

Research Article

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An Investigation into the Causes of Violence and Riotous Behaviour among Secondary School Pupils in Zambia

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The objectives of the Study were to (i) Investigate the causes of violence and riotous behaviours among secondary school pupils in Zambia, (ii) Establish the common violent and riotous behaviours among Secondary School pupils, (iii) Evaluate methods schools use to discipline their pupils in Secondary Schools in Choma District, (iv) Identify sustainable methods of improving pupils' discipline in Secondary schools in Zambia.

Study Design: The research was a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach which used questionnaires for data gathering. Questions in the questionnaires included the sources of violent and riotous behaviours schools were experiencing and the methods used to control the vices. The emphasis was on analyzing the factors associated with violence and riotous behavior, establishing the relationship between the variables and identify sustainable methods of improving pupil discipline.

Place and duration of study: The study was undertaken in Choma district, southern province, Zambia in term 2/3 of 2018 academic year.

Methodology: Respondents targeted included: Secondary school pupils from grades 8 to 12, deputies and head teachers from boarding and day schools which had at least ten-year experience in offering secondary education. Six (6) out of fourteen (14) secondary schools in Choma district were randomly sampled. Six (6) Head teachers and six (6) Deputy Head teachers were purposefully sampled in the selected schools. Six classes with twenty (20) pupils each (one class per school) were selected per class using random sampling. The total of 120 pupils were targeted. Pupils that were selected were ranging from 10 to 20 years and above of age. A randomization procedure was used to select one class per class and per grade at each school.

Analysis: The associations between independent variables and violent and riotous behaviours (dependent variables) were statistically tested using the chi square and the Fisher's Exact tests. The analysis showed that there was a positive association between the variables measured at level of significance of 95 percent. The independent variables tested in the analysis above were; (1). Insufficient diet; (2). Poor sanitation; (3). Group influence and peer pressure; (4). Pupil indiscipline; (5) Abuse by teachers. The dependent variables in the research were violent and riotous Behaviour.

Results: The analysis to test the association between the identified factors (independent variables) that contribute to violent and riotous Behaviour were tested at the level of significance of 95 percent with probability (p) = 0.05. The test results show that the calculated values are less than $p = 0.05$. The chi-square value (X^2) was 0.029 while the Fisher's Exact value was 0.033. The rule of thumb or the decision rule guides that when the calculated values of chi-square and fisher's exact tests are less than $p = 0.05$, the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternative hypothesis should be accepted.

Null hypotheses: **H01-** There is no association between poor diet and riotous behaviour, **H02-** There is no association between poor sanitation and riotous behaviour, **H03-** There is no association between group influence and peer pressure and riotous behaviour, **H04-** There is no association between pupil indiscipline and riotous behaviour.

Research Questions: 1). What causes violence and riotous behaviour among Secondary School pupils in Choma District? 2). What are the most common violent and riotous behaviours among Secondary School pupils in Choma District? 3). What methods do schools use to discipline their pupils in Secondary Schools in Choma District? 4). What are the sustainable methods that could significantly improve pupil discipline in Secondary Schools in Zambia?

Conclusion: The aforementioned findings of the study have led to the following conclusion: Poor diet, poor sanitation, shortage of enough clean water, group influence and peer pressure, lack of adequate learning and teaching facilities such as, text books, furniture, classrooms, banker beds and hostels were associated with the causes of riotous behaviour in schools. Lack of commitment to duty by teachers and not attending adequately to pupils' grievances were also responsible for causing riotous behaviours. Internal school factors such as ineffective communication between pupils and the staff also contribute to the causes of violence and riotous behavior.

It is therefore, recommended that student councils be set and involved in planning menus for their meals, school policy formulation and decision making. Open days should be planned in each term where parents are invited to school to have a say on the general welfare of their children. Platforms where pupils can bring out their grievances freely without any fear or intimidation should be created. Programs that encourage self-esteem and respect for others such as clubs, quizzes and sporting activities should be emphasized. It is recommended that teachers should work hard, use variety of teaching approaches by exploiting all the available learning and teaching resources so that the required academic need of learners is met.

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Received: November 08, 2023; **Accepted:** November 22, 2023; **Published:** November 30, 2023

Keywords: Violence and Riotous Behaviour; Pupils, Disturbances, School Administrators

Introduction

Violence and riotous behaviour in schools cannot be overlooked due to significant disturbances they cause to learning and teaching processes in schools. Riots disrupt the educational programs in schools, resulting in poor academic performance, damaging school, and public property, homes leading to people getting hurt and stressed. These disturbances may lead to poor delivery and supervision of learning and teaching instructions resulting into academic poor performance of learners. This is due to frequent closures of schools caused by riots resulting into incompleteness of school syllabi. Worse still, pupils involved in rioting may be fined or sued in the court of law and be sentenced to imprisonment [1a-4]. If schools are to effectively overcome the negative effects of this complex social behaviour, there is need to take steps to establish the cause of this disruption in schools.

Statement of Meaning

This study describes violence as the intentional use of physical force or power or threats, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm and mal-development, or deprivation. The term violence can also refer to fighting, bullying, mocking, using abusive language and abnormal noise making [5]. The term riot is defined as a violent disturbance or demonstration during which a group of angry people become noisy and out of control, often damaging property and injuring people. The mandate of schools is to protect the rights of the pupils, foster social well-being and attain meaningful quality of life for every citizen through the provision of quality education which is key to development to every nation. However, the recent riotous behaviors and violence among pupils across the country have caused great concern. Hence the need to investigate the causes of this bad behaviour.

Observed Sources of Violence

The factors that lead to violence and riotous behaviours have been observed to include (1) excessive viewing of violence on television and internet; (2) repeated experiences of bullying behaviour; (3) poor parenting, (4) child abuse; (4) history of harsh or erratic discipline at home; (5) in ability to develop friendships in school and (6) drug abuse such as alcohol and marijuana. Children who exhibit several of these factors are at risk for committing later violence [6-8].

Peer Influence

Increased growth of youth gangs, easy availability of weapons, break-down of families, through divorce between the parents, lack of effective school discipline and inability of school staff to resolve conflicts between students are also viewed as sources of violence in schools [9,10]. The drug most likely to be found in school compasses is alcohol due to its easy accessibility. Alcohol is a depressant and as the amount of alcohol one consumes increase, its depressive effects creates more negative effects such as poor self-discipline. Other drugs abused include nicotine, heroin, marijuana and morphine (1b). Therefore, there is need to verify and establish common drugs abused in Zambian secondary schools, and identify best measures to reduce the abuse.

Media Influence

Movies on media such as television, Facebook, what's app, magazines and internet that show a lot of shootings, death, and more violence could cultivate violence in children. Even some cartoons promote violence, and it leads to shootings and fights

in schools [11]. Today, it seems the most predominant cultural principles are conveyed through media and entertainment. It is therefore, prudent that good morals are taught through the media and internet [12]. For this reason, there is need to investigate whether television and all other media programs children watch are controlled by parents and guardians.

Repercussion of Punishments

To curb bad behavior, constructive punishments should be given to deserving pupils at an appropriate time. Punishments should be used as tools for correction rather than weapons for vengeance. During the Old Testament times of the Holy Bible, 'divine' punishments reflected people's redemptive purposes; they were sufficient to encourage repentance, revival, and reformation. However, on the contrary, greater punishments when not well handled, may lead to greater stubbornness and rebellion [13-15]. It is therefore, important to find out the type of punishments and methods school administrators use to discipline their pupils.

Home Influence

The home environment is also thought to contribute to school violence. The long-term exposure to home gun violence, parental alcoholism, domestic violence, physical abuse of the child, and child sexual abuse teach children that criminal and violent activities are acceptable. When they go to school they may want demonstrate the revenge to whoever they may differ with [16-18]. Therefore, there is need to investigate whether teachers have good understanding of the home environments of their pupils.

Consequences on Academic Performance

While there could be other factors contributing to academic poor performance, it is understood that one of the reasons for this problem is because of riots and violence caused by pupils [19-22]. The problems of riots in learning institutions in Zambia have not only been noted in secondary schools but also in colleges and universities.

It is for this reason that the study was conducted to investigate the causes of violence and riotous behaviour. It was hoped that when the causes of violence and riotous behaviour are identified and highlighted, school administrators would be helped to come up with sustainable measures that could be employed to prevent these disturbances from occurring.

The objectives of the Study were therefore, to (i) Investigate the causes of violence and riotous behaviours among secondary school pupils in Zambia, (ii) Investigate the common violent and riotous behaviours among Secondary School pupils and, (iii) Identify the best ways of improving pupil's discipline in Secondary schools

Methodology

Study Site

The study was undertaken in Choma district (16.8054o S, 26.9970oE), of Zambia in term 2/3, 2018 academic year. Choma is southern province's capital town situated along Lusaka – Livingstone Road. Permissions were obtained from; 1) Rusangu University where the researcher was a student, 2) District Education Board Secretary office (DEBS), Choma, 3) Head teachers and deputies of selected schools, and 4) pupils themselves who participated in the study.

In order to obtain informed consent, a letter was written to each category of respondents which explained and assured them that the study would not cause any harm to them, that their participation was voluntary and that the information given would be treated

confidentially and be used only for the purpose of studying and identifying sustainable disciplinary measures in schools. After giving this assurance, respondents were then given questionnaires and asked to answer.

Data collection

Population and Sample

The study sampled six (6) out of fourteen (14) secondary schools in the district. Six (6) Head teachers and six (6) Deputy Head teachers were purposeful selected being the custodians of discipline in schools. The total of six classes (one class per school) were selected. Further, twenty (20) pupils were selected per class using complete randomized design, bringing the total 120. However, when it came to the actual collection of questionnaires, four (4) pupils (out of 120) did not bring back the questionnaires reducing the total to 116 (table 1). Pupils selected were from secondary schools operating from grades 8 to 12 with combinations: Public boarding with co-education=01, Mission boarding with co-education=02, Mission with girls only=01, Mission with boys only=01, and day school with co-education=01. Selected Mission schools belonged to different denominational affiliations. This particular pattern of school selection was used to have a wide coverage of school statuses and eliminate biasness.

A randomization procedure was used to select one class out of the total number of classes for the sampled grade per school. Numbers 1-3 or 5 were written on separate pieces of papers representing three or five classes in the school. Each number was written on a separate piece of paper. The papers were folded and put in a box for randomization. A pupil who represented the class to be used in the study picked up one paper from the box which was written 'Yes' or 'No'. 'Yes' meant to be sampled while 'No' meant not to be sampled. One paper was written 'Yes' while the rest were 'No'. This procedure was done in order to avoid biasness in terms of the selection of classes. A single class was opted for to avoid splitting an intact group. This way, it was hoped the trustworthiness of the results would be guaranteed.

Note that each class which was selected had more than twenty pupils. To choose the 20 pupils to participate in the study, random sampling was used again. This time, there were two types of papers written 'Yes' or 'No'. The papers which were bearing a 'Yes' were 20 while the rest were 'No'. The papers were then folded and put in the box. Pupils were asked to pick one paper only, and those who picked the papers that were written 'Yes' were selected to participate in the study. Each one of them was then given a questionnaire to answer.

Description of Participants

This section gives details on the responses from respondents and distribution by gender in selected schools.

Table 1: Selected Schools

School	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
A	16	13.8	13.8	13.8
B	20	17.2	17.2	31.0
C	20	17.2	17.2	48.3
D	21	18.1	18.1	66.4
E	19	16.4	16.4	82.8
F	20	17.2	17.2	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Sampled schools were represented by letters A, B, C, D, E and F. Note: names of schools were not indicated for the sake of confidentiality. (Status of school: A=mission-co-education, boarding; B= public-co-education, boarding, C= mission-female sex, boarding; D= public-co-education, day school; E= mission-co-education, boarding; F= mission-male sex, boarding).

Table 2: Gender of Pupil

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Male	53	45.7	45.7	45.7
Female	63	54.3	54.3	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

The table 2 above shows that out of 116 responds (pupils), fifty-three (45.7%) were males while sixty-three (54.3%) were females.

Table 3: School Experience on Violent and Riotous Behaviour

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Yes	93	80.2	80.2	80.2
No	23	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

A total of 93 (80.2%) pupils had experienced violent and riotous behaviours at their school while 23 (19.8%) had not. This indicates that violence and riotous behaviours was a real issue in the district, therefore, was need to establish the causes of the vice.

Table 4: Commonly Experienced Riotous and Violent Behaviour

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Insulting	41	35.3	35.3	35.3
Breaking property	47	40.5	40.5	75.9
Beer drinking and smoking	11	9.5	9.5	85.3
Beating up teachers	2	1.7	1.7	87.1
Fighting	14	12.1	12.1	99.1
Burning yards	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Property breaking and insulting had the highest frequencies among the commonly experienced riotous behaviours while fighting, beer drinking and smoking rated the second highest. Other common riotous behaviours were beating up teachers and burning yards.

Table 5: Causes of Riotous Behaviour Schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Group influence and peer pressure	26	22.4	22.4	22.4
Poor diet	49	42.2	42.2	64.7
Poor sanitation and lack of water	24	20.7	20.7	85.3
Indiscipline by pupils	12	10.3	10.3	95.7
Lack of freedom	1	.9	.9	96.6
Teacher absenteeism	1	.9	.9	97.4
Shortage of furniture/facilities	1	.9	.9	98.3
Abuse by teachers	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Group influence and peer pressure= beer drinking, tobacco and marijuana smoking, stealing; poor diet= poorly cooked food, unbalanced diet, poor quality of food cooked.

Table 6: Measures Required to Preventing Riots

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Provide good and balanced food , water and electricity to pupils	47	40.5	40.5	40.5
Punish offenders	26	22.4	22.4	62.9
Reinforce school rules and regulations	8	6.9	6.9	69.8
Counseling pupils	8	6.9	6.9	76.7
Attending to pupils problems	27	23.3	23.3	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

In table 6, respondents have suggested the following preventive measures to avoid riots; (i) provision of good food; (ii) good sanitation; (iii) solving the problem of electricity; (iv) re-enforcing school rules and regulations. Other suggested measures are provision of guidance and counseling services and attending to pupils' problems.

Table 7: Methods Schools use to Discipline Pupils

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Provide good and balanced food , water and electricity to pupils	28	24.1	24.1	24.1
Punish offenders	26	22.4	22.4	46.6
Reinforce school rules and regulations	5	4.3	4.3	50.9
Counseling pupils	5	4.3	4.3	55.2
Attending to pupils problems	4	3.4	3.4	58.6
Total	48	41.4	41.4	100.0
	116	100.0	100.0	

The common methods schools use to discipline the pupils were rated as shown in table 7; giving punishments to offenders (41.1%), forming disciplinary committees (24.1%), calling parents (22.4%), forced transfers and suspensions (4.3%), and attending to pupils' problems (3.4%).

Table 8: Ways to Improve Discipline at School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Punishment	43	37.1	37.1	37.1
Communication between teachers and pupils	54	46.6	46.6	83.6
Transfer of offenders	4	3.4	3.4	87.1
Providing essentials such as food, water and electricity	4	3.4	3.4	90.5
Call parents and hold discussions	7	6.0	6.0	96.6
Suspension	4	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	116	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 shows suggested ways that could be employed to improve discipline in schools such as improving communication between teachers and pupils, giving punishments, transfer of offenders to other schools and giving suspensions. Other suggested ways include the provision of basic needs such as quality food, water and electricity, and calling parents to hold discussions concerning the discipline of their children.

Null Hypotheses Tests

Table 9: Chi-square and Fisher's Exact Test on the Association between the Factors and Riotous and Violent Behaviour

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.252a	7	.000	.029	
Likelihood Ratio	11.730	7	.110	.029	
Fisher's Exact Test	18.022			.033	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.422b	1	.516	.507	.267
N of Valid Cases	116				

b. The standardized statistic is .650.

The association between the factors identified that the factors contribute to riotous and violent behaviour was tested at the level of significance of 95% at $p=0.05$. The test results show that the calculated values are less than $p = 0.05$. The chi-square value (X^2) is 0.029 while the Fisher's Exact value is 0.033. The rule of thumb or the decision rule guides that when the calculated values of chi-square and fisher's exact tests are less than $p = 0.05$, the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternative research hypothesis should be accepted. The null hypotheses of the research were as follows;

H01: There is no association between poor diet and riotous behaviour.

H02: There is no association between poor sanitation and riotous behaviour

H03: There is no association between group influence and peer pressure and riotous behaviour

H04: There is no association between pupil indiscipline and riotous behaviour

The statistical analysis of the data has confirmed that the factors assumed to be associated with the riotous and violent behaviours in schools in Choma Districts were positively linked. There is an association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables tested in the analysis above are; (1) poor diet; (2) Poor sanitation; (3) Group influence and peer pressure and (4) Pupil indiscipline. The dependent variable in the research was riotous and riotous behaviour.

Histograms

The information pertaining to participants and responses have also been presented in figures as follows:

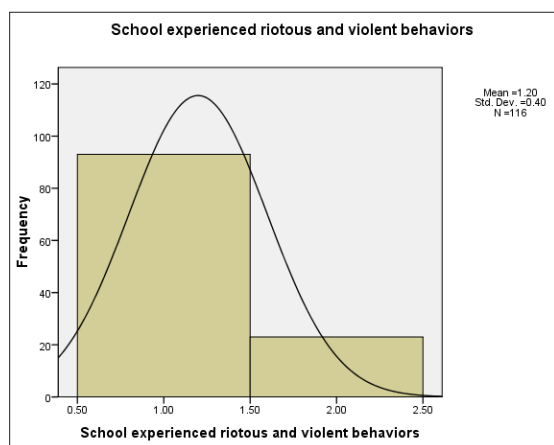


Figure 1: School Experienced Riotous and Violent Behaviour

The total number of schools sampled, 80.2 % experienced riotous and violent behaviour where as 19.8% did not have experience on riots (figure.1).

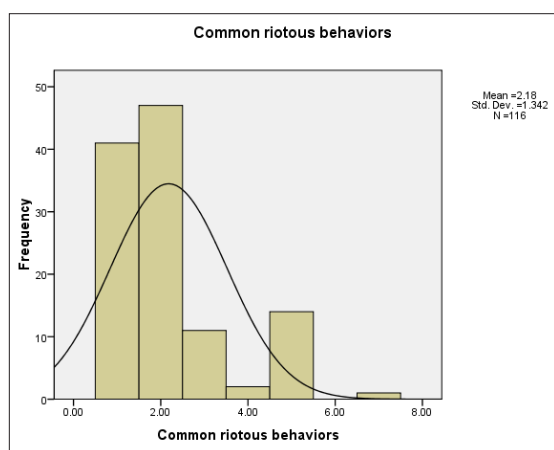


Figure 2: Common Riotous Behaviours

Common riotous behaviour were rated as follows: Insulting 35.3%, property breaking 40.5%, beer drinking and smoking 9.5%, beating up teachers 1.7%, fighting 12.1% and burning yards was at 0.9% (Figure 2).

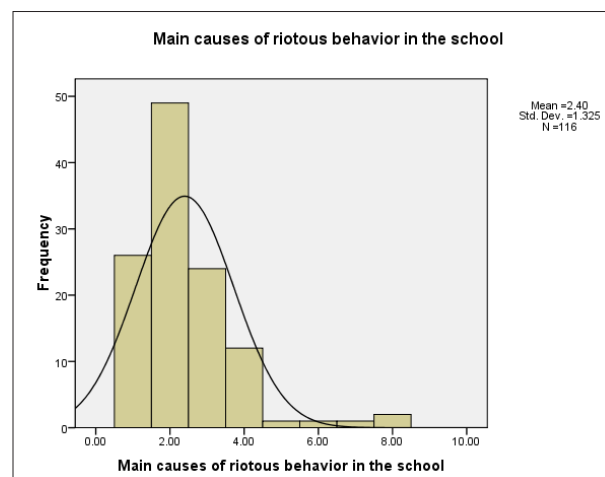


Figure 3: Causes of Violence and Riotous Behaviour

The rampant factors associated with violence and riotous behaviour was insufficient food (42.2%), peer pressure (22.4%), poor sanitation (20.7%), indiscipline by pupils, abuse by teachers (1.7%), lack of freedom, teacher absenteeism and shortage of furniture (0.9%) respectively.

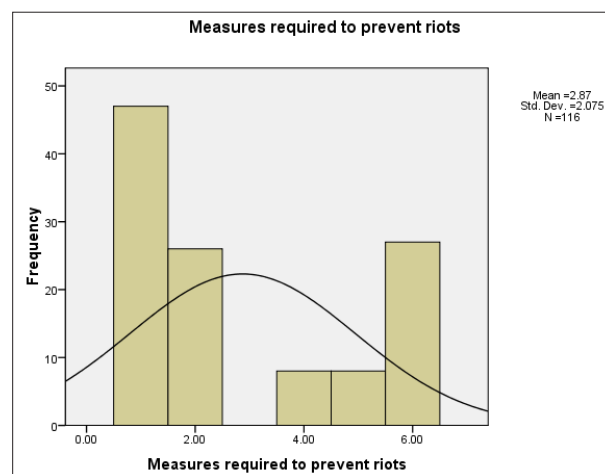


Figure 4: Preventive Measures

Provision of good quality food, good sanitation, provision of electricity, punishments to offenders, reinforcing school rules, guidance and counselling services and paying attention to pupils' problems.

Findings

The statistical analysis indicated that there was a positive association between the variables [(measured at the level of significance of 95%) and the level of significance with probability (p) = 0.05] and violent and riotous behaviour. The tests were also two-tailed and hence the statistical values used in the interpretation are taken from the fifth column (table 9). The test results show that the calculated values were less than $p = 0.05$. The chi-square value (X^2) is 0.029 while the Fisher's Exact value was 0.033. The rule of thumb or the decision rule guides that when the calculated values of chi-square and fisher's exact tests are less than $p = 0.05$, the null hypotheses should be rejected while the alternative hypotheses should be accepted.

The independent variables tested in the analysis are; (1). Poor diet (2). Poor sanitation (3). Group influence and peer pressure (4). Pupils' indiscipline. The dependent variable in the research was riotous and violent behaviour.

Conclusion

Poor diet, poor sanitation, shortage of clean water, group influence, peer pressure, lack of adequate learning and teaching facilities such as furniture, classrooms, science laboratories were associated with the causes of riots in schools. Peer pressure could be due to lack of effective provision of guidance and counseling services to pupils. Lack of commitment to duty by teachers and not attending to pupils' problems was also responsible for causing riots. It is therefore, recommended that boarding schools should set student councils which would be involved in planning menus for their meals, school policy formulation and decision making. Open days should be planned in each term where parents are invited to school to have a say on the general welfare of their children. Platforms where pupils can bring out their grievances freely without any fear or intimidation such as giving questionnaires, should be created. programs that encourage self-esteem and respect such as clubs, quizzes and sporting activities should be emphasized. It is recommended that teachers should work hard, use variety of teaching approaches by exploiting all the available learning and teaching resources so that the required need of learners is met.

Authors' Contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors 'a' and 'b'. Author MM undertook the research, writing the manuscript and performed the statistical analysis. Author DT helped in the planning for the execution of research, guided the interpretation process and proof read the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final draft of the manuscript.

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