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## **Towards Holistic Education: Synthesizing Personality Consciousness, Emerging Technologies, and Philosophical Considerations in Education System Evolution**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the article was to highlight the paradigm of holistic education in several dimensions: professional and educational, which involves coordination within the educational system (pedagogical, organisational, methodological, educational aspects); socio-educational, when education is positioned in a single context of content and format with other areas of socio-cultural activity; educational and human dimension, which ensures the formation of personal versatile general and vocational training. The aims of the **article** determined the relevance of unifying the principles of the educational system regardless of regional, national, and cultural specifics. The creation of a holistic education implies the supremacy of the purpose of education in the rapid civilizational development: preservation of traditional educational meanings and improvement of innovative forms of educational space. **Methodology.** In the research a number of general scientific methods was used: the analytical method provided a conceptual understanding of the integrity of education; the comparative method identified common and distinctive features of the educational process at different levels of transmission and perception; the modelling method defined strategies for educational development in terms of correlation of various educational components in a single paradigm. Along with scientific methods, philosophical and synergistic methods were actively used, thanks to them the study was conducted using interdisciplinary and self-organising elements. The **results of the study showed the** demand for holistic education among the educational community. The internal educational system is ready for a holistic model of the educational process at all levels, which is facilitated by the active use of innovative formats of educational activity that ensure the continuity and sustainability of education. There is also a virtually unanimous position among the subjects of the educational process on the need to unify educational standards in order to improve the quality characteristics of educational levels. Prospects for the study are proposals for the development of agreed (not identical in form, but conceptually common) principles of educational development at the local and global levels. **Conclusion.** Thus, education, being an integral part of civilizational progress, forms strategies for its development in the context of integration, multicultural, and pluralistic value processes of today. The human dimension of the educational process involves actualising the formation of the universality of knowledge, skills, and abilities that a person acquires through an educational experience.

**Keywords:** holistic education, educational synergy, educational strategies, educational subject, educational goals.

## **Introduction**

Holistic education has long been associated with the notion of universality of education. The ability to respond to the socio-cultural challenges of the time as well as to transform the internal educational environment formed the principles of sustainable education. However, the modern understanding of integrity is gaining more of a human dimension. Promoting human potential and offering various ways to realise it formed a relevant trend in education that ensured that people acquire the proper educational arsenal (knowledge, skills, experience). The focus on the individual has led to the transformation of educational standards, which have somewhat changed the standard educational principle of “knowledge for education” into the more popular “knowledge for opportunities.” Therefore, the focus on holistic education is not artificial, but causal.

### *Research Problem*

The research problem of the article involved the highlighting the principles of holistic education in order to build a universal model of education that will simultaneously ensure the sustainability and dynamism of educational development. Today’s realities determine the need to reconcile such diametrically opposed principles of the education system. The sustainability of education is a fundamental indicator and ensures the intended purpose of this sphere of social development. The

dynamism is expressed by the variability of processes and phenomena in the educational environment associated with the innovative progress of society. The integrity of education is the ability to combine these two trends in educational development while maintaining individual and social priorities for educational subjects.

#### *Research Focus*

The focus of the study was on the educational environment and the subject of the educational process and attempts to form a paradigm of integrity for these elements of education. The intra-educational space is characterised by integrity under conditions of harmonious coordination of traditional and innovative formats of educational activity. The individual characteristic of the integrity of the subject of education involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience in the process of education simultaneously according to clear fundamental standards and flexible universal principles.

#### *Research Aim and Research Questions*

The purpose of the article can be divided into several parts that define the principles of integrity of education in the modern society:

- the professional and educational aspect, which involves the holistic development of pedagogical, organisational, logistical, educational, methodological, and moral elements of education;
- the socio-educational context, in which education is positioned as an integrative active sphere of social activity;
- is an educational and human element that focuses on the formation of the versatility of the subject of educational activity.

The objectives of the article were to actualise the unification of the principles of the educational system regardless of regional, national, and cultural specifics. The research question was expressed in the need for a philosophical and value-based analysis of the standards and principles of holistic education: is the currently dominant synergistic methodology able to ensure the development of the integrity of education or are new approaches needed for a new educational paradigm?

#### **Literature Review**

Scientific research on the integrity of education has gradually transformed its views on the fundamental principles and elements that actually form and ensure this integrity. Traditionally, the issue of integrity of education had a sectoral focus and focused on the issues of pedagogical, educational, methodological, organisational, and educational unification of educational standards. However, another anthropological turn in the philosophical and worldview picture of the world has reoriented the understanding of human integrity to the subject of the educational process. The integrity of education has become the subject of research primarily in the philosophy of education, rather than in classical educational and scientific fields (Pelonis, 2021). Mookkiah & Karan (2023) offer a more interdisciplinary scientific interpretation, noting that holistic education is a combination of philosophical ideas and educational practices.

Scientific and technological progress is a global trend, and it is clear that it has transformed the principles of educational development. The understanding of the integrity of education has also changed, with elements of an innovative educational environment being actively incorporated into the content and format. Sukhonthachit & Rattanawicha (2022) give holistic education the characteristics of

a paradigm shift. Freedman & Martin (2022) in their editorial for the holistic journal grouped the ideas of holistic education of the last four decades, forming a macro view of this concept of educational development.

Educational strategies aim to create an optimal learning environment (Ramesh, 2023). The prospects of holistic education are explained in the study by De Veaux et al. (2022). Holistic education opens the way to the development of innovative education globally and locally, guided by philosophical and existential guidelines (Berbic Kolar & Srnic, 2021).

## **Research Methodology**

### *General Background*

In the research general scientific methods were used:

- The analytical method provided a conceptual understanding of the integrity of education;
- The systemic-structural method not only stated the integrity of education but also indicated the components that ensure it;
- The comparative method identified common and distinctive features of the educational process at different levels of transmission and perception;
- The modelling method defined strategies for educational development in terms of the correlation of various educational components in a single paradigm.

Along with scientific methods, philosophical and synergistic methods were actively used, thanks to which the study was conducted using interdisciplinary and self-organisational elements. Self-organisation is actualised in the article in two aspects: structural and organisational (combination and coordination of all educational elements in a holistic paradigm); personal and organisational (behaviour and activity of the subject of the educational process aimed at the effective educational activity).

## **Research Results**

The fundamental definition of holistic education is the following: "Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, the natural world, spiritual values, compassion, and peace" (Miller, 1997). This interpretation does not specify specific educational parameters either for the system or for the subjects of educational activity. However, the philosophical and ideological characteristic clearly outlines the goal of holistic education, giving it an existential meaning.

Having received such a generalised guideline for a promising educational paradigm, the educational, scientific, and philosophical communities began to fill the niches of this system with functional and substantive elements. It is worth noting that the pluralism of modern scientific discourse implies proposals for various characteristics of a particular term or concept. Given the ambiguity of the concept of holistic education, there have been many proposals for interpreting this concept or adding its components. However, it should be noted that under such conditions of scientific and theoretical diversity, not all elements of holistic education that have been proposed have been practically or theoretically recognised, verified, and given academic status. The study proposes elements of holistic education that have been established, proving their relevance in the paradigm of this educational model.

The integrity of education in terms of social relevance involves the updating of many standards of living. Rianawaty et al. (2021) propose to include such elements as a leadership programme, an

entrepreneurship programme, and an environmental care programme in a holistic education system. One of the characteristics of the human dimension of holistic education is interpersonal communication strategies (Erizki & Rochmaniah, 2020). The communication aspect is especially important in the modern society, as educational content plays a significant role, equalling its weight with traditional pedagogical activity. In the modern and rapidly growing globalised world, a holistic educational experience goes beyond the academic environment (Vasava, 2019). This raises a practical and obvious problem: what environment will guide educational processes? The educational system in the modern world is mostly guided by the usual self-organising principles, but the dynamism of social development requires a cross-sectoral universal management element. Senior (2020) notes the peculiarity of holistic education, which is a combination of sustainability and flexibility. Padmanabha (2023) notes two more elements of the holistic educational paradigm: accessibility and responsibility.

Preventing moral degradation and avoiding legal nihilism are some of the key ideological and mental tasks facing holistic education today (Isroani & Huda, 2022). Adherence to values is one of the key principles of holistic education (Ooka Pang et al., 2021). Values have always been a normative and regulatory tool. Holistic education includes not only a rationalistic and intellectual component. Moral and ethical, cultural and creative, and even religious and worldview principles are also integrated into a single educational system. Secular and religious education is a sign of the interaction of worldview and mental views that find agreement in the educational sphere (Zandroto & Indriani, 2023). Sabilan et al. (2021) suggest the use of an integrated holistic education system (IHES) to ensure the principles of cultural, religious, and other forms of tolerance and interaction.

This number of characteristics of holistic education is incomplete, but it does indicate a significant diversity of individual and social aspects that are actualised in the paradigm of holistic education. At the same time, it is worth noting that a holistic approach to education does not mean complete coordination and harmonisation. For example, certain educational elements may be abandoned or limited in order to preserve the integrity of the personal educational system. Similarly, social requirements may exclude a subject of the educational system from the list of potential candidates for certain educational activities. The integrity of education involves the adaptation of the subject of the educational space to the new conditions of digital and technological saturation. Reddy (2021) promotes the concept of holistic life education. This positioning implies the use of all elements (technological, digital, information, and communication) relevant to the subject and everyday life in the educational process. The main advantage of holistic education in today's dynamic world is the ability to quickly adapt to new conditions (Syed, Wynn, & Wasana, 2023). The dynamism of education is ensured by transformational learning (Ojha, 2020). The concept of transfer learning is relevant for a dynamic socio-cultural space (Li, Wang & Wang, 2023). The acquired knowledge, complemented by flexible humanitarian skills, is implemented in real-life scenarios. This is how the acquired competencies are adapted in the professional and practical dimension. The integrity of such processes determines the level of effectiveness of the educational process.

Another paradox of holistic education is diversity as one of its components (Liu, 2022). One of the manifestations of structuring the integrity of education is its modular model (Rybska & Błaszak, 2020). The components of such an educational system include: safety, participation, interaction, cognition, representation, and creativity. In other words, the palette of socio-cultural and individual elements of educational activity and educational outcomes convinces of the pluralism of a holistic approach rather than a uniform, strict model of educational development. The old-style holistic education dominated by a single worldview element (religion, science, or technology) is not in demand at the present stage of civilizational development. In today's world, holistic education is an integrating factor in the inclusion of national cultures and economies in global processes (Madhuri & Vidyanand, 2023).

On the one hand, such a dominant could be the technological and digital space that has literally captured the human being. However, the democratic, legal, civil, and mental characteristics of human individuality (primarily, their rights and freedoms in the understanding of the civilised world) make this potential dominance in education or other areas of social activity impossible.

Given the absence of a priority element of holistic education, the study proposes to structure three key dimensions of this paradigm (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Paradigmatic dimensions of holistic education.*

The dimension of holistic education	Key educational characteristics
1. The individual dimension of holistic education.	1. The formation of a fully developed subject of the educational space.
2. The social dimension of holistic education.	2. The setting up a functional and pragmatic educational process.
3. The civilizational dimension of holistic education	3. The educational strategies of global importance development.

Source: author's own development

Efforts to combine the paradigm of holistic education of a personal and social nature were made by Farber, Moran & Wahle (2022). According to them, education is implemented with an integrated social potential, and the result of educational activity should be the development of a holistic personality. This creates a vicious circle with pragmatic educational content when the individual shapes the integrity of society, which ensures the integrity of the individual. In particular, Halder & Sen (2022), using the example of Asian countries with difficult socio-economic conditions, points to the results of a holistic approach to education, which results in an employment algorithm as a real mechanism of educational purpose.

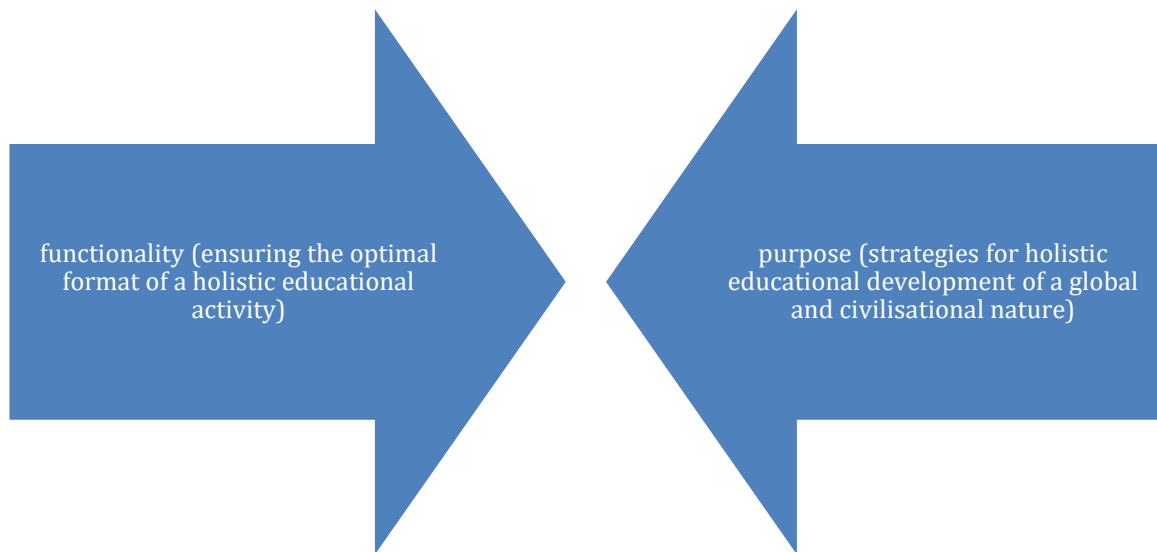
The concept of the “holistic learner” involves emotional, empirical-procedural, legal-procedural, phenomenological, and immanent elements (Farrimond, 2020). Holistic approaches actualise a person's essential strengths to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for him or her and society. If a particular cluster of knowledge is not interesting to a person on a personal level, then the interest is actualised by social demand. And vice versa, excessive socialisation of competencies is limited and regulated by personal priorities.

If the human-centred twentieth century set education the goal of raising a strong and skilled person, the globalised twenty-first century focuses education on the formation of equally strong and skilled generations (Sahinoglu, 2022). The modern methodology and philosophy of education streamlines this process by providing an up-to-date system of competencies that are a priority of the educational process (Bogo, 2022). That is, the formation of educational activity within a generation is no longer a declarative slogan, but a real mechanism with clear tools to achieve these goals.

A striking example of the contradictions of holistic education is the dichotomy of functionality and purpose (see Fig. 1).

## Figure 1

### *Functionality vs. format of holistic education*



Source: authors own development

A striking example of functional dominance in the concept of holistic education is the introduction of technological and digital potential into the educational system (Chien & Liao, 2021). Technological and digital progress in the modern world has somewhat changed approaches to educational strategies. Holistic education has become uninteresting for science and technology-oriented education clusters that focus on the practical dimension of their activities and are guided by pragmatic principles of efficiency (Mamidala, 2022). Such an orientation eliminates the humanitarian and social science aspect, which makes it impossible to comply with the principles of holistic education. On the one hand, the internal educational environment can function and fulfil its purpose with a similar differentiation of educational segments. However, the socially-oriented education cannot ignore the humanitarian and ideological element. Technologists' accusations about the lack of effect of humanitarian education are also explained by the specifics of such skills, which are mainly potential and delayed.

Therefore, the current study rejects the thesis that there is no alternative to the pragmatic effectiveness of the scientific and technological educational dimension. The holistic approach to education has its own arguments about the expediency of acquiring skills of different nature, despite the specifics of the educational level.

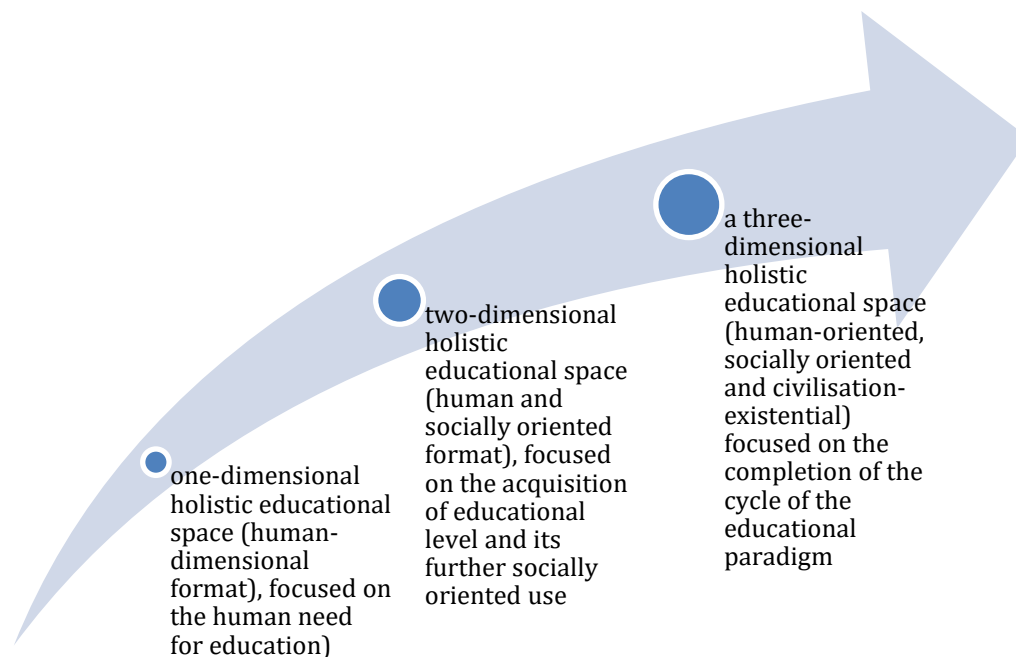
One of the mechanisms through which the practical and functional ability to ensure the holistic dimension of education is acquired is the design thinking, which is focused on the structural nature of educational potential (Lee & Divenaran, 2022). Innovative formats of educational activity develop new forms of thinking activity, which serves as a factor for the formation of holistic education. Graduates of holistic education appear in academic and non-academic aspects (Mustafa et al., 2019).

The dichotomous contradictions between goals and functionality are already embedded in the understanding of the integrity of education. Sustainable development is impossible without holistic development constants (Spychalski, 2023). The development is devoid of sources without innovation. Innovative progress destroys the fundamental principles of education, which are the basis of

sustainability. Such a simplified logical construction demonstrates the strategic uncertainty of holistic education, the achievement of which leads to contradictions and conflicts within the educational system. The integrity of education was put to the test during the COVID-19 pandemic when it shifted from the usual two-dimensional educational space (personal and academic) to a three-dimensional mode (with the introduction of virtual learning environments) (Wright, 2021). The integrity within the traditional educational system had a structuring of roles and statuses, albeit not clear. The addition of the effect of the virtual learning format completely levelled these connections. The post-pandemic period has not yet provided the scientific and educational community with the necessary data to fully analyse the resilience of holistic education in the new innovative environment. In this context, different scenarios for the development of a holistic educational paradigm are possible (see Fig. 2)

**Figure 2**

*Formats for the development of holistic education*



Source: authors own development

The prospects for research on holistic education are the educational activity of all these dimensions. However, their variability, balances between them, and interaction will depend on both the socio-cultural factors and the activity of the educational community in seeking to improve the educational system as a whole.

## **Discussion**

Educational integrity is important not only for personal or social development. Miseliunaite, Kliziene & Cibulskas, (2022) believe that a holistic approach to solving the problems of civilizational development should include educational integrity. This creates an effective mechanism of worldview and mental principles that are formed in a person through various sources, including education. The harmonious development of an individual, society, and civilisation as a whole is possible if unified worldview and value principles are used in all spheres of social activity.

However, while it is possible to reconcile integrity within an educational model (albeit with significant organisational and moral difficulties, as noted in the results of the current study), correlating

educational standards with formats and values of a socio-economic or cultural-historical nature becomes a virtually impossible mission. The problem of the mismatch between educational programmes and the real dimensions of social life is already commonplace in modern society. This problem is not artificially created but actually states the dichotomy of the sustainability of education and the dynamism of the socio-cultural space.

In this context, among scientific and educational ideas, there is a rather dangerous tendency to form a dynamic educational model that will meet the challenges of the time and go in unison with modern and promising trends in social development. However, the use of such an educational space is fraught with an existential and value crisis in education. The educational model has two key dimensions: functional and target. When dynamism is proposed for the functional cluster of education, it is seen as a difficult but probable and useful result for the educational space. On the other hand, if the purpose, in fact, the fundamental content of education, is determined by dynamic characteristics, then such an education system will not withstand such pressure and will not be able to fulfil its civilizational mission.

The problem with the concept of holistic education is often the declarative nature of this idea. Parížek (2021) expresses doubts about the ability to structure the elements of holistic education into a single system. Continuing this idea, the current study emphasises the feasibility of such structuring. The synergy of the intra-educational space and the interaction of education with other spheres should primarily focus on the process, not the goal. This approach will allow to level the declarative nature of holistic education in the segment of its intended purpose, focusing on the real functional priorities of integrity in the educational space.

The contradictions of a holistic approach to education are also expressed in the internal educational environment. The educational policy envisages a cognitive and rationalist approach, while educational and pedagogical practice is focused on determinism (Polonca Pangrčič, 2022). The solution to this problem is the human dimension of the educational environment. If the organisational and methodological structure is brought to a common appropriately oriented denominator, the integrity of education will be agreed at least in the functional dimension. Integrity in the individual dimension is expressed in the ability of the subject of the educational system to self-assess (Tumpa et al., 2022) as an element of synergistic self-organisation. Synergy in education is expressed in the strategic cooperation (Othman et al., 2023).

Martinez-Ríos, Ponce-Cruz & Molina (2022) nevertheless propose to use taxonomic principles to classify a complex system of holistic education. It should be noted that representatives of the practice-oriented cluster of scientific and pedagogical discourse are rather sceptical about such attempts. The reason for this attitude is the impossibility of combining individual elements of the educational process. However, what cannot be combined can be brought to interaction. Such a synergistic approach allows interpreting a holistic approach to education in a new format that actualises pluralism of views and is ensured by interdisciplinarity in the theoretical dimension and multiculturalism in the practice-oriented segment.

Another factor that threatens the standards of holistic education is the variability of educational strategies, which often unnecessarily change under the influence of socio-cultural realities. Bozkurt (2019) points out that interdisciplinarity attempts to preserve the integrity of the educational process. In the short term, pragmatism in education will displace other dimensions.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

Thus, holistic education forms strategies for its development in the context of integration, multicultural, and pluralistic value processes of today.

- The human dimension of holistic education is to position the subject of education as a versatile person, able to operate and combine diverse knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- The social orientation of the holistic model of education implies that education performs not only direct sectoral functions but also ensures the flexibility of educational elements in the context of the dynamic modern world.
- The civilizational mission of holistic education is to develop a universal concept of the educational environment that will correlate with socio-cultural global trends.
- The integrity of education is intended to create balances in the educational paradigm and ensure both intra-educational harmony (organisational, logistical, educational, scientific, and educational) and improve the synergistic interaction of education with other areas of social activity (socio-economic, socio-political, cultural).
- The functionality of education is a key practice-oriented parameter of holistic education, which successfully integrates innovative achievements (primarily of a technological and digital nature) into its system.
- The purpose of education is the ideological and mental priority of holistic education and consists in the coordination of educational and socio-cultural elements.

### **Suggestion for Future Research**

If considering the formats of holistic education development indicated in the results, it can be noted that the one-dimensional format is outdated and irrelevant to the modern world picture. The two-dimensional format is currently in effect and is a classical understanding of the educational process, in which integrity does not fully position and realise its potential. The three-dimensional format is a promising vector for the development of holistic education, as it represents a complete cycle of the educational process in all its senses (cultural and historical, worldview and mental, educational and sectoral, and individual consciousness).

The intensity and scale of transformations in education and society as a whole determines the balance in the paradigm of holistic education:

- traditionality-innovation, where there is a need to update specific educational elements, depending on the internal educational specifics and external influences;
- content-format, when the problem of functionality begins to override aspects of the purpose of education, which is unacceptable in the existential and value dimension;
- individual-social-global, in the context of these dimensions, the practice-oriented and theoretical and ideological components of the integrity paradigm are formed.

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None.

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