long-term faculty retention and institutional success.

Organizational Engagement

Engagement can reflect a shared organizational characteristic shaped by affective and social processes (Albrecht et al., 2018). HRM practices, including personnel selection, socialization, performance management, and training, significantly influence engagement (Simpson et al., 2020). Organizations are prioritizing employee engagement because it is recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing organizational performance (Shahid, 2019). According to (Shahid, 2019), this leads to improvements in quality, customer satisfaction, and long-term financial success, where an engaged employees are a crucial resource in today's rapidly changing work environment and increasingly diverse workforce. Organizations that emphasize employee engagement are more likely to achieve their goals, as many employees desire workplaces where they feel actively involved and contribute positively (Shahid, 2019). Many workers seek workplaces where they feel involved and know they are making a positive impact (Shahid, 2019). Human resources provide organizations with a competitive advantage by bringing knowledge, skills, and abilities (Haziazi, 2024). Employee engagement is a significant predictor of job performance, as engaged employees tend to be more productive, contribute to organizational success, and exhibit greater retention, prompting organizations to continuously seek strategies to enhance engagement (Haziazi, 2024; Shahid, 2019).

Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to the emotional, physical, and cognitive connection employees have with their work. Factors driving engagement include fulfilling basic needs, managerial support, and opportunities for growth. It is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption,

leading to productivity, loyalty, and pride (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Passionate and committed employees exert maximum effort, improving organizational success (Bakker et al., 2011). Engaged employees significantly contribute to workplace effectiveness and personal fulfillment.

Dimensions of Organizational Engagement in Higher Education

The dimensions of organizational engagement in higher education encompass instruction, research, and community engagement, all of which play pivotal roles in shaping institutional effectiveness and societal impact. Instruction focuses on active student participation, effective pedagogy, and teacher efficacy, which are vital for fostering student engagement and learning outcomes (Hammond & Moore, 2018; Jorilla & Bual, 2021). Research emphasizes the importance of building faculty and student research capacities, fostering a research culture, and addressing challenges such as limited resources, motivation, and institutional support to enhance evidence-based practices (Ulla, 2018; Bao & Feng, 2022). Community engagement, regarded as the "third mission" of higher education, integrates teaching and research to address societal needs, although challenges such as resource limitations and inadequate training persist, particularly in the Global South (Glover et al., 2016). Together, these dimensions reflect the interconnected goals of teaching, research, and service, underscoring their collective importance in advancing higher education's mission to contribute to individual development and community welfare.

Remuneration

Remuneration is a critical factor for both employees and organizations, as it encompasses the compensation or payment individuals receive for their work or services, including financial and non-financial components (Aslam et al., 2019). Research shows that remuneration significantly influences employee motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and overall organizational effectiveness (Haziati, 2024). Competitive compensation packages attract and retain top talent, boosting morale and engagement. Remuneration systems should be designed to meet the specific needs of both the organization and its employees, and they should be fair, equitable, and consistent with the value of employees' contributions to the organization (Kozioł & Mikos, 2019). Compensation includes all forms of pay or rewards given to employees for performing their jobs, such as salaries, commissions, bonuses, and non-cash benefits (Suresh & Reddy, 2017). These rewards are crucial in attracting and retaining talent, as they directly impact employees' decisions to join, stay with, and perform well in an organization (Suresh & Reddy, 2017).

Effects of Remuneration on Work Engagement and on Teachers' Profile Variables

Remuneration, as compensation for work, plays a vital role in influencing employee work engagement by improving welfare, motivation, and loyalty. A fair and adequate remuneration system fosters job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, while inadequate compensation can lead to dissatisfaction and turnover (Fauchil et al., 2020). Studies show that fair remuneration enhances work engagement by boosting energy, dedication, and involvement, especially for teachers (Stachowska, 2016). Teachers' profile variables, such as experience, qualifications, and subject expertise, further impact the effect of remuneration on engagement, with experienced teachers or those with advanced degrees often expecting higher pay. Performance-based pay systems also link compensation to teaching performance, influencing engagement levels (De Stasio et al., 2020). The implementation of remuneration needs to be reviewed to meet the requirements related to the performance of supporting activities, indirect rewards, research performance, and the performance of teaching/lectures, the performance of community service (Nurtjahjani et al., 2021). If educational institutions provide remuneration structures and managerial policies that are not particularly favorable to academic personnel, it may be difficult to retain such staff (Bhatia &

Williams, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research designs to examine the organizational engagement of Catholic educators and their perceptions of the remuneration system. For the quantitative aspect, descriptive and correlational methods were employed to assess respondents' profiles, their evaluations of remuneration, their organizational engagement, and the significant relationships between these variables. The qualitative aspect involved basic qualitative research to explore the challenges faced by respondents concerning the remuneration system. Data were collected through a questionnaire and focus group discussions, with the questionnaire addressing respondents' profiles, remuneration assessments, and organizational engagement across various dimensions. The survey instrument underwent content validation by three field experts, ensuring relevance and clarity. A pilot test with 30 respondents achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89, indicating high reliability. Descriptive statistics were used for the quantitative analysis, while T-tests, ANOVA, and Chi-square tests examined significant differences and relationships. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data on the challenges faced by respondents. The study targeted faculty members from six Catholic higher education institutions using stratified random sampling. Participants provided informed consent before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and all data were securely stored and destroyed post-study completion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age		
<30	56	31.3
30 – 39	38	21.2
40 – 49	46	25.7
≥ 50	39	21.8
Mean Age = 39 years old		
Sex		
Female	74	40.9
Male	107	59.1
Civil Status		
Single	68	38.0
Married	104	58.1
Widowed	7	3.9
Employment Status		
Probationary	32	17.9
Permanent	147	82.1
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	16	8.9
With Masteral's Units	40	22.2
With Master's	66	36.7
With Doctoral Units	33	18.3
With Doctorate Degree	25	13.9
Number of Years of Teaching		

< 5	44	24.2
5 - 9	38	20.9
10 - 14	19	10.4
15 - 19	29	15.9
≥ 20	52	28.6
Ave. Number of Years = 14 years		
Designation		
Fulltime Teacher	107	58.8
Adviser/Moderator	7	3.8
Coordinator/Program Chair/ Department Head	37	20.3
Administrator	11	6.0
Others (Dean, Marketing Officer, Research head)	20	10.9
Academic Rank		
Assistant Instructor	50	30.7
Instructor	49	30.1
Senior Instructor	19	11.7
Assistant Professor	18	11.0
Associate Professor	18	11.0
Professor	9	5.5
Eligibility		
CS	26	18.8
PRC	93	67.4
None	19	13.8
Professional Development Activities		
Training/Seminars Related to Field of Specialization	52	52.5
Graduate Studies	26	26.3
Others (in-service trainings, webinars, etc.)	9	9.1
None	12	12.1
Special Skills/Certification		
National Certificates	12	11.5
Others (investment teacher, Microsoft technology associate, etc.)	45	43.3
None	47	45.2
Gross Monthly Salary		
≤ 10,000	9	7.2
10,001 - 20,000	35	28.0
20,001 - 30,000	54	43.2
30,001 - 40,000	18	14.1
40,001 - 50,000	6	4.8
> 50,000	3	2.4
Ave. Gross Monthly Salary = 25,212.00		

The table shows that the mean age of the respondents is 39 years old. It further shows that the majority are male, married, and have a permanent employment status. Meanwhile, many of the respondents have a master's degree. In addition, the average number of years of teaching is 14 years. The majority of respondents are full-time teachers, with many holding assistant instructor or instructor positions in terms of academic rank. Additionally, many have

undergone training or seminars related to their field of specialization. Regarding special skills/certifications, a few individuals have acquired national certifications, and the average monthly salary is P25,212.00.

Table 2. Respondents' Assessment of Remuneration

Remuneration	Mean	Description
Conformity	4.15	Highly Favorable
Fairness	3.86	Highly Favorable
Effectiveness	3.90	Highly Favorable
Overall Assessment	3.97	Highly Favorable

The study found that Catholic educators perceive their remuneration as highly favorable in terms of conformity ($M=4.15$), fairness ($M=3.86$), and effectiveness ($M=3.90$). These findings align with studies by [Pongton and Suntrayuth \(2019\)](#) and [Ahmed et al. \(2020\)](#), which emphasize that a well-structured compensation system fosters job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. However, the presence of salary concerns in the qualitative data suggests that while the overall assessment is positive, there are underlying issues that warrant attention.

Comparing these findings to [Aliyu et al. \(2018\)](#), who highlighted that transparent and equitable remuneration structures boost morale, it becomes evident that Catholic educators value clarity in their compensation systems. However, this contrasts with research by [Kulikowski and Sedlak \(2017\)](#), which suggests that financial incentives alone may not be sufficient to drive engagement, indicating that other factors, such as institutional culture and professional growth opportunities, are also critical.

Table 3. Respondents' Organizational Engagement

Engagement	Mean	Description
Instruction	4.57	Fully Engaged
Research	1.88	Less Engaged
Community Engagement	3.06	Engaged
Christian Faith Formation	3.09	Engaged
Financial Management	3.36	Engaged

The study found that Catholic educators exhibit high engagement in instruction ($M=4.57$) but low engagement in research ($M=1.88$). This pattern aligns with [Ulla \(2018\)](#), who highlighted that faculty members in private institutions often struggle with research due to time constraints, lack of institutional support, and limited access to funding. Educators demonstrated strong instructional engagement, as reflected in their commitment to student learning, lesson preparation, and classroom interaction. This finding supports the research of [Alvarez-Bell et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Sharp et al. \(2020\)](#), which emphasize that teacher engagement is directly linked to effective pedagogy and improved student outcomes. Additionally, faculty members in mission-driven institutions, such as Catholic HEIs, display strong instructional commitment due to their alignment with institutional values.

In contrast, the study revealed low research engagement among educators, pointing to systemic barriers such as high teaching loads, inadequate incentives, and limited research funding. These findings are consistent with [Tripney et al. \(2018\)](#), who argue that faculty members struggle with scholarly activities when institutional support is lacking. The FGD results further confirm this, as several respondents cited heavy workloads and a lack of motivation to pursue research. To address this issue, potential solutions include reducing teaching loads for research-active faculty,

providing dedicated research funding, and implementing mentorship programs to develop research competencies among faculties. Similar initiatives, as noted by [Bao and Feng \(2022\)](#), have led to improved faculty research output in some institutions.

Regarding community engagement and Christian faith formation, the study found that educators participate in community service ($M=3.06$) and Christian faith formation activities ($M=3.09$), aligning with the mission of Catholic HEIs. This supports the findings of [Calimpos et al. \(2023\)](#), who emphasized that community engagement is a fundamental aspect of Catholic education. However, some educators reported a lack of resources and institutional support for extension programs, which mirrors the challenges identified by [Glover et al. \(2016\)](#). The majority of faculty surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with their compensation and perceived lack of institutional recognition, prompting many to seek external income ([Comm & Mathaisel, 2003](#)). These findings highlight the critical need for Catholic HEIs to address faculty compensation and recognition to improve job satisfaction and retention, aligning with the mission of promoting holistic development and social justice. While compensation appears to be more important to assistant and associate professors ([Ehrenberg et al., 1991](#)), salary is a key indicator of equity and personal achievement. This result suggests that compensation is an important factor in attracting and retaining valuable faculty members; however, compensation is not the only factor that affects faculty satisfaction and retention ([Comm & Mathaisel, 2003](#); [Nurtjahjani et al., 2021](#)).

In terms of financial management, Catholic educators reported moderate engagement ($M=3.36$), with many actively budgeting and saving. However, some respondents rely on side businesses and credit lines to supplement their income. This finding aligns with research by [Yusof et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Operio \(2021\)](#), which indicates that low salaries often compel educators to seek alternative income sources. These financial challenges suggest the need for policies that support better compensation and financial stability for educators in Catholic institutions.

Issues and Challenges Faced by the Respondents on the Remuneration System of Their Institution

Based on the results of the Focus Group Discussion conducted to different selected respondents of different Catholic Higher Education Institutions in the Cagayan Valley Region, there are five emerging issues and challenges faced by the respondents on the remuneration system of their respective institution which include the following: (1) Low Salary, (2) Lack of Institutional Benefits, (3) Inconsistency in Pay, (4) Unfair Distribution of Pay, and (5) Lack of Transparency on the Pay Scheme/Remuneration System.

Low Salary

This theme revolves around the low salaries paid to private school educators and their impact it has on their financial well-being. According to some respondents, they received a lower salary than those in government schools and universities. In addition, some of them stressed that they face financial struggles due to low salaries, which make it challenging to meet their basic needs. They also claimed that they receive minimal or no salary increases over time, leading to stagnation in their salaries and limited financial growth. As a result, they may feel undervalued and unappreciated due to low salaries, which can lead to job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates. Some of the responses of the respondents are as follows:

“Actually, my issue is on the low salary that I received from the school. Well, since this is a private school, then the administrators relied on the tuition fees coming from students to pay for their employees. However, the administrators should also come up with a scheme to increase our salaries so that we can become more motivated to work.” – T10

"Our school offers a not so competitive salary package to its employees which is why many resigned after one school year to look for greener pasture." – T04

"Well, I am in a private school and the salary is not that high. Sometimes, many of my friends ask me to look for better companies that offer a higher salary package. I will just finish my remaining contracts here in the school and look for better work." – T11

"Professionals like us must be paid higher, like in other private and government firms." – T18

"My existing salary is below average." – T20

Lack of Institutional Benefits

This theme encompasses the lack of benefits, such as health insurance, retirement, and paid leave, that teachers should be granted. Some respondents emphasized that they do not have access to health insurance or must pay for it out of pocket, which can be a significant financial burden. In addition, some of them even stressed that their school does not provide professional development opportunities for teachers, leaving them without the chance to improve their skills and advance their careers. The informants stressed the following:

"Our salary is okay, but we lack fringe and institutional benefits which can help us in our finances." – T01

"My place of employment is a private school without health insurance. It costs a lot and I have to pay for it myself." – T04

"Being denied the same perks as teachers in public schools is frustrating." – T05

"In the school where I work, we do not have rice allowance." – T15

"No birthday leave is given to us. Just birthday greetings and sometimes a birthday gift." – T18

Inconsistency in Pay

This theme involves the inconsistency in the pay structure for teachers, including irregular pay schedules or unpaid periods. According to them, inconsistent pay can cause significant financial difficulties for private school teachers, who may struggle to pay bills and make ends meet. It can also contribute to a perception of unfairness and dissatisfaction among teachers, which may negatively impact their job performance and the overall quality of education provided to students. Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

"In our school, I always face uncertainty about when I will be paid, as the pay schedule may be irregular or unclear." – T14

"Our salary depends on our units. I may not receive pay during the summer months due to limited teaching loads." – T09

"I'm never sure when I'll get compensated. Sometimes it arrives on schedule, other times it takes weeks. It's incredibly annoying and makes it challenging for me to stick to my budget."

– T05

“I think receiving different remuneration with the same qualifications and academic rank.” – T21

“In my case, I am receiving lower or almost the same remuneration as others while having a higher designation and tasks assigned.” – T19

Unfair Distribution of Pay

This theme involves the respondents' perception that the remuneration system is biased towards certain employees or positions. Accordingly, some respondents feel that they are not being compensated fairly for the work they do, particularly if they are doing the same job as someone else but receiving a lower salary, and if they are given a substitute load. In addition, they also perceive salary disparities between different positions, such as between teachers and administrators, or between senior and new teachers. The respondents articulated the following:

“Sometimes bias of giving remuneration in terms of work and working overtime without pay.” – T15

“Receiving almost the same remuneration as that of others while having other tasks assigned.” – T07

“The substitution pay should also be given on a timely basis because sometimes we receive our substitution pay late already.” – T03

“They should study the ranking system, the qualification, the experience, the workload and the salary adjustment of the institution to avoid salary disparities between different positions.” – T05

“I think receiving different remuneration with the same qualifications and academic rank.” – T21

Lack of Transparency on the Pay Scheme/Remuneration System

Finally, the last issue that respondents shared during the FGD is the lack of transparency on the pay scheme/remuneration system. This theme encompasses the lack of transparency in the remuneration system, including unclear salary scales, inadequate communication about pay, and doubts regarding the process of remuneration payment. Some of the responses of the informants are as follows:

“I am uncertain about how my salary is determined or what factors are taken into account.” – T08

“I do not receive clear communication from the administration regarding my pay, including when raises or promotions are available.” – T13

“Usually, employees and staff complain because of some deductions that are not foreseen.” – T03

“Sometimes, I am not given updates on any deductions which I am not aware of.” – T10

“As I have said, receiving almost the same remuneration as that of others while having other tasks assigned is really unfair, thus there should be transparency from our school regarding this.” – T07

The results from the focus group discussion reveal that private school teachers in the Cagayan Valley Region face several significant challenges related to their remuneration system. The five major themes identified are low salaries, lack of institutional benefits, inconsistent pay, unfair pay distribution, and lack of transparency. The most pressing issue is low salary, with many teachers reporting financial difficulties that hinder their ability to meet basic needs, potentially leading to high turnover rates and diminished quality of education (Miles & Katz, 2018). Additionally, the lack of institutional benefits, such as health insurance and professional development opportunities, further impacts teachers' financial stability and job satisfaction (Nyamubi, 2017). Teachers also expressed concerns about inconsistent pay, with irregular pay schedules causing financial strain and reducing job performance. Moreover, the perceived unfair distribution of pay among employees exacerbates feelings of dissatisfaction (Robertson & Sorensen, 2017).

To address these issues, private schools should consider implementing several changes, including offering competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits packages to support teachers' financial well-being (Miles & Katz, 2018). Establishing a clear and consistent pay structure along with adopting equitable salary distribution policies can alleviate concerns of unfairness and ensure timely compensation (Robertson & Sorensen, 2017). Finally, improving transparency by providing clear communication about salary scales, pay determinants, and opportunities for advancement will help foster trust and improve job satisfaction among teachers (Namara & Kasaija, 2016). By addressing these concerns, private schools can improve teacher retention, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to a higher quality of education.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of remuneration in shaping the engagement of Catholic educators in higher education institutions. Findings reveal that educators perceive their remuneration as fair, effective, and aligned with their contributions, fostering strong engagement in instruction, financial management, Christian faith formation, and community service. However, engagement in research activities remains low, signaling a need for institutional support and incentives. These results emphasize the importance of a well-structured remuneration system in promoting faculty retention, motivation, and institutional commitment. For Catholic school leaders, the study highlights the importance of equitable and transparent compensation practices to maintain high levels of engagement. Enhancing financial incentives, professional development opportunities, and institutional research support can contribute to a more holistic engagement framework. By addressing these areas, Catholic higher education institutions can strengthen faculty commitment and overall institutional effectiveness.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Conducted within six Catholic higher education institutions in Region II, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or different educational settings. Additionally, while the sample size was sufficient for analysis, it may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across various institutional structures. Another limitation is the reliance on educators' self-reported assessments, which may be subject to

personal bias.

Future research can explore several key areas to address these limitations. Expanding the study to include both Catholic and non-Catholic institutions across different regions can provide a comparative analysis of remuneration and engagement patterns. Longitudinal research examining how changes in remuneration policies over time influence faculty engagement and retention would offer more profound insights into long-term trends. Further studies could also investigate how faculty remuneration impacts teaching quality, student satisfaction, and academic performance, providing a more comprehensive understanding of its broader implications. Additionally, research assessing the barriers to research participation among Catholic educators and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions such as research funding and mentorship programs could be valuable. Exploring the relationship between remuneration, financial stability, and educators' overall well-being would also help institutions develop more holistic faculty support systems. By addressing these gaps, future research can further enhance the understanding of remuneration dynamics and their impact on faculty engagement in Catholic higher education institutions.

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