

# Personal branding through Fashion blogging and its impact on Consumers

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## Abstract

This research paper sets out to examine the influence of personal branding and fashion bloggers on our shopping habits and perceptions of fashion in the digital realm. It is noted that fashion bloggers act as influential online friends, imparting style tips and introducing us to new fashion trends and brands. The study underscores the importance of building a strong personal brand, with a focus on authenticity and expertise as key factors in gaining the trust of an audience. The paper also highlights the impact of fashion bloggers on consumer behaviour, demonstrating their ability to shape preferences and create a sense of trust that often surpasses traditional advertising methods. The study emphasises the interconnected relationship between personal branding, fashion blogging, and consumer decision-making, showcasing the profound impact they have on the digital fashion landscape.

**Key-Words:** Fashion Blogging, Personal Branding, Fashion Bloggers, Consumer behaviour.

## Introduction

In the current digital era, personal branding is becoming an essential tool for people trying to stand out in a crowded professional field. Like product branding, it's the deliberate process of creating a unique identity, communicating it to a target audience, and evaluating how it affects one's reputation and image. As a nonverbal mode of expression, fashion is essential for expressing one's individuality and sense of style to a worldwide audience. Specifically, fashion blogging has become a potent medium for cultural creation, enabling people to convey aspects of their own identities and lifestyle in addition to showcasing trends. This phenomenon has been widely visible and commercially successful, demonstrating its importance in the digital ecosystem.

According to a recent research, fashion bloggers play a significant effect in moulding consumer choices and opinions. They are regarded as credible communicators with a one-of-a-kind ability to influence consumer behaviour. Bloggers' content is seen as more real and trustworthy than traditional marketing tactics. As personal branding grows in popularity, it is becoming widely recognised as a critical aspect in professional success. This includes high-level executives and leaders who are leveraging the power of personal brand building to improve their professional status. The personal brand one transmits is an important initial impression, especially in a setting where difference is critical to capturing opportunities and building meaningful connections.

The rapid increase of social media platforms has amplified the impact of personal branding within the fashion industry, allowing individuals to curate and showcase their unique style, aesthetics, and preferences to a global audience. With the rise of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest, fashion enthusiasts and influencers have gained unprecedented access to a diverse range of audiences, enabling them to establish their distinctive personal brands and cultivate dedicated communities of followers. Through visually appealing content, such as outfit inspirations, style tips, and behind-the-scenes glimpses into their lives, fashion influencers can effectively communicate their personal brand narratives, fostering authentic connections and engagement with their audience. This engagement not only strengthens their online presence but also facilitates collaborations with brands, leading to lucrative partnerships and sponsorships that further reinforce their influence and credibility within the fashion industry.

Moreover, the advent of e-commerce and digital marketing has revolutionised the way fashion brands and retailers approach their target consumers. Personal branding, particularly within the context of fashion blogging and social media influence, has emerged as a powerful strategy for enhancing brand visibility and driving consumer engagement. Collaborations between fashion influencers and brands have become commonplace, with influencers often serving as ambassadors for products, effectively leveraging their personal brands to endorse and promote various fashion items and accessories. This symbiotic relationship between influencers and brands not only promotes the products but also contributes to the influencers' personal brand growth, solidifying their positions as trendsetters and opinion leaders within the fashion community.

## Literature Review

The study of **Hund & Duffy (1990)**, looks at how fashion bloggers portray "entrepreneurial femininity" through three interwoven tropes:

1. The Fate of Passionate Work: Bloggers emphasise their work as a result of their passion and creative expression, while downplaying the discipline and effort required for self-production.
2. The Glam Life: Bloggers create an ideal image for their audience by showcasing a glamorous lifestyle through photographs of worldwide travel, exclusive events, and access to expensive products.
3. Carefully Curated Personal Sharing: Bloggers reveal personal information in order to look relatable and real, blurring the barriers between the private and public spheres.

The study also shows how these representations can promote traditional gender stereotypes and marginalised people who do not fit mainstream aesthetic standards.

Through the study done by **Cheung et.al (2019)**, the researchers interviewed some fashion bloggers in the United Kingdom to learn about their fashion blogs, how they market their websites, and how they maintain relationships through their blogs. Bloggers value authenticity above conformity, showing their actual fashion selves rather than adhering to outside perceptions. This authentic expression is the foundation of their online persona. Furthermore, bloggers aggressively promote their work across several channels, with social media sites such as Twitter serving as powerful tools for distributing updates. In essence, the study emphasises the importance of authenticity, personal identity, and meaningful relationships in fashion blogging and personal branding, providing significant information for firms wishing to engage with fashion bloggers.

**Pedroni (2022)**, explored the evolution of fashion influencers over the past two decades, tracing their emergence from the early days of blogging in the 2000s to the prevalence of fashion bloggers and influencers. The author outlines a four-stage process from 2000 to 2020, highlighting the institutionalisation of social media in the fashion industry. Notably, the shift from blogging to Instagram is portrayed as a transformative moment, giving rise to a distinct professional identity—the influencer. The paper also critically examines the concepts of influence and the role of influencers, with a focus on the significant impact of Instagram and TikTok in the latter half of the 2010s and early 2020s.

**According to Harris (2011)**, the blogosphere is expanding, traditional media such as newspapers and magazines are still the most influential sources of information. People use blogs alongside traditional media outlets. Technorati's 2011 survey of both bloggers and consumers found that many bloggers (over one-third) have worked for traditional media. This indicates that bloggers are skilled writers, providing high-quality content for free. Additionally, the blogosphere influences itself, with bloggers reporting that other blogs they read are the main source of topic inspiration. Bloggers are both writers and readers, creating content on topics they enjoy reading about. More than 50% of consumers trust traditional media less than they did three years ago, and many prefer blogs as valid sources of

information.

**Petruică (2016)**, through her research work demonstrated how social media platforms provide access to new employment options, business collaborations, and a larger online audience. It emphasises the significance of deliberate brand management. Social media platforms offer a low-cost way to present expertise because virtually anyone with basic skills and internet access may use them. This paper also advises maintaining social media branding by sharing videos or photographs on Facebook twice daily, Twitter five times daily, LinkedIn once daily, Google+ twice daily, Pinterest five times daily, and Instagram 1.5 times daily. Although the future of social media and personal branding is still unclear, technology improvements are set to open up new possibilities for improving one's online identity and image.

**Marisa (2020)** investigated that the majority of their readers view fashion bloggers more as an inspiration figure than as a personal seller. The following provided findings confirm this: Instagram, a visual platform that works well for showing fashion, attracts a lot of followers from readers who follow fashion blogs. Style and aesthetic inspiration as well as personality are shared traits among the fashion bloggers that respondents follow. This shows that buyers are seeking information beyond just fashion bloggers' product suggestions. Only 57.53% of those surveyed have made a purchase based on a blogger's recommendation. Price and a recommendation not suiting needs or wants are the two most frequent excuses for not buying a blogger's recommendation. According to these results, fashion bloggers are better at inspiring and aspirational marketing than at generating direct sales. Brands that comprehend the function of fashion bloggers can create marketing plans that take advantage of their particular influence. In order to create exclusive goods or collections that appeal to their following, brands can collaborate with fashion bloggers.

**Zafar and Sarwar (2021)**, through their research paper investigates the impact of fashion blogs on the purchasing behaviour of millennials in the Pakistani fashion industry, particularly focusing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its extended variables. The study collected data through a survey of 300 respondents using convenience sampling. The results revealed that perceived usefulness, perceived social influence, and perceived influencer credibility significantly influence the purchase intention of millennials, while perceived ease of use and fashion innovativeness did not show significant effects. The study emphasizes the increasing role of social media and digital marketing in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours, especially among the younger generation. Additionally, it underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of consumer attitudes and the role of fashion blogs in influencing purchase decisions in the digital landscape. The research paper encourages further investigation into the interplay between consumer behaviour and blog marketing and highlights the need for qualitative research to provide a deeper understanding of consumer perspectives.

**Pelat & Cabot-(2016)**, through their study investigated how fashion companies strategically employ bloggers as a new communication tool to promote their brands. Findings reveal that bloggers function as influential opinion leaders, engaging in word-of-mouth marketing to generate buzz around fashion names and products, ultimately shaping consumer perceptions and trends. The study highlights various ways in which fashion brands collaborate with bloggers, from featuring advertisements in blog posts to compensating them for product reviews or providing free products. Moreover, there is a discernible shift towards subtler and more authentic promotion, with fashion companies inviting bloggers to events or offering early product access, allowing bloggers to convey relatable and genuine perspectives. Overall, the research underscores the diverse and impactful roles that bloggers play in enhancing brand visibility, influencing consumer attitudes, and fostering engagement within online communities.

**Hauge (2010)**, through his study investigated the impact of fashion blogs on consumer attitudes towards fashion, revealing their growing influence in the industry. The findings indicate that consumers are not only more inclined to search for and purchase fashion products featured on blogs but also experience a shift in their self-concept and desired

self-image. Key characteristics of popular fashion bloggers include fashion expertise, unique or trendy styles, and authenticity, positioning them as aspirational or identification figures for readers. The study underscores the significance for the fashion industry to actively engage with the blogosphere, gaining insights into consumer preferences and expanding product promotion. Additionally, it advises fashion bloggers to focus on building expertise, maintaining authenticity, and consistently producing high-quality content to effectively connect with their audience.

### **Fashion Blogging & Consumer Behaviour**

Fashion blogging has emerged as a dynamic platform for individuals dedicated to curating content exclusively related to fashion and styling. These bloggers are trendsetters who frequently experiment with various styles, encouraging their readers to step out of their comfort zones and try new looks. They provide regular updates on the latest fashion trends, share insights on beauty products, and even offer tutorials on makeup application and product recommendations. Beyond showcasing their own style, fashion bloggers play a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and passion for fashion to their audience.

These bloggers often come from diverse backgrounds, typically being ordinary individuals driven by a deep passion for fashion and beauty. They distinguish themselves by their ability to interlink creative ideas and inspirations, setting trends that resonate with their followers. Fashion blogs are considered a vibrant hub of fashion information, acting as a primary source for readers seeking the latest trends and styles. The inclusion of vivid imagery is paramount to their identity, allowing readers to visually connect with the content.

In recent times, fashion bloggers have transcended their initial roles and attained a form of celebrity status, affectionately referred to as 'micro-celebrities'. They serve as an inspiration for a youthful audience passionate about both beauty and fashion, introducing their own clothing collections and recommending products to their dedicated followers. Through their dedicated content creation, fashion bloggers have forged a unique and influential space within the fashion industry, impacting not only consumer trends but also the broader cultural landscape.

Consumer behaviour is deeply influenced by the relationships and connections established between bloggers and their audience. Followers often perceive fashion bloggers as relatable and authentic, which fosters a strong sense of trust and credibility in their recommendations and reviews. This trust significantly impacts consumer decision-making processes, as individuals are more inclined to purchase products endorsed or suggested by bloggers they trust, viewing these recommendations as personalized and genuine advice rather than conventional marketing tactics. The psychological phenomenon of social proof further reinforces this behavior, as individuals tend to mimic the actions of others, especially those they perceive as knowledgeable or influential in a specific domain, such as fashion.

The interactive nature of fashion blogging communities also plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour. Through various online platforms and social media channels, followers have the opportunity to engage in discussions, share their opinions, and seek guidance from both the blogger and fellow community members. This active participation not only cultivates a sense of belonging and shared enthusiasm for fashion but also serves as a forum for individuals to exchange ideas, seek validation, and gain insights into emerging trends and style choices. The community dynamics further influence consumer behavior by fostering a collective sense of fashion consciousness, where individuals are motivated to align their preferences and purchase decisions with the prevailing trends and recommendations within the blogging community.

### **Personal branding**

Personal branding operates as a powerful tool for individuals aiming to distinguish themselves in an increasingly competitive professional landscape. It involves a careful curation of one's narrative, encompassing experiences, values, and expertise, to create a cohesive and authentic story that resonates with the intended audience. This process

demands a deep understanding of one's unique strengths and the ability to effectively communicate these attributes in a compelling manner. By consistently showcasing their knowledge and skills through various channels, individuals can position themselves as authorities in their respective fields, thereby enhancing their professional visibility and opportunities for advancement.

Furthermore, personal branding necessitates a profound awareness of the evolving digital landscape, as online platforms continue to shape how individuals are perceived and connected with on a global scale. Social media, in particular, serves as a crucial arena for cultivating and disseminating one's personal brand. It requires a strategic approach to content creation and engagement, emphasizing the importance of authentic storytelling and meaningful interactions with followers. Building an engaged and loyal online community involves fostering genuine connections, actively participating in relevant conversations, and providing valuable insights that contribute to the broader discourse within the industry.

A comprehensive personal branding strategy also requires individuals to be cognizant of the importance of continuous learning and growth. Staying abreast of industry developments, emerging trends, and technological advancements enables individuals to remain agile and adaptable, positioning themselves as forward-thinking leaders within their field. Embracing a mindset of lifelong learning and professional development not only enhances one's expertise but also reinforces their credibility and authority, establishing them as trusted sources of knowledge and innovation. By actively seeking out opportunities for skill enhancement and staying open to new experiences, individuals can reinforce their personal brand, demonstrating a commitment to excellence and a dedication to staying at the forefront of their industry.

### Objectives

- To determine the criticality of personal branding through fashion blogging
- To determine whether fashion bloggers play an important role in influencing buying behaviour
- To evaluate if fashion bloggers play a critical role in shaping the fashion trends

**(H0) Null Hypothesis** - Personal branding through fashion blogging is not critical in consumer buying behaviour.

**(H1) Alternate Hypothesis** - Personal branding through fashion blogging is critical in consumer buying behaviour.

### Research Methodology

#### Data Collection

Both secondary and primary data have been utilised to get an overall picture of the topic. It is crucial to have both for the study as they support each other and help with the outcomes.

Primary data has been collected of sample size 110 for the study. A questionnaire was created and distributed among people who qualified for the sample size.

The questionnaire was created by combining Likert scales and categorical scaling. For example, respondents can indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.

Secondary data was used in order to obtain accurate information about personal branding and fashion bloggers and to connect with main data. It was collected from previous Research Journals, Books and websites. Google Search Engine and Google Scholars were also used to collect the secondary data.

**Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )** is a model of reliability analysis. The statistical tools like simple percentage method, Chi-Square test, have been used to derive conclusions for the study.

**Data Analysis & Interpretation:****Table 1: Profile of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	59	53.6
Female	51	46.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents, 53.6%, are men, while 46.4% are women

**Table 2: Age of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
15-25	99	90	90	90
26-35	9	8.2	8.2	98.2
36-45	1	0.9	0.9	99.1
46-55	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 2 shows that 90% of the 110 responders are between the ages of 15 and 25. 8.2% of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 35, and the rest of them are between the age of 36 and 55

**Table 3: Frequency of following fashion blogs**

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	13	11.8
Weekly	21	19.1
Monthly	28	25.5
Rarely/	48	43.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3 shows that about 25.50 % follow on a monthly basis while 19.1% follow it weekly. Also around 11.8% follow it on a daily basis & 43% rarely follow it

**Table 4: Making a purchase on blogger's recommendation**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	33.6
No	35	31.8
Maybe	38	34.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This was placed to study the impact of fashion bloggers in consumer buying preferences. Around 33.6% of the people choose to go for the brand they watch from their fashion bloggers for their buying decisions.

**Table 5: Fashion bloggers influencing style choices**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	11	10
Agree	40	36.4
Neutral	56	50.9
Disagree	1	0.90
Strongly Disagree	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 suggests that 10% strongly agree, 36.4% agree, 50.9% were neutral and very few of them disagree and strongly disagreed on asking about the influence of fashion bloggers in their style choices.

**Table 6: Fashion bloggers playing a role in shaping fashion trends**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	22	20
Agree	60	54.5
Neutral	27	24.5
Disagree	1	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When asked "what role do fashion bloggers play in shaping fashion trends among consumers," 20% strongly agree, 54.5% agree, and hardly a few disagree.

**Table 7 Fashion bloggers having a significant influence on consumer buying behaviour in the fashion industry**

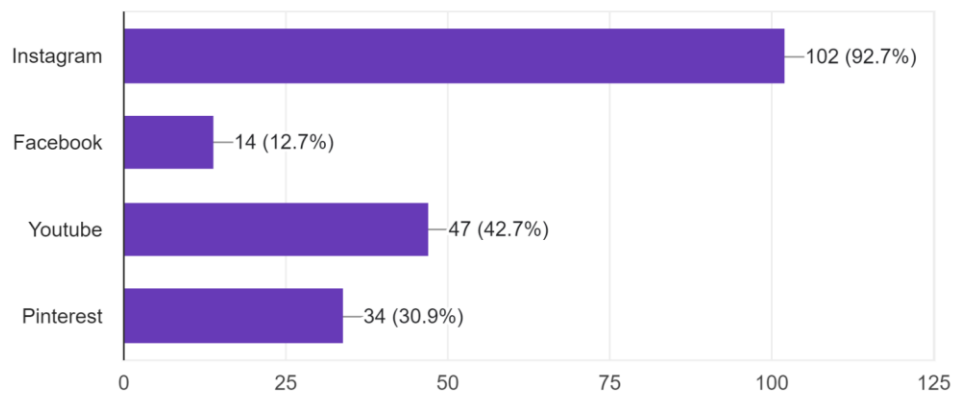
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	28	25.5
Agree	54	49.1
Neutral	25	22.7
Disagree	3	2.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Around 25.5% of the people strongly agree, 49.1% agree with only a small percentage believing it has no influence.

**Bar Graph 1: Medium used to get fashion information**

What medium do you use to get fashion information?

110 responses



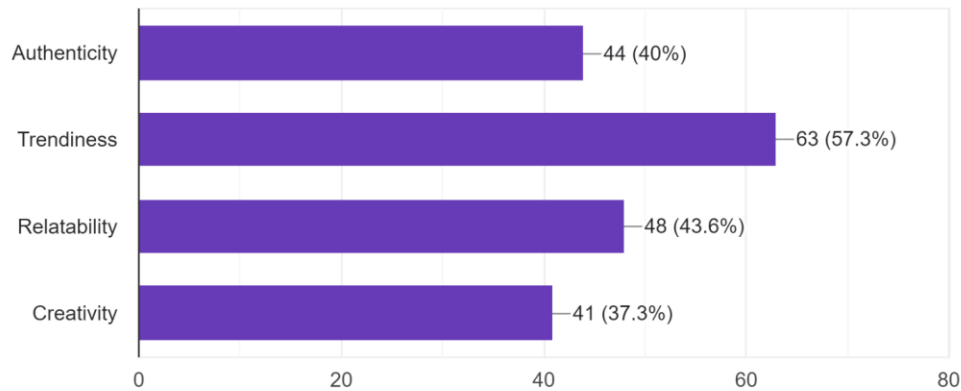
There are several sources and mediums through which fashion blogs can be accessed to follow fashion bloggers and obtain fashion knowledge by the people. The most common among them are selected and studied to identify the most common tool used. Around 92.7% of the people follow Instagram, 12.7% use Facebook, 42.7% use YouTube while 31% of them use Pinterest to follow their favourite fashion blogs.



**Bar Graph 2: Qualities associated with blogger's personal brand**

What qualities do you associate with fashion bloggers' personal brand?

110 responses



This question emphasized the qualities which consumers look forward to while referring to a fashion blog. The greatest impact here is by the trendiness of the blog which encompasses 57.3% of the consumers. Along with trendiness the other major qualities which also have a significant impact are studied. The other qualities preferred were authenticity which constitutes around 40%, Relatability which constitutes 43.6% and Creativity which constitutes around 37.3% of the sample size.

**Table 8: Cronbach Alfa test for the variables indicating Personal branding through Fashion blogging and its impact on Consumers**

Personal branding through Fashion blogging and its impact on Consumers	Cronbach's Alpha
Customers have made a purchase based on a blogger's recommendation	.922
Fashion bloggers influence customer's style choices	.921
Fashion bloggers play a role in shaping fashion trends	.920
Fashion bloggers have a significant influence on consumer buying behaviour in the fashion industry	.917

**Cronbach Reliability Test**

Reliability Statistics	
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No.of Items</b>
<b>.918</b>	<b>4</b>

The reliability was found to be more than 0.8. It shows that there is a consistency for the variables included in the research.

**Table 9: CHI-Square Analysis for the variables indicating Personal branding through Fashion blogging and its impact on Consumers**

Description	Chi-Square Value	Standard Value	Level of significance
Customers have made a purchase based on a blogger's recommendation	81.333	9.49	.000
Fashion bloggers influence customer's style choices	76.812	9.49	.000
Fashion bloggers play a role in shaping fashion trends	81.107	9.49	.000
Fashion bloggers have a significant influence on consumer buying behaviour in the fashion industry	79.308	9.49	.000

The significance level of 5% (or 0.05) aimed to assess the role of personal branding through fashion blogging in consumer buying behaviour. The calculated chi-square values for the respective tests are 81.333, 76.812, 81.107, and 79.308. The significance values less than 5% for all the variables suggest that personal branding is highly significant in fashion blogging to influence consumers' fashion behaviour choices. The significance value less than 5% reveals that null hypothesis can be rejected. The chi-square values of 81.333, 76.812, 81.107, and 79.308 are all greater than the standard value of 9.49, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It can be inferred that personal branding is highly significant in fashion blogging to influence consumers' fashion behaviour choices.

### Discussions

The results of the analysis of fashion bloggers' responses reveal several key themes. Firstly, bloggers prioritise personal identification through their platforms, showcasing their genuine fashion selves and emphasising that they only feature outfits they would wear in real life. They express a strong sense of individuality, valuing their own opinions on fashion over external judgments. Building a distinct personal identity through their blogs is not only important for self-expression but also for gaining recognition from high-profile bloggers and commercial brands.

Secondly, bloggers use promotion and communication strategies to reach a wider audience. They utilise various platforms such as blog directories and social media, particularly valuing Twitter for timely updates. Bloggers engage in self-marketing, treating their blogs as personal brands. Additionally, the significance of relationships emerges strongly, both within the blogging community and with fashion brands. Maintaining positive connections with fellow bloggers and readers is crucial for fostering a sense of community and popularity.

According to the survey data, the pervasive influence of fashion blogging on consumer behaviour is clearly illustrated. The high level of participation from individuals aged 15 to 25 suggests that personal branding through fashion blogging is highly resonant among younger demographics, and that digital platforms and influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and buying decisions. The balanced gender representation also indicates that this phenomenon is not limited to any specific demographic. The emphasis on authenticity as a crucial factor in fashion blogging further reinforces the importance of trust and credibility in this space. As consumers seek reliability and genuine connections, bloggers who uphold authenticity stand to build more enduring and meaningful relationships with their audience.

## Conclusion

People who share their fashion styles online, known as fashion bloggers, create their own unique identities. They do this by being genuine and true to their own fashion choices. These bloggers use various online platforms, like social media and blogs, to reach a wide audience. The study shows that these bloggers have a big influence on what people choose to buy. Many people trust their recommendations, and a lot of them make purchases based on what the bloggers suggest. One important finding is that Instagram is the main place where people go to get fashion ideas. This shows how important Instagram has become in the world of fashion. In a nutshell, this research highlights how fashion bloggers, by being real and using platforms like Instagram, are changing the way people think about and buy fashion.

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