

Empowering Teachers: Integrating Technology into Livelihood Education for a Digital Future

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Osias Kit T. Kilag

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Mercado St., Poblacion, Toledo City, Cebu, Philippines
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0845-3373>

Jayson R. Miñoza

Dean of Instruction, Chairperson for Research and Development, Cebu Technological University Pinamungajan Campus
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0339-9999>

Epifania S. Comighud

Department of Education, Schools Division of Toledo City, Philippines
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1513-6175>

Catherine A. Amontos

Department of Education, Schools Division of Toledo City, Philippines
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-5238-5522>

Marinelle C. Damos

PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Toledo City, Philippines
<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3053-6788>

Cara Frances K. Abendan

ECT Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Balamban, Cebu, Philippines
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6363-7792>

Abstract:

This systematic review explores the integration of technology into livelihood education and its impact on teacher empowerment and student preparedness for a digital future. Through a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature, the study highlights the benefits of technology integration in vocational education, including enhanced student engagement, improved learning outcomes, and personalized instruction. The findings emphasize the crucial role of teacher empowerment in successful technology adoption, with ongoing professional development and support programs proving instrumental in equipping educators with the necessary skills and confidence to leverage technology effectively. However, the digital divide remains a significant challenge, with unequal access to technology and the internet hindering inclusive education. Recommendations for addressing this gap include collaborative efforts and inclusive initiatives to extend technology access to underserved communities. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of balancing technological education with the development of essential soft skills to prepare students for the demands of an ever-changing job market. The implications of this research have significant implications for educational practice and policy, highlighting the need to prioritize teacher empowerment and create future-oriented vocational education ecosystems that foster a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Keywords: Technology integration, Livelihood education, Vocational education, Teacher empowerment, Digital future

Introduction:

In the fast-paced and ever-evolving digital landscape, technology has become an integral part of modern society. It has transformed the way we communicate, work, and learn, impacting virtually every aspect of our lives. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of digital literacy and technological skills cannot be overstated. In the context of education, embracing technology is not just a matter of staying relevant but a necessity for preparing the future workforce for the challenges of the digital era.

The integration of technology into livelihood education holds great promise for enhancing teaching and learning processes. Digital tools, such as interactive simulations, virtual reality (VR) modules, and augmented reality (AR) applications, can provide hands-on experiences that simulate real-world scenarios, enabling students to develop technical skills in a safe and controlled environment. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), incorporating technology into vocational education can lead to a 15% increase in learning outcomes and significantly reduce the dropout rates among students (ILO, 2018). Additionally, technological integration can cater to diverse learning styles, enabling teachers to personalize instruction and address individual student needs effectively (Zhu, 2016).

While the potential benefits are vast, the successful integration of technology into livelihood education relies heavily on the skills and readiness of the teachers. Educators play a crucial role in shaping the learning experience, and their ability to adapt to new technological advancements determines the extent of the positive impact on students' learning outcomes (Timperley, et al., 2008). Therefore, empowering teachers with the necessary knowledge and training is imperative to ensure the seamless implementation of technology in the classroom.

Challenges, however, accompany this integration process. One significant obstacle is the digital divide, referring to the unequal access to technology and the internet among different communities and regions. According to the World Bank, about 3.7 billion people, most of them from developing countries, lack access to the internet, hindering their ability to benefit from digital education (World Bank, 2021). Bridging this gap requires concerted efforts from governments, organizations, and stakeholders to provide adequate infrastructure and resources.



Moreover, integrating technology into livelihood education may raise concerns about job displacement and the relevance of certain skills in an increasingly automated world. As industries adopt automation and artificial intelligence technologies, there is a legitimate fear that some jobs may become obsolete (Ivanov & Webster, 2017). Hence, striking a balance between imparting technological skills and nurturing timeless human qualities such as creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability is essential to prepare students for an uncertain future.

This research aims to explore the integration of technology into livelihood education with a particular focus on empowering teachers. Livelihood education, also known as vocational or technical education, equips individuals with the practical skills and knowledge required to enter the workforce and pursue successful careers in specific fields. By incorporating technology into this form of education, we can bridge the gap between traditional teaching methods and the demands of the digital future, ultimately fostering a more skilled and adaptable workforce.

Literature Review:

In the digital age, technology has become ubiquitous in our lives, profoundly impacting the way we work, communicate, and learn. Consequently, there is an increasing emphasis on integrating technology into various educational domains, including livelihood education. Livelihood education, also known as vocational or technical education, is designed to equip students with practical skills and knowledge relevant to specific careers. Incorporating technology into this form of education holds the potential to enhance learning outcomes and better prepare students for the demands of the digital future.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018), the integration of technology into vocational education can lead to significant improvements in learning outcomes and retention rates. The use of interactive simulations, virtual reality (VR) modules, and augmented reality (AR) applications in vocational training creates immersive and engaging learning experiences. Students can practice technical skills in virtual environments, gaining valuable hands-on experience that prepares them for real-world challenges (ILO, 2018). Furthermore, research by Dalton, et al. (2012) indicates that technology integration in vocational education caters to diverse learning styles, enabling teachers to personalize instruction and address individual student needs effectively.

While the benefits of technology integration in livelihood education are promising, the success of implementation hinges on the readiness and skills of the teachers. Educators play a pivotal role in shaping students' learning experiences and need to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to effectively leverage technology in the classroom.

Studies have shown that teacher empowerment programs focused on technology integration significantly impact student learning outcomes. Bond, et al. (2020) found that training teachers to use digital tools effectively resulted in improved student engagement and motivation. Teachers who received training felt more confident in using technology to enhance their teaching methods, leading to a positive impact on student performance.

However, it is essential to address potential barriers to teacher empowerment. Research by Chai et al. (2018) highlights that some teachers may feel overwhelmed or intimidated by technology, leading to resistance in adopting new teaching practices. Providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities can mitigate these concerns and foster a culture of continuous learning among educators.

One significant challenge in integrating technology into livelihood education is the digital divide. The digital divide refers to the disparity in access to technology and the internet among different communities and regions. According to the World Bank (2021), approximately 3.7 billion people, predominantly from developing countries, lack access to the internet. This divide can limit the potential benefits of technology integration, as students without access to digital resources may be left behind in acquiring essential skills for the future job market.

To address the digital divide, governments, organizations, and stakeholders need to collaborate on initiatives that provide equal access to technology and the internet. Projects like "One Laptop Per Child" (OLPC) have been implemented in various countries to distribute low-cost laptops to students in underserved communities, enabling them to access digital learning resources (Mora, et al., 2018). Additionally, partnerships with private companies can facilitate the provision of internet connectivity in remote regions, thereby extending the benefits of technology integration to a broader population.

As technology continues to advance, concerns about job displacement and the relevance of certain skills in an automated world have emerged. While technology is a powerful tool for enhancing vocational education, it should be complemented with the development of timeless human qualities such as creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability.

Research by Stein (2017) highlights the importance of nurturing skills that set individuals apart from machines. Soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, and emotional intelligence are essential for success in any career and cannot be easily replicated by technology. Thus, vocational education programs should strive to strike a balance between imparting technical expertise and fostering these essential human qualities.

Several countries and institutions have implemented successful models of technology integration in livelihood education. Singapore, for instance, has been recognized for its innovative approach to vocational education. The country's Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs) and Polytechnics have embraced technology to provide students with hands-on experiences through simulated labs and virtual training environments (Rafiq, et al., 2019). The success of Singapore's approach lies in its focus on preparing students for the evolving needs of industries, enabling them to be highly employable in the digital economy.

Similarly, Germany's dual education system has been lauded for its effective integration of technology and practical training. The system combines classroom education with on-the-job training, enabling students to apply their theoretical knowledge directly in workplace settings (Casey, et al., 2021). The use of modern technology in these workplace environments has not only enhanced learning experiences but also increased students' employability and preparedness for the digital job market.



The literature on integrating technology into livelihood education highlights the potential benefits of preparing students for a digital future. The use of digital tools can enhance learning experiences, increase engagement, and cater to diverse learning styles. However, successful implementation requires empowering teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively use technology in the classroom.

To ensure inclusive education, efforts must be made to bridge the digital divide and provide equal access to technology and the internet. Additionally, vocational education programs should strike a balance between imparting technical skills and nurturing essential human qualities that will remain relevant in the face of automation.

By examining successful models from different countries and institutions, this research aims to provide insights into the best practices for technology integration in livelihood education. The findings will contribute to the development of comprehensive and future-oriented learning ecosystems, empowering both teachers and students for success in the digital age.

Methodology:

In this study, a systematic review methodology was employed to investigate the integration of technology into livelihood education and its impact on empowering teachers and preparing students for a digital future. The systematic review aimed to synthesize and analyze existing literature on the topic, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research and identifying key trends, challenges, and best practices in this domain.

The research question guiding the systematic review was as follows: "What are the effects of integrating technology into livelihood education on teacher empowerment and student preparedness for a digital future?"

A systematic search of academic databases, including PubMed, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Scopus, and Google Scholar, was conducted. Keywords and search terms used included "technology integration," "livelihood education," "vocational education," "teacher empowerment," "student preparedness," "digital future," and related variations. The search was limited to articles published in the past decade to ensure relevance and currency.

To maintain the rigor of the systematic review, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. Included studies had to be peer-reviewed articles, research papers, or reports that focused on the integration of technology into livelihood education. Studies examining the impact of technology on teacher empowerment and student preparedness for a digital future were considered. Articles that discussed other forms of education or technology applications unrelated to vocational training were excluded. Non-English publications and studies published before the past decade were also excluded.

The initial search yielded a total of 347 articles. After removing duplicates, two researchers independently screened the titles and abstracts of the remaining articles based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Discrepancies in the selection process were resolved through discussion, resulting in the identification of 53 articles for full-text review.

During the full-text review, the researchers extracted relevant information from the selected articles. Data extraction included the author's name, publication year, research context, research design, technology integration methods, teacher empowerment strategies, student outcomes, and key findings related to the research question.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the included studies, a quality assessment was conducted. The Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies and the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Quasi-Experimental Studies were used to evaluate the methodological rigor of each study. Studies that did not meet the minimum quality criteria were excluded from the final analysis. The data extracted from the selected studies were synthesized and analyzed thematically. Key themes and patterns related to the impact of technology integration on teacher empowerment and student preparedness were identified. Findings from the included studies were compared and contrasted to draw overarching conclusions.

Findings:

The systematic review of literature on the integration of technology into livelihood education and its impact on teacher empowerment and student preparedness for a digital future yielded valuable insights. The findings were organized into key themes and trends, shedding light on successful practices, challenges, and the overall implications of incorporating technology in vocational education.

1. Technology Integration in Livelihood Education

The reviewed literature highlighted a widespread adoption of technology in livelihood education across various countries and institutions. Digital tools, such as interactive simulations, virtual reality (VR) modules, and augmented reality (AR) applications, were commonly used to provide students with hands-on experiences in simulated environments. For example, Singapore's Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs) and Polytechnics were recognized for their innovative use of technology in creating virtual training environments (Varaprasad, 2022). Germany's dual education system also emphasized technology integration, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge directly in workplace settings through digital platforms (Paryono, 2015).

Moreover, the use of technology in livelihood education was found to enhance student engagement and motivation. Studies reported that students responded positively to interactive learning experiences, leading to increased interest and active participation in the learning process (Koech & Bagwasi, 2020). The ability to practice technical skills in virtual environments created a safe and controlled setting, allowing students to build confidence and competence before entering real-world work settings (ILO, 2018).

2. Teacher Empowerment and Technology Integration

A critical aspect of successful technology integration in livelihood education was the empowerment of teachers. Research indicated that training and professional development programs played a pivotal role in equipping educators with the necessary skills and confidence to leverage



technology effectively (Ali, 2020). Teachers who participated in these programs reported feeling more prepared to adopt digital tools in their teaching practices, leading to positive outcomes for both themselves and their students.

Whalen, et al. (2019) emphasized the significance of ongoing support and mentorship for teachers as they navigated the challenges of integrating technology into their classrooms. Providing educators with continuous learning opportunities and access to technical support was found to be crucial in overcoming resistance to change and ensuring sustained progress in technology integration.

Furthermore, teacher empowerment through technology integration extended beyond the classroom. Many studies highlighted that digitally competent teachers were better positioned to support students in developing 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy (Erstad, et al., 2021). Empowered teachers also played an active role in creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation among their students (Ferrari, 2009).

Despite the benefits of technology integration in livelihood education, the digital divide emerged as a significant challenge. Access to technology and the internet varied widely among different communities and regions, affecting the equitable distribution of educational opportunities. The World Bank (2021) reported that approximately 3.7 billion people, predominantly in developing countries, lacked access to the internet, hindering their ability to benefit from digital education.

To address the digital divide, several initiatives were identified in the literature. "One Laptop Per Child" (OLPC) programs, implemented in various countries, aimed to provide low-cost laptops to students in underserved communities (Whalen, 2019). Additionally, public-private partnerships were formed to expand internet connectivity in remote regions, ensuring that students from all backgrounds could access digital learning resources.

3. Balancing Technological Education with Human Qualities

A recurring concern in the literature was the need to strike a balance between technological education and the development of essential human qualities. While technology integration was seen as vital for preparing students for a digital future, researchers emphasized the importance of nurturing skills that set individuals apart from machines.

Soft skills, such as communication, creativity, emotional intelligence, and adaptability, were identified as crucial attributes for success in the modern job market (Gunter, 2017). Vocational education programs were encouraged to incorporate activities that fostered these skills alongside technical training. Some institutions integrated project-based learning, group activities, and real world problem-solving tasks to promote the development of both technical and soft skills among students (Kumar & Vigil, 2019).

The systematic review also identified some gaps in the existing literature. While there were several studies focusing on the benefits of technology integration in livelihood education, there was a limited number of longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of technology on student outcomes and career success. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of different teacher empowerment programs and strategies was relatively sparse, with more studies needed to explore the most effective approaches for preparing educators to integrate technology effectively.

Discussion:

The systematic review of literature on the integration of technology into livelihood education and its impact on teacher empowerment and student preparedness for a digital future provides valuable insights into the current state of research in this domain. This discussion section delves into the implications of the findings and their significance for educational practice and policy. It also explores the potential benefits and challenges of technology integration in vocational education, along with recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness.

1. Technology Integration for Engaging and Effective Learning

The reviewed literature consistently highlights the positive impact of technology integration on student engagement and learning outcomes in livelihood education. The use of interactive simulations, virtual reality (VR) modules, and augmented reality (AR) applications provides students with immersive and hands-on learning experiences. These digital tools allow learners to practice technical skills in simulated environments, preparing them for real-world challenges (ILO, 2018). Such engaging learning experiences are particularly beneficial for students who may struggle with traditional instructional methods or have different learning styles (Kumar & Vigil, 2019).

Additionally, technology-enhanced livelihood education offers opportunities for personalized learning experiences. Teachers can tailor instruction to meet individual student needs, providing targeted support and feedback to enhance learning outcomes (Kumar & Vigil, 2019). This personalization can foster a supportive learning environment, empowering students to take ownership of their education and explore their interests and strengths.

2. Teacher Empowerment: A Key Factor for Successful Technology Integration

The findings emphasize the pivotal role of teacher empowerment in successful technology integration. Educators play a crucial role in guiding students' learning experiences and must be adequately equipped with the knowledge and confidence to leverage technology effectively (Kumar & Vigil, 2019). Teacher empowerment programs that offer professional development, training, and ongoing support are essential for helping teachers navigate the challenges of integrating technology into their classrooms (Chai et al., 2018).

Empowered teachers not only effectively use technology but also foster a positive and inclusive learning environment. They are better equipped to support students in developing critical 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, problem-solving, and communication (Koech & Bagwasi, 2020). Additionally, teacher empowerment contributes to a culture of continuous learning, where educators embrace innovation and are open to exploring new teaching methodologies (Koech & Bagwasi, 2020).

3. Addressing the Digital Divide for Inclusive Education



The findings highlight the digital divide as a significant challenge in ensuring equitable access to technology and digital learning resources. The World Bank (2021) estimates that billions of people, mainly from developing countries, lack access to the internet. This digital divide poses a threat to inclusive education, as students without access to technology may miss out on the benefits of technology integration in livelihood education.

To address the digital divide, policymakers and educational institutions must prioritize initiatives that promote equitable access to technology. Public-private partnerships, government-funded programs, and community-based efforts can help extend technology and internet connectivity to underserved areas (Warschauer, 2018). Additionally, institutions can explore alternative methods of technology delivery, such as mobile-based learning platforms, which have the potential to reach students even in remote regions with limited access to traditional computer-based technology.

4. Balancing Technological Education with Soft Skills Development

A critical consideration in technology integration is striking a balance between technical education and the development of essential human qualities. While technology offers valuable opportunities for vocational training, the importance of nurturing soft skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability, should not be overlooked (Gunter, 2017). These skills are vital for success in any career and cannot be easily replicated by technology.

Vocational education programs should adopt approaches that foster the simultaneous development of technical and soft skills. Project-based learning, collaborative activities, and real-world problem solving tasks can be incorporated into the curriculum to promote the integration of both skill sets (Kumar & Vigil, 2019). Emphasizing the value of soft skills alongside technical proficiency can better prepare students for the demands of a rapidly changing job market, where adaptability and creativity are highly valued.

5. Long-Term Impact and Future Research

While the findings demonstrate the positive impact of technology integration in livelihood education, there is a need for more longitudinal studies to assess its long-term effects on students' career trajectories and success. Understanding the lasting impact of technology-enhanced vocational education can provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and employers in shaping future educational strategies.

Furthermore, more research is required to explore the most effective teacher empowerment strategies for technology integration. Comparative studies examining different professional development models and the outcomes of various support structures can offer evidence-based recommendations for empowering teachers in adopting technology in vocational education.

6. Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

The findings of this systematic review have several implications for educational practice and policy:

- a. **Professional Development for Teachers:** Educational institutions should invest in comprehensive and continuous professional development programs to empower teachers in integrating technology effectively. These programs should address the specific needs and challenges faced by teachers and provide ongoing support.
- b. **Equitable Access to Technology:** Policymakers must prioritize initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide and providing equitable access to technology and the internet. Collaboration between governments, private organizations, and international agencies can be instrumental in reaching underserved populations.
- c. **Emphasizing Soft Skills:** Vocational education programs should actively promote the development of soft skills alongside technical training. Integrating activities that foster creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability can better prepare students for the complexities of the future job market.
- d. **Continuous Research and Evaluation:** Ongoing research and evaluation are essential for understanding the long-term impact of technology integration in livelihood education. Future studies should assess the effectiveness of teacher empowerment programs and the outcomes of technology enhanced vocational education.

The findings of this systematic review emphasize the potential of technology integration in empowering teachers and preparing students for a digital future. The positive impact on student engagement, learning outcomes, and the development of essential skills highlights the importance of embracing technology in vocational education. However, challenges, such as the digital divide and the need to balance technical education with soft skills development, must be addressed to ensure inclusive and effective technology integration. By considering the implications of these findings, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can work collaboratively to create innovative and future oriented vocational education ecosystems that equip students with the skills they need to thrive in the digital era.

Conclusion:

The integration of technology into livelihood education holds tremendous promise for empowering teachers and preparing students for a digital future. This systematic review of literature has highlighted the significant impact of technology-enhanced vocational training on student engagement, learning outcomes, and the development of essential skills. The findings underscore the importance of equipping educators with the knowledge and confidence to effectively leverage technology in the classroom while also addressing the challenge of the digital divide to ensure inclusive education.

Technology integration has proven to create engaging and effective learning experiences for students in livelihood education. The use of interactive simulations, virtual reality (VR) modules, and augmented reality (AR) applications has enabled learners to acquire practical skills in simulated environments, preparing them for real-world challenges. Such immersive learning experiences have not only enhanced student engagement but also promoted personalized instruction, catering to diverse learning styles and needs.

However, the success of technology integration hinges on teacher empowerment. Empowering teachers through professional development, training, and ongoing support has been demonstrated to be a critical factor in harnessing the full potential of technology in vocational education. Digitally competent teachers are better positioned to guide students in developing 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, critical thinking,



and problem-solving. Moreover, teacher empowerment fosters a positive and inclusive learning environment, where students are encouraged to explore their interests and strengths.

Yet, the digital divide remains a significant challenge in realizing the full potential of technology enhanced livelihood education. The unequal access to technology and the internet among different communities and regions poses a threat to equitable education. To address this divide, collaborative efforts involving governments, private organizations, and international agencies are essential to extend technology and internet connectivity to underserved populations. Inclusive initiatives, such as "One Laptop Per Child" (OLPC) programs and mobile-based learning platforms, offer promising solutions to bridge the gap and create equal opportunities for all learners.

Moreover, a critical consideration in technology integration is the balance between technical education and the development of soft skills. While technology offers invaluable opportunities for vocational training, nurturing essential human qualities, including creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking, must remain a priority. Vocational education programs should strive to integrate activities that promote the simultaneous development of technical and soft skills, preparing students for a future job market that demands adaptability and innovation.

As the future workforce navigates the complexities of the digital era, the implications of this systematic review carry significant weight for educational practice and policy. Educational institutions must invest in continuous teacher empowerment programs to ensure educators are well prepared to embrace technology in the classroom. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to technology and digital learning resources for all students. Vocational education programs must actively foster the development of soft skills alongside technical training, equipping learners with a comprehensive skill set for success in the rapidly evolving job market.

The findings of this study underscore the transformative potential of technology integration in livelihood education. By empowering teachers and providing equitable access to technology, vocational education can truly prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of a digital future. As stakeholders work collaboratively to implement the implications of this research, they have the power to shape inclusive and future-oriented learning ecosystems that equip the workforce with the skills and adaptability needed to thrive in the dynamic and digitalized world of tomorrow. The journey towards a technology-empowered livelihood education begins today, paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future.

Conclusion:

The integration of technology into livelihood education holds tremendous promise for empowering teachers and preparing students for a digital future. This systematic review of literature has highlighted the significant impact of technology-enhanced vocational training on student engagement, learning

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the systematic review, several implications and recommendations can be drawn for practice and future research:

- a. **Teacher Empowerment:** Educational institutions and policymakers should prioritize teacher empowerment programs to support effective technology integration. Providing continuous professional development opportunities, mentorship, and technical support can help educators overcome challenges and maximize the benefits of technology in livelihood education.
- b. **Inclusive Education:** Efforts to address the digital divide are essential to ensure equitable access to technology and digital learning resources. Collaborative initiatives involving governments, private companies, and international organizations can help bridge the gap and create inclusive learning environments.
- c. **Balancing Technical and Soft Skills:** Vocational education programs should focus on nurturing both technical and soft skills among students. Emphasizing the development of creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability alongside technical training will better prepare students for the evolving job market.
- d. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of technology integration on students' career trajectories and success. This will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of technology-enhanced vocational education over time.

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