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## The Effects of Personality Traits on Teaching Efficacy of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan Cooperative Universities in China

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To understand the current situation and relationship between the Big Five personality and teaching efficacy of college English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities. **Method:** By using Big Five Personality Questionnaire Short Form and the Teaching Efficacy Scale, 250 college English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities were investigated. **Results:** It was found that the Big Five personality and teaching efficacy levels of college English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities were in the middle to the upper level, and the personality traits of agreeableness and openness were obvious. The Big Five personalities of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities were closely related to their teaching efficacy, among which extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were all significant positive predictors of positive teaching efficacy; extraversion, and openness were significant negative predictors of negative teaching efficacy.

**Keywords:** Fujian-Taiwan Cooperative Universities, English Teachers, Big Five Personality, Teaching Efficacy

### Introduction

English Teachers in higher education are the core force driving the development of higher education. As key subjects of educational activities, they shoulder the traditional responsibilities of preaching, teaching, and solving problems. As a product of cooperation between universities in Fujian and Taiwan, English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities mainly come from Taiwan universities and mainland universities. As the main force in the front line of teaching in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities, their personality traits embodied in the process of teaching will have an important influence on the thoughts

and behaviors of college students. Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities have characteristics that are different from those of other universities in China. Firstly, college students in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities have a poor cultural foundation, they can enter undergraduate institutions with lower grades and more expensive tuition fees; secondly, the curricula of various majors in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are more international; thirdly, Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are oriented to cultivate urgent, practical and outward-looking talents. These factors make Fujian-Taiwan students a new group of college students, and English Teachers who teach with them will bring some different feelings (Shen, 2016). So, what factors in the personality traits of Fujian-Taiwan college English Teachers have an important impact on their teaching efficacy? Experience shows that more extroverted and articulate college English Teachers tend to get a better teaching experience, while more introverted and unsociable college English Teachers may get a lower teaching feeling. To promote the enhancement of teaching efficacy among English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities and to strengthen the training of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college English Teachers in a targeted way, this paper conducts an empirical study on the personality traits of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college English Teachers and their teaching efficacy. To be specific, Based on the research background and literature review, this study aims to explore the effects of different types of personality traits on teaching efficacy among Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college English Teachers? Three null hypotheses of the study are (1) Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college's English Teachers' extroversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness of personality had no significant effect on personal positive teaching efficacy; (2) Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college's English Teachers' extroversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness of personality had no significant effect on personal negative teaching efficacy; (3) Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college's English Teachers' extroversion, Agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness of personality had no significant effect on general teaching efficacy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Personality Traits**

Personality, the sum of beliefs, attitudes, interests, temperament, abilities, and values, determines how a person behaves and where he or she is directed and is the organic unity of a person's inner and outer qualities (Zhang et al., 2016). Trait refers to a relatively persistent, consistent, and stable characteristic of human thoughts, feelings, and actions that can be expressed in many environments, and it expresses the behavioral tendencies that characterize personality (Allport, 1961). The Big Five Personality Traits theory, first proposed by McCrae and Costa in 1997, includes five dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Extraversion describes the frequency of interpersonal interactions and the ability to obtain pleasure; agreeableness describes the individual's sympathetic or oppositional attitude toward others; conscientiousness describes the individual's self-discipline and management to achieve goals; neuroticism describes the individual's emotional stability, and openness describes the individual's perception of experience (McCrae & Costa, 1997). In this study, we searched 59 Chinese literature on China Knowledge Network DataBase from 2012 to 2022 with the theme of "English Teachers" + "personality" + "traits". In these studies, different scholars have studied the relationship between personality traits and English Teachers' work stress (Zhang, 2020), subjective well-being (Lai et al., 2020), occupational stress (Ding et al., 2020), empathy (Xia, 2019) and self-efficacy (He, 2018). The research on personality traits of university English Teachers mainly

lies in their relationship with organizational identity (Tao & Feng, 2019), job burnout (Hu & Zhao, 2019; Ji, 2018; Zhang & Cheng, 2016), research ability (Han & Chen, 2019), professional commitment (Hu, 2019), professional identity (Wang, 2018) and students' academic performance (Wei et al., 2015).

### **Teaching Efficacy**

In the context of English Teachers' affective perceptions, their personality traits can enhance their teaching efficacy and promote teaching performance (Tao, 2015). Woolfolk et al. showed that teaching efficacy consists of three factors, namely personal positive teaching efficacy, personal negative teaching efficacy, and general teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy refers to English Teachers' confidence in their ability to positively or negatively influence students' learning behaviors and achievement; general teaching efficacy refers to English Teachers' general perceptions of teaching and learning and the role of education in students' development (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

In many studies, the research objects are early childhood English Teachers, primary and secondary school English Teachers, and general college English Teachers, but there is no research on Fujian-Taiwan cooperative College English Teachers. Given the special characteristics of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college English Teachers, it is of special significance to study their personality traits and teaching efficacy with them as the objects.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

In this study, 280 questionnaires were distributed to English Teachers in seven Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities in China, using convenience sampling, and 259 questionnaires were returned. 250 valid questionnaires were obtained after excluding 9 invalid questionnaires, with a valid return rate of 89%. Since the demographic factors of English Teachers and students were not analyzed in this paper, the gender, age and other information of English Teachers and students are not detailed here.

### **Research Instruments**

#### **Big Five Personality Inventory**

A simplified version of the Big Five Personality Inventory developed by American psychologists McCrae and Costa were used, with 60 items and five dimensions, which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. The questionnaire was self-assessed by the English Teachers and scored on a five-point LIKERT scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The reverse question scoring was shifted, and the scores for each construct were summed and averaged as the personality trait score for that construct. The internal consistency coefficient (reliability) of the original scale was 0.79, and the internal consistency coefficients of the subscales were 0.75 (extraversion), 0.77 (agreeableness), 0.78 (conscientiousness), 0.84 (neuroticism), and 0.81 (openness). The reliability of the scales was 0.82, 0.80 (extraversion), 0.82 (agreeableness), 0.87 (conscientiousness), 0.78 (neuroticism), and 0.85 (openness), respectively, after appropriate modifications according to the subjects of this paper, and the reliability of the scales was good by SPSS 22 test.

### Teaching Efficacy Scale

This study used the Teacher Teaching Efficacy Scale developed by Chinese scholars Guoliang Yu, Jiliang Shen, and Tao Xin, which has 27 items and 3 dimensions, they are personal positive teaching efficacy, personal negative teaching efficacy, and general teaching efficacy. The questionnaire was scored on a five-point LIKERT scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The scores for the reverse questions were shifted and the scores for each construct were summed and averaged as the teaching efficacy score for that construct. The internal consistency coefficients (reliability) of the original scale and each subscale ranged from 0.7 to 0.89. In this study, the reliability of the scale ranged from 0.72 to 0.8, with good reliability, after appropriate modifications were made according to the study population.

### Results

SPSS 22 was used to perform factor analysis, descriptive statistics analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis on the data.

### Validity analysis of the Big Five personality trait scale (factor analysis)

Using the validated factor analysis method, based on the principal component analysis, the maximum variance method was chosen to orthogonal rotate the data, and the factor value was set not less than 0.6. Finally, combined with the literature, five factors (extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness) were obtained, which explained a total of 72.94% of the variance, with a high degree of factor explanation and good questionnaire validity, the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Factor Analysis of the Big Five Personality Trait Scale*

	extraversion	agreeableness	Sense of conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
A12	0.784				
A17	0.799				
A32	0.757				
A57	0.636				
A4		0.799			
A19		0.836			
A34		0.782			
A49		0.783			
A10			0.908		
A25			0.882		
A60			0.915		
A1				0.581	
A16				0.738	
A36				0.679	
A51				0.765	
A8					0.817
A13					0.766
A18					0.753
A53					0.745

### Validity Analysis of the Teaching Efficacy Scale (Factor Analysis)

Using the validated factor analysis method, the data were orthogonally rotated based on the principal component analysis and the maximum variance method, and the factor values were set at no less than 0.6. Finally, combined with the literature, three factors (personal positive teaching efficacy, personal negative teaching efficacy, and general teaching efficacy) were obtained, which explained a total of 69.35% of the variance, with a high degree of factor explanation and good questionnaire validity.

Table 2

Factor analysis of the Teaching Efficacy Scale

	Personal Positive Teaching Efficacy	Personal negative teaching efficacy	General teaching efficacy
B1	0.784		
B3	0.799		
B5	0.757		
B6	0.636		
B2		0.799	
B9		0.836	
B13		0.782	
B25		0.783	
B7			0.908
B18			0.882
B20			0.915
B27			0.675

### Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the current situation of Big Five personality and teaching efficacy of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Descriptive analysis of the dimensions of Big Five personality and teaching efficacy among English Teachers of universities in Fujian-Taiwan cooperation*

Factor	M	SD
extraversion	3.98	0.44
agreeableness	4.13	0.73
conscientiousness	3.34	0.76
Neuroticism	2.24	0.79
Openness	3.66	0.63
Personal Positive Teaching Efficacy	3.56	0.74
Personal negative teaching efficacy	2.57	0.90
General teaching efficacy	2.32	0.31

As shown in Table 3, the scores of personality traits in the Big Five personality of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities were ranked from highest to lowest as agreeableness, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Personal positive teaching efficacy scores were higher than general educational efficacy and personal negative teaching efficacy on the teaching efficacy scale.

### Correlation Analysis

The correlations between the dimensions of the Big Five personality and the dimensions of teaching efficacy are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Correlation analysis between the dimensions of Big Five personality and the dimensions of teaching efficacy*

	Personal Positive Teaching Efficacy	Personal negative teaching efficacy	General teaching efficacy
extraversion	0.79***	-0.26***	0.27
agreeableness	0.65	-0.35	0.48
conscientiousness	0.67	-0.57	0.57**
Neuroticism	0.58	-0.56***	0.61
Openness	0.86**	-0.43***	0.66

Note: \*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $P < 0.001$  (same below)

The data indicated that personal positive teaching efficacy had a highly significant positive relationship with extraversion and openness, while personal negative teaching efficacy had a significant negative relationship with extraversion, neuroticism, and openness.

### Regression Analysis

Based on the literature review, the following prediction model is proposed in this study.

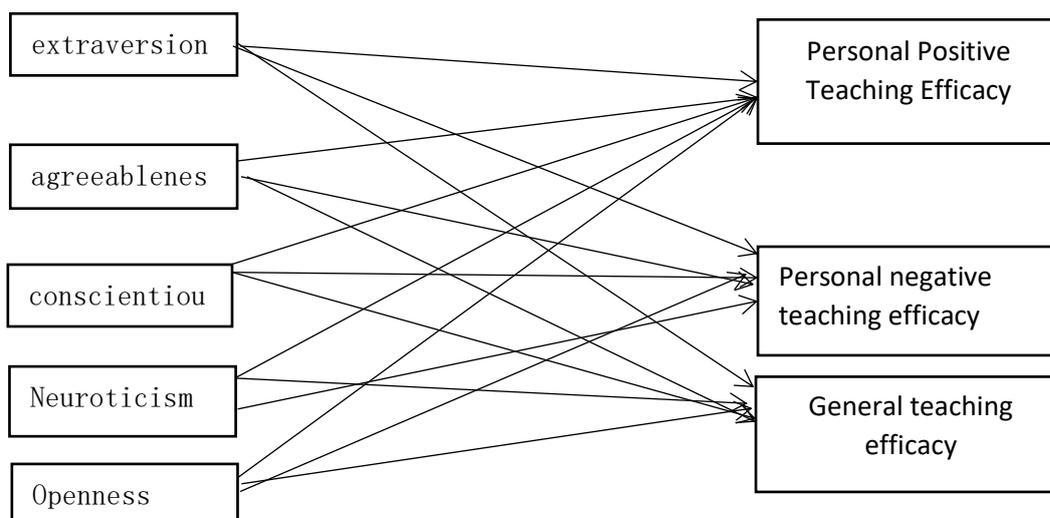


Figure 1 Prediction model

In Model 1 (see Table 5), extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness were the independent variables and personal positive teaching efficacy was the dependent variable, and the regression effect was significant, explaining a total of 56.4% of the variance, with good explanatory power. Among them, extraversion personality was a highly significant positive predictor of personal positive teaching efficacy ( $P=0.000 < 0.001$ ); and agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were significant positive predictors of personal positive teaching efficacy ( $P=0.021, 0.015, \text{ and } 0.032 < 0.05$ ), respectively. In terms of the degree of influence of Big Five personality on personal positive teaching efficacy, extraversion (0.457) > openness (0.443) > agreeableness (0.354) > neuroticism (0.245) > conscientiousness (0.231).

In Model 2, with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness as independent variables and personal negative teaching efficacy as dependent variables, the regression effect was significant, explaining a total of 45.5% of the variance, with good explanatory power. Among them, agreeableness and conscientiousness personality were highly significant negative predictors of personal negative teaching efficacy ( $p=0.000 < 0.001$ ); extraversion and openness were significant negative predictors of personal negative teaching efficacy ( $p=0.044, 0.041 < 0.05$ ), respectively. In terms of the degree of influence of Big Five personality on personal negative teaching efficacy, extraversion (0.543) > neuroticism (0.512) > agreeableness (0.443) > conscientiousness (0.352) > openness (0.126).

In Model 3, with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness as independent variables and general teaching efficacy as the dependent variable, the regression effect was not significant, explaining a total of 15.3% of the variance, with poor explanatory power, and this model will not be discussed.

Table 5  
Table of Regression Analysis Coefficients

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardization factor	t	Sig.	R-Square
		B	Standard error	Beta			
Personal Positive Teaching Efficacy Model 1	extraversion	0.394	0.356	0.457	3.452	0.000	0.564
	agreeableness	0.305	0.086	0.354	2.310	0.021	
	conscientiousness	0.234	0.57	0.231	1.980	0.015	
	Neuroticism	0.345	0.065	0.245	1.523	0.069	
	Openness	0.86	0.051	0.443	2.330	0.032	
Personal negative teaching efficacy Model 2	extraversion	-0.453	0.032	0.543	2.741	0.044	0.455
	agreeableness	-0.732	0.024	0.443	3.606	0.000	
	conscientiousness	-0.365	0.067	0.352	3.755	0.000	
	Neuroticism	-0.321	0.025	0.512	1.654	0.356	
	Openness	-0.689	0.033	0.126	2.536	0.041	
General teaching efficacy Model 3	extraversion	0.345	0.032	0.257	1.342	0.078	0.153
	agreeableness	0.631	0.021	0.124	0.054	0.165	
	conscientiousness	0.372	0.042	0.212	0.096	0.347	
	Neuroticism	0.441	0.021	0.148	0.035	0.891	
	Openness	0.952	0.054	0.164	1.324	0.736	

## Discussion

### Current situation of Big Five personality and teaching efficacy of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities

This study found that the extraversion personality ( $M=3.88$ ), agreeableness personality ( $M=4.13$ ), conscientiousness personality ( $M=3.34$ ), and openness personality ( $M=3.866$ ) of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities were at a moderate to the high level (higher than the median value of 2.5), which indicated that the Big Five personality of

English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities showed high extraversion, high agreeableness, high conscientiousness, and high openness personality traits, which is partially consistent with the findings of Qi (2018); Hu (2019) on teacher personality traits and teaching efficacy. It also indicates that English Teachers in Min-Tai cooperative universities are happy to deal with people and enjoy interpersonal interactions; are more inclined to hold a sympathetic attitude toward others; can discipline and manage themselves and have a strong sense of conscientiousness, and have better imaginative and creative traits. English Teachers with these personality traits are better able to mingle with students in the process of teaching and management, listen to their ideas up close, and can manage students with an optimistic, positive, and responsible attitude with themselves as role models; at the same time, they have good imaginative and creative traits, which are all excellent traits for English Teachers. In the teaching efficacy dimension, the teaching efficacy of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities showed a high degree of personal positive teaching efficacy ( $M=3.56$ ), a moderate degree of personal negative teaching efficacy ( $M=2.57$ ), and a low degree of general teaching efficacy (median value of 2.5). This indicates that English Teachers in Min-Tai cooperative universities have a high degree of confidence in their ability to positively influence students' behavior and achievement; they believe that teaching and education play only an average role in the development of students.

#### **Correlation between the Big Five Personality and Teaching Efficacy of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan Cooperative Universities**

The correlation coefficients between the Big Five personality traits and teaching efficacy of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative college English Teachers show that positive personal teaching efficacy has a strong positive relationship with extraversion and development; negative personal teaching efficacy has a significant negative relationship with extraversion, neuroticism, and openness; and general teaching efficacy has a significant positive relationship with conscientiousness. This indicates that the more optimistic, positive, imaginative, and creative English Teachers in Min-Tai cooperative universities are, the more confident they are in teaching and the more positive they are in influencing students' behavior and performance; on the contrary, the more pessimistic, unsociable, emotionally unstable and dull-minded English Teachers are, the more negative they are in teaching and its influence. The more responsible English Teachers are, the more positive their perceptions of the role of teaching and education in the development of their students.

#### **Regression analysis of Big Five Personality on Teaching Efficacy among English Teachers of Fujian-Taiwan Cooperative Universities**

In the three regression models, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were found to be significant positive predictors of personal positive teaching efficacy. In particular, English Teachers with extroverted personalities had higher personal positive teaching efficacy than English Teachers with openness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness, suggesting that traits such as enthusiasm, socialization, activity, and optimism significantly influence their confidence in their judgments about students and their behavior and performance. The study also showed that traits such as optimistic and active, imaginative, and emotionally rich predicted low personal positive teaching efficacy and significantly increased their confidence in the teaching process to positively influence students and student behavior and academic performance.

After a literature summary and data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn from this study. First, the Big Five personalities of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are in the middle to the upper level, the level of teaching efficacy is in the middle level, and the traits of agreeableness and openness are obvious. Second, the Big Five personality of English Teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities was closely related to their teaching efficacy, in which extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were all significant positive predictors of positive personal teaching efficacy; extraversion and openness were significant negative predictors of negative personal teaching efficacy.

### **Conclusion**

After a literature summary and data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn from this study. First, the Big Five personalities of teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are in the middle to the upper level, the levels of teaching efficacy are in the middle level, and the traits of agreeableness and openness are obvious. Second, the Big Five personalities of teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities are closely related to their teaching efficacy, in which extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness are significant positive predictors of personal positive teaching efficacy, while extroversion and openness are significant negative predictors of personal negative teaching efficacy.

The results of this study found that there is a close relationship between personality traits and teaching efficacy among English teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities. Further, the regression analysis revealed that English teachers' personality traits have an important influence on the improvement of teaching efficacy.

From the perspective of English teachers themselves, If English teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities can control and adjust themselves, and have a correct perception of the curriculum that is different from that of other universities (for three reasons: first, the admission scores of Fujian-Taiwan universities are lower, and college students have a poorer cultural foundation and unqualified English level; second, the curriculum of each major in the Fujian-Taiwan program is more international and English-related course is easily accessed; and third, the program aims to cultivate practical in English and outward-looking talents), and balance themselves with reality, then their sense of teaching effectiveness will be enhanced and improved accordingly. Although teaching efficacy exists as a relatively stable perception and belief in the development of English teachers, teaching itself is contextual, complex, and diverse, and English teachers' teaching efficacy may change in the face of specific educational tasks and teaching situations. The English teachers of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities need to pay attention to their personality and cognition in their teaching practice, develop and improve themselves, and give full play to the influence of their excellent personality traits on students in their teaching practice.

From the viewpoint of the education department, English teachers must pass the corresponding written test and interview when they enter the education position. The personnel department that selects the English teachers of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities should add attention to the personality traits of the English teachers, and use questionnaires and interviews to select the English teachers with high extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. This strict admission principle controls the

high standard of the teaching team of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities from the basis, and to a certain extent restricts people with unsound personality traits from entering the teaching team and thus affects the healthy development of the teaching team. Furthermore, In Fujian-Taiwan cooperative colleges and universities, the improvement of English teachers is conducive to the smooth training of college students. In addition, it can reduce the probability of negative events and promote the sound development of education.

From the perspective of universities administrators, personality traits have stability across time and situations, and what makes personality change is the events in life that affect people. In teaching practice, there are a variety of relevant events every day, which more or less affect the personality traits of English teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities. To help English teachers strengthen their teaching beliefs and improve their positive personal teaching efficacy, a democratic, equal, and harmonious external environment for English teachers needs to be created, and psychological counseling through short-term lectures, lectures and discussions needs to be carried out for English teachers in specific situations of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities. Universities should regularly provide high-quality professional learning and vocational training programs for English teachers in Min-Taiwan cooperative colleges and universities, and systematically organize English teachers' learning such as further education and advanced study to further improve English teachers' general teaching efficacy; at the same time, rich insight, appropriate training, and assistance from research groups help English teachers form an open-minded cognition, and contribute to the development and refinement of English teachers' personality traits in the process of learning, providing a boost to reduce English teachers' negative personal teaching efficacy.

Therefore, adopting appropriate incentive mechanisms to help English teachers of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities improve their personalities and establish sound mental health mechanisms can help improve English teachers' sense of teaching efficacy, promote the professional development of English teachers of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities, prevent brain drain, and thus stabilize the English teachers of Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities. In conclusion, the research results on personality traits and teaching efficacy of English teachers can provide good references for the selection and training of English teachers in Fujian-Taiwan cooperative universities.

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