

PARTICULARITIES OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE ROMANIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Professional skills of teachers, their level of engagement in fulfilling the responsibilities of educating pupils is a crucial key in the educational process. Need to understand the particularities of management is given by increasing efficiency, effectiveness of achieving the aims of education, and not only by providing resources and effective directing the activities. In this paperwork we performed an analysis of the particularities of human resource management in secondary education and a quantitative research of human resource management aspects in secondary education at the local level in rural areas from Romania. In order to improve pupil outcomes, secondary schools need a strong and ambitious strategy for improving the educational process, in which human resource management acquire strategic dimensions.

Key words: human resources, human resource management, secondary education, Romania

JEL classification: O15

1. Introduction

Human resources management approach in education is a challenge for all countries, both developing and developed countries. Teachers are seen as key to the quality and success of any educational system. Understanding the importance of policies and practices of human resources in terms of recruitment, hiring, retention, evaluation, motivation and providing an environment that meets the needs and expectations is very important for ensuring a quality education (Omeba, 2014).

Unfortunately, the idea that anyone can be a good teacher is a myth that still encumbers national education systems worldwide (Hdiggui, 2006). Too often, working conditions and employment, the importance of ensuring career and professional development and involvement of teachers in the decision-making education are neglected or underestimated by builders of educational policies and policymakers (Kiran, 2014). It is necessary to adopt policies and practices aimed at effective recruitment, career support, professional development, and proper evaluation, stimulating motivation and good working conditions ensuring for teachers (Chelaru, 2011).

The challenge that this paper aims to answer will be the research of particularities recorded in human resource management in secondary education. To achieve the research objectives the work paper has a structure made up of five sections. After the first section make an introduction to human resource management at the educational level, following the second section that outline research methodology and design. The third section displays an exploratory research on human resource management particularities in secondary education. The fourth section is devoted to a quantitative study on human resource management in secondary education at the local level in rural areas from Romania. Thus, we chose a typical rural Romanian school. The last section draws conclusions for empirical study and makes proposals concerning the strategic approach to this area.

2. Research design

Research axes that define the challenge addressed will be: the analyze of the particularities of human resource management in pre-university education and research aspects of human resource management in secondary education at the local level in rural areas from Romania by conducting an empirical study on human resource management in a typical secondary from Romanian rural area Vișina Nouă Secondary School.

To address the first axis we conduct an exploratory research to identify the main aspects of human resources management of pre-university education. In the approach of the second axis we conducted a quantitative research based

on questionnaires to collect and interpret employee perceptions on human resources management from a typical Romanian schools from rural area. In this respect, we chose Secondary School Vișina Nouă, a small school in a community with a number of pupils steadily declining due to aging population, emigration and mobility to urban areas phenomena.

3. Particularities of human resource management in pre-university education

Human resource practices in secondary education must take into account its specificity in all aspects: initial training; continuous professional development; recruitment practices, hiring and retention of qualified candidates; ensuring effective motivating incentive and wages; teaching and learning conditions that encourage learning quality; participation of teachers in making decisions through consultation and negotiation (ILO, 2012).

3.1. Recruitment, selection and employment of human resources

Recruitment of teachers on the basis of professional competence is essential for quality of educational services and the existence of a respected professional status. As in all professions, teacher recruitment processes should be based on principles of efficiency, transparency and objective criteria such as merit, equity and aptitudes (Hallack and Poisson, 2007).

There are three general patterns of employment of teachers offering different levels of stability in employment (ILO / UNESCO, 1966):

- career public servant;
- career based on position or function in the public sector (appointment of teachers is based on position, but without the benefits of public servant);
- career-type contract (teachers are employed on a contract basis in accordance with labor legislation as other staff directly by local public authorities or directly by the school administration).

Teachers should be adequately protected against arbitrary action affecting their professional status or career. After profession entrance, teachers can also lose jobs due to system restructuring or school closing for economic or demographic reasons (ILO, 2012).

3.2. Promotions and career development issues

A diverse and attractive career structure for teachers is crucial for joining, remaining or leaving the profession (OECD, 2005).

Criteria for teacher promotion from one post to another should be based on the same principles as those governing recruitment and selection: transparency, fairness, the existence of clearness and adeptness to specific job (Chelaru, 2011). When teachers are promoted from one grade, level or position to another, different options on the benefits, rewards and incentives should be available associated with new responsibilities (Odden and Kelly, 2008).

Also, establishing a system of continuous professional development is the cornerstone of continuing professional development. Such a system should be designed in collaboration with teachers and trade unions and access should be free (ILO, 2012). There are a number of reasons that determines the authorities to invest in consolidated professional development programs for teachers. Since wage costs represent the majority of spending on education, it is effective that teachers to be competent and qualified which will increase their effectiveness and for this reason, the value of human resources and ultimately of financial resources invested in them (Villegas -Reimers, 2003).

3.3. Teacher evaluation and feedback

The evaluation of teachers is essential, being a tool sometimes under-utilized. A growing trend in terms of performance evaluation is the evaluation of teachers. Such performance evaluations should not be exaggerated because they tend to focus only on evaluating the objectives set by supervisors for teachers without taking into account the objectives of career development and pupils progress (Ingvarson et al. 2007).

Using different methods of evaluation will depend on the purpose and desired outcomes of the process and the means available for the education system. Traditionally, teacher evaluation has been associated with the image of "inspector", a school outsider who comes to assess and criticize the performance, which in many cases was perceived negatively by teachers (Carlson, 2009). Increasingly more schools moving away from this model and opt more for more flexible peer evaluation systems. Teacher evaluation can be performed internally by colleagues, executives or pupils. Another option is to be assess by a person or an external body. Any teacher evaluation process should be objective, holistic, standardized but flexible and transparent.

3.4. Work environment: teaching and learning conditions

The work environment in which teachers operate is essential for their ability to effectively exercise their professional roles, job satisfaction and ensure the best possible teaching and learning outcomes (OECD, 2009).

Decision makers, managers and unions should strive to provide the enabling environment to motivate teachers to get the best learning outcomes and generate satisfaction of teachers at the workplace leading to increased productivity measured by teachers' achievement or pupils' achievement (Chelaru, 2011).

3.5. Reward Policy

Rewarding teachers is an essential factor in recruiting and retaining qualified, motivated and capable teaching force. Salaries and benefits of teachers should meet the same systemic objectives and individual expectations: to reflect

the status of teachers and their responsibilities, to ensure a standard of living above the average, take into account the qualifications and experience to avoid anomalies that create tensions. These principles contribute to attracting and retaining the best individuals in the teaching profession and to the motivation of individuals.

4. Study on human resources management at Vișina Nouă Secondary School

Vișina Nouă Secondary School is a unit with legal personality employing 18 teachers, 15 of which are titular teachers and 3 are qualified substitute teachers. Of the 15 teaching staff, 12 teachers have grade I, two have grade II teacher, one teacher has definitive teaching degree. Auxiliary staff consists of: secretary, librarian, and accountant. The non-teaching activities is provided by a caretaker administration. In school are trained and educated 111 students, divided into four classes from primary level, four class from secondary level and two pre-school groups.

To assess the human resources management in Vișina Nouă Secondary School we have conducted a study based on a questionnaire covering key areas of human resources management. The main objective of the study was to analyze the perceptions of human resource management at Vișina Nouă Secondary School studied. Population is represented by employees of Vișina Nouă Secondary School which counts 22 employees. The number of respondents was 21 from a total of 22 employees of the Vișina Nouă Secondary School which provides a confidence level of 95% with a maximum error of 4%.

The gender structure of the sample indicate a high preponderance of female and non-teaching staff (80% of teachers are women). Regarding the structure on age groups, one can observe a mature human resource with slight aging tendencies. The vast majority of teachers and non-teaching staff are in the range 31-50 years (71.43%). Seniority structure analysis of employment shows a human resource experienced in the workplace. It can be seen that 80.9% have seniority bigger than 10 years of service.

Of the 21 respondents 10 are secondary education teachers, three are preschools teachers, three are primary teachers, three are auxiliary teaching staff, and two are administrative employee.

For the analysis of human resources in the Vișina Nouă Secondary School we used 16 assertions in the questionnaire that employees of the organization were invited to join or not, using a five-stage scale: strongly agree (to whom we attributed the value 5); partially agree (to whom we attributed the value 4); moderate (to whom we attributed the value 3); partially disagree (to whom we attributed the value 2); total disagree (to whom we attributed the value 1).

In Table 1 we presented the variables used on the human resources management analysis in Vișina Nouă Secondary School on which are based the research concerning the validity or invalidity of the hypotheses.

Table 1. Variables used on the human resources management analysis in Vișina Nouă Secondary School

Assertion	Strongly agree	Partially agree	Moderate	Partially disagree	Total disagree
Recruitment, selection and employment					
Are respected the criteria for recruitment, selection and hiring of human resources in the organization.					
Evaluation					
The assessment is made according to objective and clear criteria and well known by all.					
Management provides feedback and activity improvement solutions.					
Human resource development					
The organization shall provide all necessary resources and create favorable conditions for successful performance.					
I am encouraged to develop my career.					
Organization management directly involved in the development of my career.					
Personal development activities are undertaken (effective communication, stress reduction, counseling etc.).					
Human resource reward					
I am pleased about the level of remuneration.					
There are equity wage in the institution.					
Work relations and conditions					
I talk to colleagues about problems and difficulties in activity.					
There are trust relationships between colleagues.					
In the organization often arise conflicts.					
Organization management creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.					
The organization provide equal opportunities.					
Working conditions are good.					
The organization fulfills its obligations relating to health and safety.					

Hypotheses from which we started in our research on a schools from the Romanian rural area were:

H1. Recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation are perceived as fair by employees due to the fact that they are well regulated by laws and internal regulations.

H2. Employees are dissatisfied with the level of remuneration, given its low level in education sector.

H3. Within the organization there is a pleasant organizational climate, trust and collaboration between employees, with the involvement of management in the process of personal and professional development.

The variables on the recruitment, selection, hiring and evaluation within the organization recorded equal arithmetic mean, perception of employees concerning the accuracy of these activities being good and very good (Figure 1). This perception is due to the fact that these activities are highly regulated by laws and internal regulations, which usually within public institutions are strictly respected.



Figure 1. Perception on recruitment, selection, hiring, evaluation and feed-back (absolute indicators)

Recruitment, selection and hiring activities are largely outsourced, given that employment is made as a result of competition tenure taking place at national level. The assessment also is a well-regulated activity with more formal rules and not greatly influence the policy of reward.

Merit gradations which reward performance are awarded following competitions and not on the basis of the annual evaluation conducted by the school. We can say that the research hypothesis H1 is validated.

Concerning human resource development it can be seen that employees generally have a good and very good perception especially on providing the necessary resources and on creating favorable conditions for successful performance.

Arithmetic means and asymmetry coefficients indicate distributions to right with few extremes values to the left (Figure 2), which indicates employees consider that they are supported in the professional and personal development.

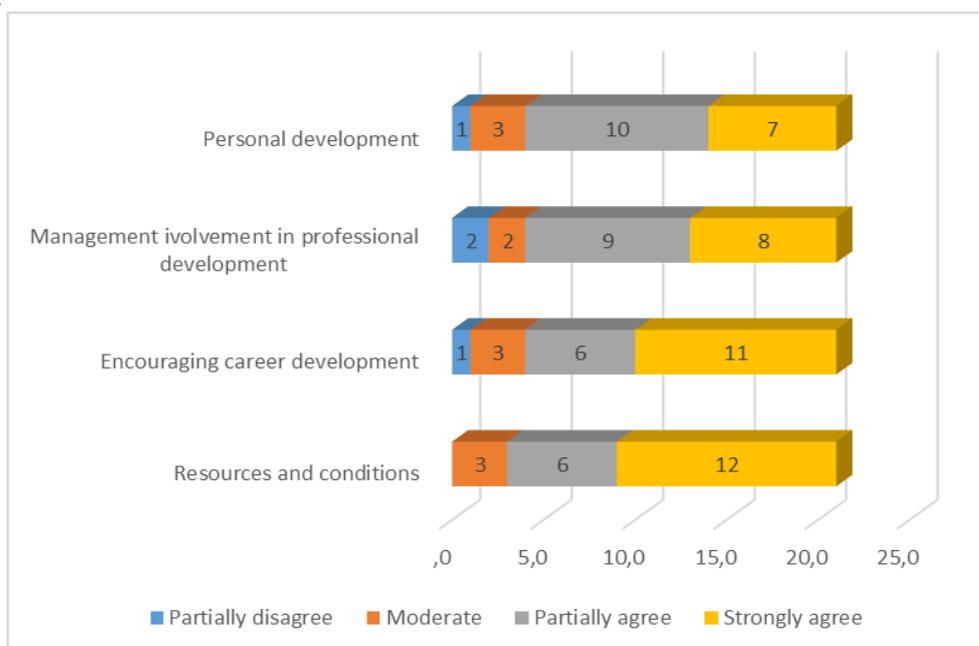


Figure 2. Perception of human resource development (absolute indicators)

Variable remuneration recorded answers coming out of the usual average (Figure 3).

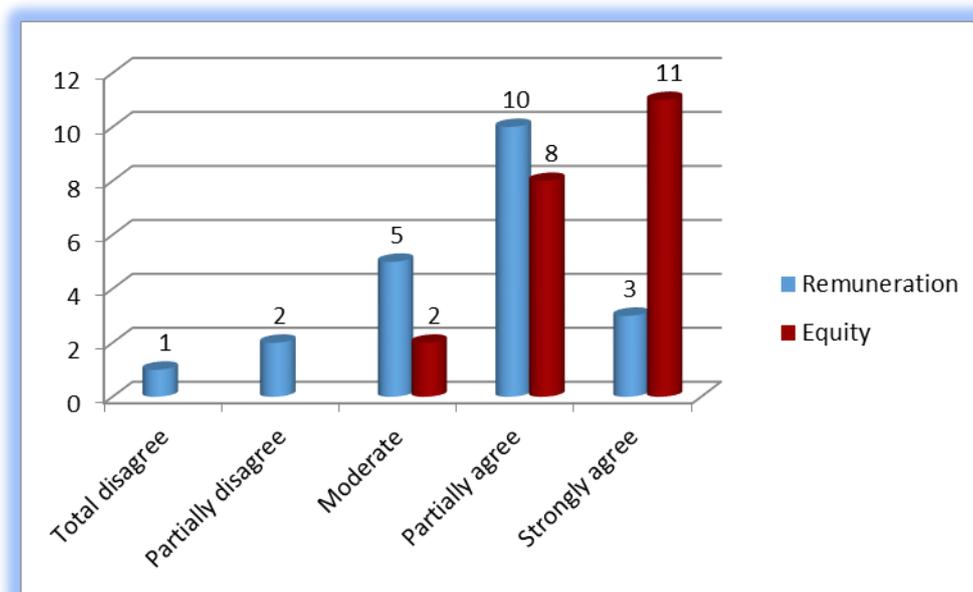


Figure 3. Perception of human resource development (absolute indicators)

There is dissatisfaction among employees of the organization. Three of employees (representing 14.3%) have a great dissatisfaction in terms of salary, while five employees (representing 23.8%) had moderate perceptions regarding wage levels. Although there is dissatisfaction on the salaries, wages perception of fairness is favorable, with only two opinions that it considers should be improved.

Analyzing the structure of personnel who are dissatisfied with salary we can see that they are from among auxiliary staff and non-teaching staff, five of the eight who are not satisfied with the salary being persons from these category (Table 2).

Table 2. Perception of remuneration by position held

	Remuneration					Total
	Total disagree	Partially disagree	Moderate	Partially agree	Strongly agree	
Preschool teacher	0	0	0	1	2	3
Primary school teacher	0	0	0	3	0	3
Secondary school teacher	1	0	3	5	1	10
Auxiliary teaching staff	0	2	0	1	0	3
Non-teaching staff	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	1	2	5	10	3	21

Also, it can be seen that of the four three male employees are not satisfied with the salary (Table 3).

Table 2. Perception of remuneration by gender

	Remuneration					Total
	Total disagree	Partially disagree	Moderate	Partially agree	Strongly agree	
Male	1	0	2	1	0	4
Female	0	2	3	9	3	17
Total	1	2	5	10	3	21

Levels recorded for indicators on wages indicates that hypothesis H2 is partially invalidated. Although there is dissatisfaction in terms of wage levels, lower relative to other areas from national average level, yet the teaching profession provides an income above those could get individuals if they work in the same locality in other economic areas.

Labor relations has a good perception among employees (figure 4).

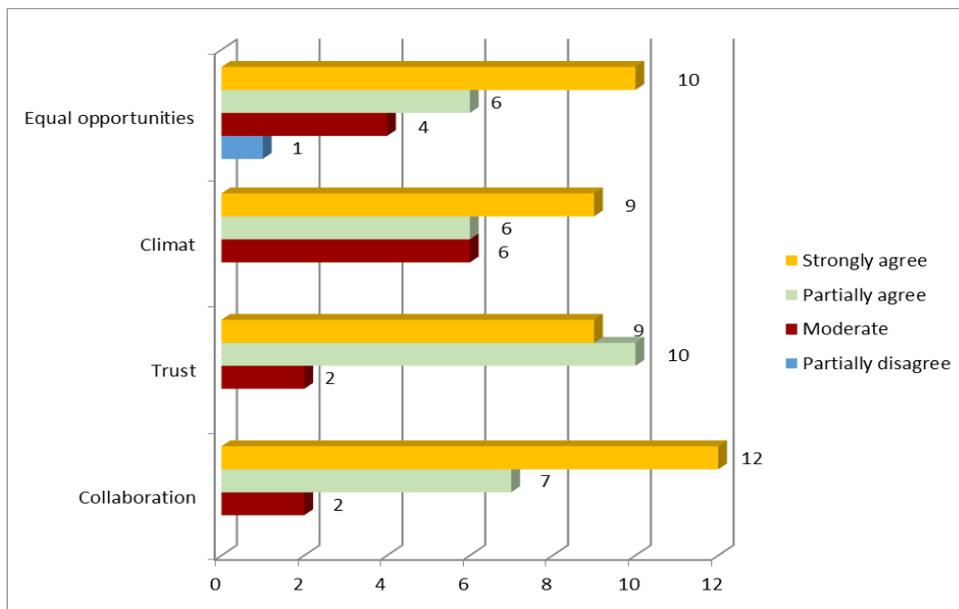


Figure 4. Perception of organizational climate and equal opportunities (absolute indicators)

There is a good organizational climate, characterized by cooperation and trust between colleagues. Also the situation of ensuring equal opportunities is good, only one person declaring himself unhappy with this issue.

A discordant note in labor relations is issue of conflicts within the organization. There are seven employees (representing 34% of total employees) that are wholly or partly agree that there are often conflicts within the organization. However, most employees (57%) disagreed with this assertion (figure 5).

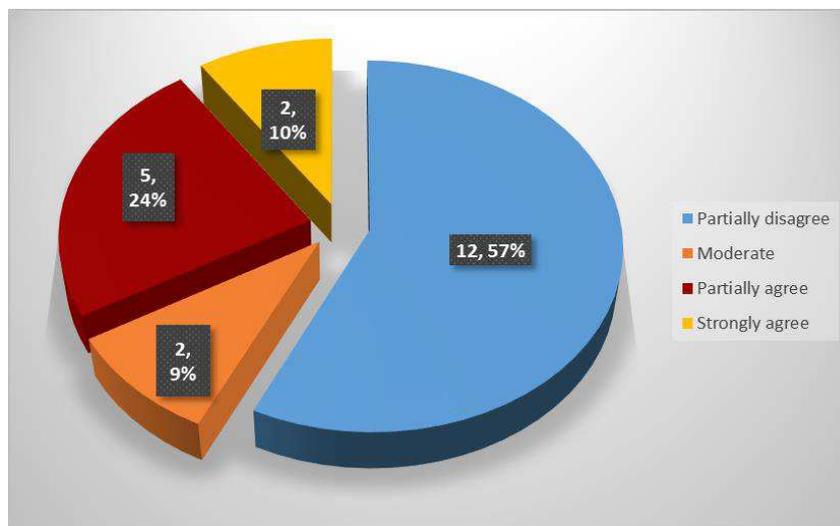


Figure 5. Perception of conflicts in the organization (absolute indicators)

One explanation for this anomaly from the general climate may be explained by personal punctual conflicts but these conflicts not affect the general climate of the organization.

Research of the third hypothesis H3 led to its validation. Within the organization there is a pleasant organizational climate, trust and collaboration between employees, with the involvement of management in the process of personal and professional development. The conflicts that arise are punctual which does not diminish the general climate of understanding and cooperation within Vișina Nouă Secondary School.

Perception of work conditions and obligations relating to health and safety at work is very good (average on working conditions is highest, being 4.90). Figure 6 illustrates this situation, 90.5% of employees in the organization stating that working conditions are very good.

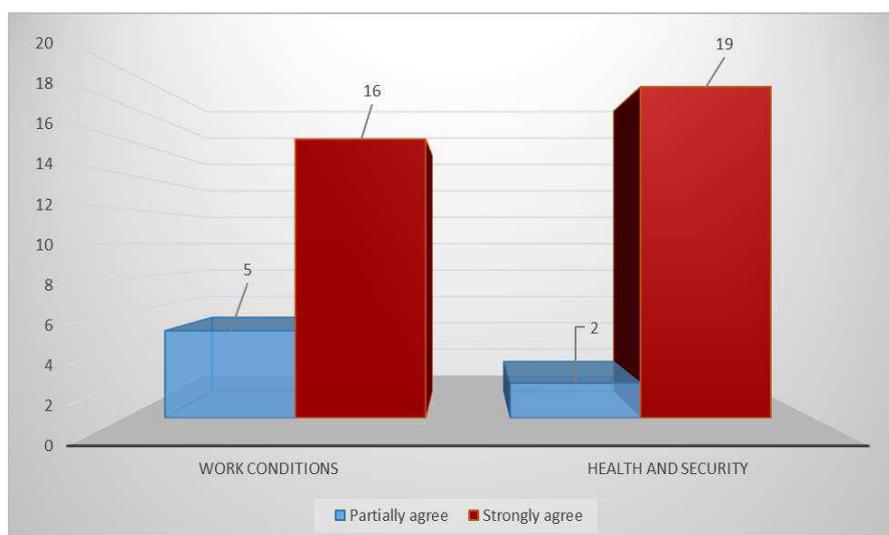


Figure 6. Perception of work conditions and obligations relating to health and safety at work (absolute indicators)

These perceptions can be explained by investments in schools and through the attention paid by local authorities to expenses and proper functioning of Vișina Nouă Secondary School.

5. Conclusions

Human resource management in education is of particular importance. This is because education staff is the main tool to achieve educational goals and, consequently, national development. Human resources are the key to rapid socio-economic development of any country and efficient services, including in education.

Human resource management activities in education include the recruitment and selection, staff retention, work relations, staff development, job management, performance management and rewards. Human resource management challenges include bad working conditions, problems with attracting and retaining staff, underfunding, and unpredictability status of teachers, among others. Education should be attractive by creating an atmosphere adequate for teachers. It is necessary a more attention that central and local public authorities give to the education sector because education remains the basis for the progress of all sectors of society.

In our paper work we conducted an empirical research that is based on a questionnaire covering key areas of human resources management at a school in Romanian rural area, Vișina Nouă Secondary School. The primary objective was to determine the particularities of human resource management in pre-university education. Due to hypotheses research were result a series of conclusions on how human resources are managed in a rural school in Romania.

Employee perception on fairness of recruitment, selection, hiring and evaluation in the organization is good and very good. Recruitment, selection and hiring activities are largely outsourced, given that employment is a result of a tenure competition taking place at national level. The evaluation also is a well-regulated activity with more formal rules and evaluation has not a great influence on the reward process.

Levels recorded for wages indicators show that although there is dissatisfaction in terms of wage levels, yet the teaching profession provides an income above average on total economy.

Within the organization there is a pleasant organizational climate, trust and collaboration between employees, with the involvement of management in the process of staff development. The conflicts that arise are punctual and does not affect the general climate within Vișina Nine Secondary School.

The overall conclusion that emerges from empirical research and observations overview of human resource management in the education system, is that in order to improve pupils outcomes, secondary schools need a strong strategy to improve the educational process. For that it is necessary a vertical networking with improvement strategy of the whole system of education, and a horizontal networking merging all its key elements - recruitment, selection, retention, mentoring, professional development, performance management, evaluation, rewarding process. In this way in the system will enter and remain people with the knowledge and skills needed to operationalize the overall strategy of improving the quality of education.

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