Evaluation of Workshop Training Program for Caregivers in Childcare Centres

Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the Workshop Training Program provided for caregivers in childcare centres under the jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization. The evaluation aimed at the knowledge acquired before and after the training and the training process. The research design used was one group pretest posttest. The sample were 190 caregivers from every region all over the country. The two research instruments used to collect the data were 1) two paralleled tests to evaluate 11 topics of the training content and 2) the training process evaluating form. The duration of 6 days was spent for the training program at the beginning of the year 2012. Data were analysed by using percentage, mean, standard deviation and t-test.

The research results were as follows:

- 1. The acquisition of knowledge: the caregivers acquired more knowledge after the training program than before significantly at the .001 level.
- 2. The training process considering the area of content, activities and resource persons: the mean as a whole was at the high level. When ranking according to the aspects, the first was Creating Materials Activities for Young Children, and the next were Observation, Record, and Child Development Assessment, and Nutrition for Young Children respectively.

As for the process, the mean as a whole was at the high level. The first rank was the personnel taking charge of the training program and the next were multimedia and services respectively.

For the training program advantage: the mean as a whole was at the highest level. The first rank was the utility and the importance of the program for the improvement of the caregivers towards developing young children, the next was the whole training curriculum that can be brought into practice.

Key words: Evaluation, Workshop Training Program, Caregivers, Childcare Centre, Local Administrative Organization

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Introduction

The Early Childhood Education , provided in the school system or childcare centres, is the crucial part of today family life. This is due to the change in works of parents and the form of family; from the extended family to the nuclear family. So there is need to send children to childcare instead of having them in family care; and this means the need for childcare centres with high quality. For the beginning of children life, parents try to find high quality childcare for their children. This is because the quality of childcare places has a direct impact on the child development. From the research results indicated that caregivers are the most crucial factor in childcare centres For those centres that were evaluated with high quality, there were the well trained caregivers with the Early Childhood Education Degree. (Whitebook,1995)

Eheart, B.K. (1987) stated that when mothers go to work and leave their children in childcare centres, the specifications of the quality childcare places were concerned among early childhood educators, researchers and parents. The important element for quality childcare is the specific training program for caregivers. This can indicate the caregivers efficiency and thus mostly relates with the quality of the training program.

From previous research results indicated that the caregivers with the Early Childhood Education Degree tend to care and educate the children with high quality. There were also research results which found that the caregivers with the Early Childhood Education Degree who took part in training programs had sensitive interaction with children and can providing higher quality in childcare than other groups of caregiver. In addition, the children with caregivers who participated in both official and unofficial training programs had more progress in their language skills. (Burchinal, Howes, Cyrer and Clifford, 2002)

Click, P (2000) stated that those who work for the early childhood education already have some level of knowledge and skills for the work, and the training program activities can assist them to work more effectively. This is because they have gained knowledge and are proud of their work together with better professional image. Nowadays, parents are asking more from the caregivers, they have learnt about child development and what children should learn. Furthermore, they would like to know the curriculum and talk with caregivers concerning childcare. It means that early childhood teachers need to have the knowledge to talk with them. So those responsible offices need

to develop working staff to stimulate professional growth and success for those who work with the early childhood education. There is the recommendation to develop working staff by mean of inquiring what they need from training program.

Council Of Australia Governments (2009) stipulated the Seven National Standard for Early Childhood Education which are: 1) Education Program and Practice, 2) Children's Health and Safety, 3) Physical Environment, 4) Staff Arrangement, 5) Relationship with Children, 6) Collaborative Partnership with Families and Communities, and 7) Leadership and Service Management.

For the Standard of Staff Arrangement, it states the professional development in which the developing plan and practice have to be made, and participating regularly in the training program is encouraged.

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI,1998) proposed that the children learning quality is vital for both their future life and nation. In managing children learning and development, early childhood teachers need to have good knowledge and skills in creating good interaction, managing interesting and suitable learning activities, which can response the children needs and interest in the diverse society. They should have child development knowledge, from prenatal period to infant, toddler, preprimary education and primary education period. In addition, they should be knowledgeable in Music, Arts, Literature, Health, Physical Education, Nutrition, Technology and Philosophy. They should also have learnt the principal of curriculum, teaching strategy, teaching process, research, language, mathematics, the world, the universe, history, psychology, social tradition and moral. Finally, they should be able to evaluate the whole child development and create good relationship between parents, school and community.

Massachusetts Department of Education (2003) stipulated 11 standards for early childhood education program which are: 1) Interactions Between Staff and Children, and Among Children, 2) Curriculum and Assessment, 3) Physical Environment, 4) Family Involvement, 5) Staff Qualifications and Staff Development, 6) Group Ratio and Size, 7) Health and Safety, 8) Nutrition and Food Service, 9) Transportation, 10) Administration, and 11) Accreditation and Evaluation.

For the Standard of Staff Qualifications and Staff Development, it has the stipulation concerning staff development. This is in form of encouraging for further education to increase knowledge, skills and experience which help to increase the quality

of childcare works. For the staff development program, it compose of detail for development plan, participation development program records, permission for participation in training program of 20 hours/ year. These mean to maintain the continuity of staff development program in term of working skills with children and their families. In addition, the training program must be response to the need of the staff by giving various experiences, such as, classroom observation, individual counseling, group workshops, visiting other training programs and seminar participation.

For the staff development lessons, they should cover in areas of health and safety, child growth and development, curriculum planning, early language and literacy development, child guidance and behavior management technique, community collaboration, communication/relation with families, working with culturally and /or linguistically diverse children/families, detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect, advocacy for early childhood programs and profession and the profession's code of ethical conduct.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC,2008) proposed the 10 standards for early childhood program accreditation, which are: 1) Relationship, 2) Curriculum, 3) Teaching, 4) Assessment of Child Progress, 5) Health, 6) Teachers, 7) Family, 8) Community Relationships, 9) Physical Environment, and 10) Leadership and Management.

For Teachers' Standard, it stipulate in principal that children can have the highest learning interest from the teachers with high early childhood education background. Those who are well prepared both in knowledge and skills in child development can create warm and positive interaction with children together with language experience and quality learning environment. There should be chance for teaching staff to have teaching supervision and participate the ongoing profession development. These, in turn, can provide them with up to date professional skills.

Prior to work alone with children, orientation should be provided for the new teachers. This will make them understand the working process with children, philosophy, values, ethical objectives, health, safety, emergency management, child individual needs, guidance and classroom management, daily program activities, curriculum, caring abused and neglected children, program policy and procedure, standards for early childhood education program, rules and regulations. They also need for follow up program to increase their knowledge

There is also the stipulation to have at least 75 % of teaching staff with Bachelor Degree or equivalent in Early Childhood Education, Child development, Primary Education, Early Childhood Education Development which cover in the areas of child learning from birth to kindergarten, relationship between families and community, child observation, child record and assessment, teaching and learning, professional development and practices.

Teaching staff and teacher assistant should take part in the profession development programs to gain their expertise for working with children and families with diverse nationality, tradition and language. Also, teaching staff should have self assessment, working development, annual professional development planning with supervisors. These information will be used for continuous self development. In addition, teaching staff should participate in both official and unofficial activities of the local, states and region. These are for realization of the activities concerning child care together with the information for child and families improvement for their responsible programs.

Sciarra and Dorsey(2003), has proposed that prior to training program, there should be individual need assessment ,and after that the decision has to be made concerning time, lessons and training approach for each time. Training approach and strategy for in-service training program depend on the length of time and training lessons. Workshop Training Program is one useful approach. Trainees not only learn the training lessons, but also the authentic practice; but it needs cooperation from the trainees. This approach is more suitable than seminar and lecture. Also, this approach needs follow up program because trainees, as practitioners, want feed back information to support their use of the new practice for their daily works. This means workshop training program can provide ideal opportunity for training teaching staff.

Thailand has given first priority to the personnel development, and to be provided continually. The National Education Act B.E.2542 and its revised edition (second edition) B.E.2545(2547), in its Section 52 of Chapter 7, stipulates that the Ministry Of Education has to promote systematically the production and development for all educational personnel to have standard and be the high profession. This is made by mean of supervision and cooperation with other institutions responsible for teacher production and training, and also to make them ready and strong for preparation of new teachers together with promotion of continuous in–service training programs. In addition, the state have to provide enough budget and fund to support education personnel development.

The Handbook for Third Round External School Assessment (B.E.2554–2558) of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (B.E.2554), has the stipulation in the KPI 7.3, School efficiency for Provision of Quality and Adequate Teaching Staff for Early Childhood Education (age 2–5) with 4 criteria which were; 1) managing to have adequate teachers, caregivers for the children, 2) selecting and developing teachers and caregivers to have knowledge and ability in congruent with their responsible works, 3) selecting and developing teachers and caregivers to have right characteristics, and 4) encouraging and supporting teachers and caregivers to participate in training program for early childhood development at least 20 hours/year.

From the Study of State and Problem of Early Childhood Education Among Child Development Centres conducted by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (B.E.2554), it was found that 30.24 percent of the caregivers have Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education, 19.71 percent have other Bachelor Degree or higher and all that left have education qualification below the Bachelor Degree. It also found that all caregivers from every level of education background need the training program to develop their own works.

From the information above, the conclusion is that development programs should be provided for working staff continually with diverse approach and in accordance with work condition. For the caregivers under the jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization, whose works are providing care and developing young children, one suitable form of training for them is workshop training program. This approach can give the trainees both content knowledge and authentic practice, which can be used understandably while working with the young children.

One mission of the Department of Local Administration is to provide and support the education under its jurisdiction. The provision of early childhood education, run by child development centres, is one mission that is given first priority. This is because the education at this level is a starting point for the development of human resource. It is the first education institution that emphasizes all around readiness development for young children, ie.; body, mind, emotion, intelligence and social skills. These are the foundation for learning in the Basic Education Level. (The Department of Local Administration, B.E.2555)

In the present, Local Administrative Organization is responsible for the childcare centres both established by itself and those transferred by other agencies. This means the differences in standard of childcare given by those caregivers with differences background. To make them well prepared to work effectively and efficiently, the Office of Cooperation and Local Education Development, the Department of Local Administration had promoted the Workshop Training Program for Caregivers Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization. The training program curriculum, pretest and posttest were made with the help from those knowledgeable persons in the field of Early Childhood Education from various institutions; and they also were the resource persons in the training program.

There were 11 topics of the training contents that cover all childcare practices and early childhood education for the workshop training program, which were; 1) Children with Special Needs, 2) How Environment and Learning Creating the Brain? 3) Classroom Management for Young Children, 4) Young Children Development, 5) Learning Experiences for Young Children, 6) Observation, Record, Assessment and Reporting Young Children Development, 7) Creating Materials for Young Children, 8) Nutrition For Young Children, 9) Promoting Integrity and Ethic for Young Children, 10) Health and Safety for Young Children and, 11) Importance of Song, Poem and Circle activity for Young Children.

With the systematic work and good management, the workshop training program could provide the trainees with useful knowledge and understanding; which in turn, can be used to work with young children in real situation effectively and efficiently; and this brings the researcher to be interested in evaluating the Workshop Training Program for Caregivers in Childcare Centres Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization.

Research Objective

To evaluate the Workshop Training Program Provided for Caregivers in Childcare Centers Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization in terms of knowledge acquired before and after the training and the training process.

Research Procedure

1. Sample

The sample of this research were 190 caregivers in the childcare centres who took part in the workshop training program. They were from every region of the country.

2. Research Instruments

There were two forms of the research instruments, which were; 1) two parallel tests to evaluate 11 topics of the training contents, and 2) the training process evaluating from.

- 2.1 For the two parallel tests, they assessed trainees' knowledge in the 11 topics of the training contents. They were objective tests with 4 selective choices in each question and each test contains 36 questions. In addition, both test contain the questions for the trainees' demographic data; i.e., sex, age, education and work experiences.
- 2.2 The Training Process Evaluating Form, this form was comprised of 4 parts to evaluate the training process:
- **Part 1** Eleven items to evaluate the training contents, activities and resource persons.
 - Part 2 Five items to evaluate the training process.
 - **Part 3** Three items to evaluate the training program advantage.
 - Part 4 The recommendation for the next training program.

For the Part1,2 and 3 were Five Level Rating Scale ;i.e. Excellent, Good, Moderate, Fair and Poor; and the Part 4 was an open-ended question.

3. The Workshop Training Program

The details of training procedure were:

3.1 Duration.

There were 6 days for the training program at the time from 9.00A.M. to 5.00 P.M.

3.2 Training Handbooks.

There were 2 training handbooks.

- 1. Early Childhood Education Curriculum B.E. 2546 with 56 pages.
- 2. The 141 pages of eleven topics of the training contents together with appendix of 107 pages with extra knowledge for caregivers.

The eleven topics of the training contents:

- 1) Children with Special Needs,
- 2) How Environment and Learning Creating the Brain?
- 3) Classroom Management for Young Children,
- 4) Young Children Development,
- 5) Learning Experiences for Young Children,
- 6) Observation, Record, Assessment and Reporting Young Children

 Development,
- 7) Creating Materials for Young Children,
- 8) Nutrition For Young Children,
- 9) Promoting Integrity and Ethic for Young Children,
- 10) Health and Safety for Young Children, and
- 11) Importance of Song, Poem and Circle activity for Young Children.

Appendix

- 1) The National Education Standards
- 2) The National Education Act B.E.2542 and the revised edition (second edition) B.E.2545
- 3) Standards for Childcare Centres Management
- 4) The National Education Standards (The Basic Education Level) for Childcare Centres Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization.
- 5) Personnel Administration Criteria for Employees under Local Administrative Organization.
- 6) The Childcare Centers Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative
 Organization: Another Perspective for Childcare and Early Childhood
 Education.
- 7) Solving Behavioral Problems of Children Age 3-5 Years Old of the Caregivers in the Childcare Centres Under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization.
- 8) Early Childhood Development Based on the National Education Act B.E.2542

3.3 Preparation of the training contents for the workshop training program

There was a board to consider and recruit experts for preparing each training lessons. The board was comprised of concerning persons from the Department of Local Administration, universities professors, experts from the Department of Health and the representatives from Local Administrative Organization.

3.4 Resource Persons

The resource persons were university lecturers in the Field of Early Childhood Education. They were responsible for program training papers including pretest and posttest on their responsible topics and acted as the resource persons. The experts from the Department of Health, were responsible for preparing the training papers concerning childcare. There were 11 key resource persons for the workshop training program.

3.5 Activities and Multimedia

Each resource person could have their own training design, in the form of learner center approach, independently. They contributed those basic academic knowledge in term of theories, concept and principle. The emphasize was to bring knowledge into practice by mean of workshop training. The resources persons also prepared the papers, materials, audio visual aids and evaluation method for each learning lesson.

3.6 The Evaluation of the workshop Training Program

There were pretest and posttest of the trainees' knowledge and the evaluation of training process.

3.7 Certificate Presentation

Trainees who participated the training program completely according to the criteria would be presented with the Certificate of Participation.

4. Data Collection, analysis and presentation

4.1 Data collecting was made between the 6 days of the training program. On the first day, before beginning of the training program, the caregivers did the pretest. On the sixth day, after finishing the training program, they did the posttest and the training process evaluating form.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Percentage was used to analyze the trainees' demographic data and Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used to analyze the pretest and posttest score.

4.2.2 The data from the training process evaluating from was analyzed by using Mean and Standard Deviation. The criteria to interpret the level of practice was:

1) Criteria for the level of practice:

Excellent	score	5
Good	score	4
Moderate	score	3
Fair	score	2
Poor	score	1

2) Criteria for interpretation of the mean score of the level of practice:

4.2.3 Results presentation

The results presentation was made in the form of tables and description.

Research Results

The research results were summarized as shown below:

1. The demographic data it was found that from the 190 trainees, they were 189 female (99.47%), and one male (0.53%). Most of the trainees were between 31–40 years old (51.05%), and followed by 41–50 years old (22.63%). Most of the trainees have the Early Childhood Education Degree (37.37%), have other Bachelor Degree (30.52%), 26.32% and 5.79% have under Bachelor Degree and others respectively. For working

experience, 41.05% have working experience between 3-10 years, and 34.21% have working experience between 11-20 years.

2. For training contents, it was found that the caregivers in the training program had the knowledge after the training program higher than before having the training program at the significant level of .001 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The comparison of the knowledge aquired by caregivers before and after the training program

Time	Number	\overline{X}	S.D.	t-test
	(person)			
Before Training	190	21.94	3.95	
After Training	190	26.32	3.08	20.07***

^{***} significant level .001

3. The Evaluation of Training Process

There were 4 parts of research results which were:

Part 1 From the evaluation of the training contents, training activities and resource persons, as a whole, it was found that the training contents, training activities, and the resource persons were evaluated in the good level (\overline{X} = 4.47), When considering in each training topic, Creating Materials for Young Children was in the first rank (\overline{X} =4.79), followed by Observation, Record, Assessment and Reporting Young Children Development (\overline{X} =4.62), and Nutrition For Young Children (\overline{X} = 4.53), respectively as shown in Table 2

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviation of the evaluation of the training contents, training activities and resource persons.

Topics	$\overline{\overline{X}}$	S.D.	Level	Rank
1) Children with	4.39	0.56	Good	9
Special Needs,				
2) How Environment and	4.36	0.55	Good	11
Learning Creating the Brain?				
3) Classroom Management	4.39	0.62	Good	10
for Young Children,				
4) Young Children	4.43	0.53	Good	4
Development,				
5) Learning Experiences	4.42	0.69	Good	5
for Young Children,				
6) Observation, Record,	4.62	1.21	Excellent	2
Assessment and Reporting				
Young Children Development,				
7) Creating Materials for	4.79	0.56	Excellent	1
Young Children,				
8) Nutrition for Young Children,	4.53	0.53	Excellent	3
9) Promoting Integrity and	4.41	0.54	Good	7
Ethic for Young Children,				
10) Health and Safety for	4.40	0.61	Good	8
Young Children,				
11) Importance of Song,	4.41	0.53	Good	6
Poem and Circle activity				
for Young Children				
Total	4.47	0.63	Good	

Part 2 The evaluation of training process, it was found that the training process, as a whole, was ranked in the good level (\overline{X} = 4.19). When considered in each item, the first rank was Training Program Personnel (\overline{X} =4.58) followed by Multimedia (\overline{X} =4.15) and Services (\overline{X} =4.13) respectively as shown in Table 3

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviation of the training process

Items	$\overline{\overline{X}}$	S.D.	Level	Rank
1. Training Place, rooms	4.03	0.57	Good	5
for the training and stay				
2. Foods and Snacks	4.05	0.73	Good	4
3. Multimedia	4.15	0.64	Good	2
4. Services	4.13	0.58	Good	3
5. Training Program Personnel	4.58	0.59	Excellent	1
Total	4.19	0.62	Good	

Part 3 Advantage of the training Program

It was found that the advantage of the training program, evaluated as a whole, was in the good level (\overline{X} =4.54). When considered in each item, the first rank was the Training program utility and Importance to the child development (\overline{X} =4.65) followed by Training Curriculum can be brought into practice (\overline{X} =4.51) as shown in Table 4

Table 4 Means and Standard Deviation of the training program advantage

Items	\overline{X}	S.D.	Level	Rank
1. Training Curriculum can be	4.51	0.52	Excellent	2
brought into practice.				
2. Knowledge can be enlarged	4.47	0.51	Good	3
to network creation.				
3. Training program utility	4.65	0.65	Excellent	1
and importance to the child				
development.				
Total	4.54	0.56	Excellent	

Part 4 Additional Recommendation for the training program and the continued training program:

The caregivers gave the additional recommendation for the training program and the continued training program which were:

4.1 There were 12 recommendations for the training program and the continued training program from the caregivers and could be summarized as 1) providing more time on the lesson about Creating Materials for Young Children. This was because it was mostly used, 2) giving more time in the morning period in subject studies than practice, 3) providing field trip to the good schools, 5) having good editing on the training papers for their perfection, and 6) other recommendations about room to stay and selling goods.

4.2 There were 24 recommendations about the lessons for the continued training program that could be summarized as 1) child care and education for early childhood children, there should be lesson on early childhood IQ and EQ, classroom management, management of daily activities, selection of teaching materials and toys, story, song, game and recreation activities for children, teaching and learning innovation, nutrition and cooking for young children, classroom research, school curriculum development, promoting integrity and ethic for children age 2–5 years old and observation, record, assessment and reporting young children development, 2) knowledge for work enhancement such as the standard for childcare centres, network building, early

childhood education teacher performance, childcare centres management, coding of papers for child centres and computer for childcare works.

Discussion

The Workshop Training Program for Caregivers under the Jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization was provided directly to the need for caregivers continuous development, which will bring the quality education for young children. The program is made annually for those caregivers with Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education and others or below Bachelor Degree. The training program was provided in accordance with the Article 52 of the National Education Act B.E. 2542 and with the Criteria 4 of the Key Performance Indicator (7.3) of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, which stipulates that teacher of young children or caregivers have to take part in training program at least 20 hours/year. The Local Administrative Organization is provided with national or local budget to paid the caregivers to take part in the training program annually. This means to encourage the caregivers to work with confidence.

From the evaluation of the training contents, activities and resource persons, it was found that the lesson on creating materials for young children was ranked the highest. Moreover, there was recommendation to give more time on the activities on creating materials for young children and there should be continued training. The reason was that it is the lesson the caregivers mostly use. From the observation for each training lesson, it was found that resource persons had given information concerning the making teaching materials to be used in learning activities. They also provided the concept for using them in the creative activities.

For caregivers with Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood Education, what they have learnt from the training program may be different, and new for those who graduated from other fields. There were diverse materials used by resource persons for creating their products. They were natural materials, what left over and those found in the surrounding. The products can be used in creative activities in Language, Science, Mathematics and for other aspects of child development. The trainees were happy and enjoyable. They were attentively involved in the training activities and in presenting their works. The training activities not only aroused the caregivers creativeness but also be useful to the child

development as stipulated in purposes of Early childhood Education Curriculum B.E.2546 for 3–5 yeas old in item 3 Good mental health and be happy, item 5. Emotion are expressed through art, music, movement and a love of a physical exercise, item 10. Able to think and solve problems, and item 11. Imagination and creative thinking is demonstrated. (Ministry of Education, B.E.2546)

For the result of the evaluation of the training program process, considered as a whole, it was in the good level, while the training program personnel was ranked in the first. There were 2 training program personnel. They were experienced in the training program and could run the 6 days program smoothly. Also, they could well manage the training program concerning foods, place and multimedia. These caused the trainees to have good impression to other services of the training program too.

The clear and well set works with enough time for learning, practicing and applying new ideas were important characteristics for the development of successful training personnel.

For the result of the evaluation of the training program advantage, considered as a whole, it was in the excellent level. There were 2 items ranked in the excellent level which were the utility of the training program for the caregivers in child development and the training program curriculum can be used in the real situation. The result could indicate that the training program was successful. This was because it could directly response to the needs of the trainees and also could be used to develop their works. The eleven lessons of the training program were congruent with the recommendation of the Association For Childhood Education International (1998), Massachusetts Department of Education (2003) and National Association for Education of Young Children (2008). The use of workshop approach could give the trainees both knowledge and practice, which in turn, could bring the confidence to work with young children. In addition, the training program papers had enough examples and details for the trainees to use as handbook in their works.

Conclusion

The results of the evaluation as a whole can be concluded that the workshop training program for caregivers in childcare centres under the jurisdiction of Local Administrative Organization was achieved as purposed. The caregivers gained more knowledge, skills and basic experiences in caring and educating young children efficiently and effectively. The development process need to be continued every year. Government and related agencies should set the budget to serve for the training program. Time and places to provide the training need to be considered on caregivers' convenience so they don't have to leave the children for the training.

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