



**DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES OF THE CIREBON
CITY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT**

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Abstract

This study examine the effect of Distributive Justice and Structural Empowerment on Affective Commitment, with Psychological Empowerment as a mediating variable among employees of the Fire and Rescue Service (DPKP) of the Cirebon City, Indonesia. A quantitative casual-associative approach was employed, utilizing Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The population consisted of 240 Employees, and 150 respondents were selected via simple random sampling using the Slovin formula. Data were collected through a closed-ended Likert scale questionnaire (1-5) and analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. The Results indicate that: (1) Distributive Justice positively and significantly affects Affective Commitment; (2) Structural Empowerment positively and significantly affects Affective Commitment; (3) Distributive Justice positively and significantly affects Psychological Empowerment; (4) Structural Empowerment positively and significantly affects Psychological Empowerment; (5) Psychological Empowerment positively and significantly affects Affective Commitment; (6) Psychological Empowerment significantly mediates the effect of Distributive Justice on Affective Commitment; however, (7) the mediation of Psychological Empowerment on the relationship between Structural Empowerment and Affective Commitment is not significant. These findings reinforce the relevance of Social Exchange Theory and provide practical implications for human resource management strategies in public sector organizations.

Keywords: Distributive Justice, Structural Empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Affective Commitment



INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive modern organizational environment, *Affective Commitment* has emerged as one of the primary foundations for organizational success and sustainability. This emotional attachment reflects employees' desire to remain in and contribute to their organizational out of sense of belonging. *Affective Commitment* plays a critical role in enhancing productivity and job satisfaction, and in reducing turnover intention, particularly in labor intensive service organizations such as hospitals and educational institutions (Aggarwal et al., 2022). As demands for organizational change and global work dynamics intensify, affective commitment serves as psychological force that maintains workforce stability and consistency under organizational pressure (Monje-Amor et al., 2020). Accordingly, a deep understanding of the antecedents of *Affective Commitment* is essential for organizations committed to long-term human resource sustainability (Dennerlein & Kirkman, 2023).

Affective Commitment does not arise spontaneously but is shaped by a range of interrelated internal and external organizational factors. Two variables that have garnered particular scholarly attention are *Distributive Justice* and *Structural Empowerment*, with *Psychological Empowerment* serving as the primary mediating mechanism. *Distributive Justice* reflects employees perceptions of the fairness foster feelings of being valued and trusted within the organization (Aggarwal et al., 2022). *Structural Empowerment*, as theorized by Kanter (1977), provides employees with access to information, support, and resources that enable them to exercise autonomy and control in their roles (Echebiri et al., 2020). Both variables are subsequently internalized as *Psychological Empowerment* defined as a sense of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact over one's work outcomes which in turn strengthens emotional attachment to the organization (Singh & Sarkar, 2019).

Empirical evidence supports the importance of these variables in shaping *Affective Commitment*. (Aggarwal et al., 2018) found that perceptions of fairness and structural support enhance intrinsic motivation, ultimately increasing affective commitment. Research by Monje-Amor et al. (2020) demonstrated that access to information and developmental opportunities within organizational structures heightens employees' sense of meaning and competence. In the Indonesian context, (Evalina et al., 2022) confirmed that organizational culture and justice directly influence employees' emotional commitment. Nonetheless, prior studies reveal considerable variation in conceptual model development, with most research positioning *Affective Commitment* as a supporting or mediating variable rather than as the primary outcome of organizational models.



Several research gaps remain. First, the integration of *Distributive Justice* and *Structural Empowerment* within a single comprehensive conceptual model is lacking, as existing studies tend to examine these constructs in isolation (Aggarwal et al., 2018; Singh & Sarkar, 2019). Second, findings regarding the mediating of role *Psychological Empowerment* on *Affective Commitment* remain inconsistent across contexts (Aggarwal et al., 2022; Kaya & Altinkurt, 2018). Third, empirical research in the Indonesian context particularly within labor intensive public service organizations remains limited (Evalina et al., 2022; Fitriyah et al., 2023). This study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrative model grounded in *Social Exchange Theory* (Blau et al., 1964) that simultaneously examines the direct and indirect effects of *Distributive Justice* and *Structural Empowerment* on *Affective Commitment* among employees of the Fire and Rescue Service (DPKP) of Cirebon City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is grounded in Adams' (1965) *equity Theory*, which posits that individuals assess organizational fairness by comparing the ratio of their contributions (inputs) such as effort, skills, and time to the outcomes (outputs) they receive, including compensation, recognition, and career opportunities. When employees perceive that their outcomes are commensurate with their contributions, they experience a sense of justice and exhibit positive organizational attitudes; conversely, perceived inequity generates dissatisfaction and diminishes *Affective Commitment* (Aggarwal et al., 2022). (Aggarwal et al., 2022) further found that *Distributive Justice* positively influences *Psychological Empowerment*, as equitable reward distribution fosters feelings of recognition and enhances intrinsic motivation consistent with principles of *Social Exchange Theory* (Blau et al., 1964).

Structural Empowerment

Structural Empowerment is rooted in Kanter's (1977) *Structural Empowerment Theory*, which argues that empowerment in organizations arises when employees are granted access to information, support, resources, and opportunities that enable them to perform their work effectively and maintain control over their roles. The four structural components- opportunity, information, support, and resources constitute the foundational conditions for a work environment that promotes creativity, autonomy, and employee accountability (Kanter, 1977). (Echebiri et al., 2020) demonstrated that *Structural Empowerment* positively influences *Psychological Empowerment*, as access to these structural conditions enhances employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, and autonomy in their work.



Affective Commitment

Affective Commitment is conceptualized within Meyer and Allen's (1991) *Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment*, which defines it as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of employees with their organization. Employees with high affective commitment remain in their organization because they genuinely want to, driven by affective bonds rather than obligation or external factors. Key antecedents include *Psychological Empowerment*, organizational justice, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational structure (Yogalakshmi & Suganthi, 2020) also reported a moderate positive correlation between *Structural Empowerment* and organizational commitment, including its affective component, through a systematic review and meta-analysis.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological Empowerment is conceptualized as an intrinsic motivational construct reflecting four dimensions: *meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact* (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). It functions as the psychological justice translate into behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. (Aggarwal et al., 2022) found that *Psychological Empowerment* significantly mediates the effects of both *Structural Empowerment* and *Distributive Justice* on *Affective Commitment*, confirming its role as a critical psychological bridge in organizational commitment research.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The overarching theoretical framework of this study is *Study Exchange Theory* (Blau et al., 1964), which explains that positive organizational treatment such as just reward distribution and access to empowering structural conditions triggers reciprocal emotional responses from employees in the form of loyalty and commitment. Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) underpins *Distributive Justice*; Kanter's Structural Empowerment Theory (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995) underpins the mediating variable; and Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model underpins *Affective Commitment*. Based on this theoretical grounding and prior empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Distributive Justice has a positive and significant effect on Affective Commitment.*

H2: *Structural Empowerment has a positive and significant effect on Affective Commitment.*

H3: *Distributive Justice has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Empowerment.*

H4: *Structural Empowerment has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Empowerment.*

H5: *Psychological Empowerment has a positive and significant effect on Affective Commitment.*



H6: Psychological Empowerment significantly mediates the effect of Distributive Justice on Affective Commitment

H7: Psychological Empowerment significantly mediates the effect of Structural Empowerment on Affective Commitment

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach to examine causal relationships among distributive justice, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment. A quantitative explanatory design is appropriate when research aims to test theoretically derived hypotheses and analyze cause–effect relationships among variables using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014). The population of this study consisted of all employees of the Cirebon City Fire and Rescue Department, totaling 240 individuals. A probability sampling technique using simple random sampling was applied to ensure equal selection opportunities for all members of the population. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 150 respondents. This sample size is considered adequate for Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which is suitable for studies with moderate sample sizes and complex models involving mediating variables (Hair et al. 2021)

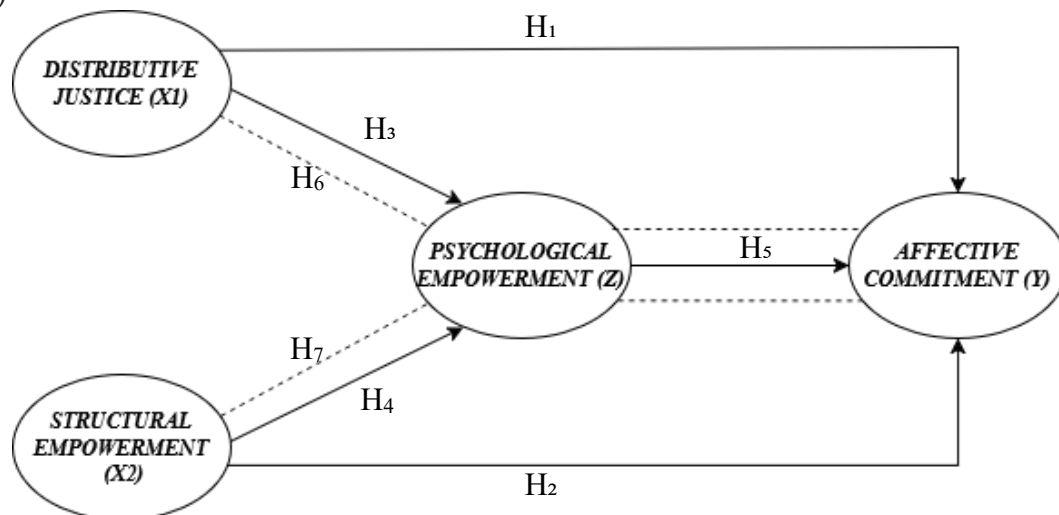


Figure 1.
Research Design



Measurement

Table 1.
Features of The Respondents

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	< 25	31	20,67%
	25 – 35	96	64,00%
	36 – 45	19	12,67%
	>45	4	2,67%
Total		150	100%
Gender	Male	112	74,67%
	Female	38	25,33%
Total		150	100%
Education	High School	70	46,7%
	Associate Degree	30	20,0%
	Bachelor's Degree	45	30,0%
	Master`s Degree	5	3,3%
Total	Items	150	100%

Source: Questionnaire Results

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 software. This approach was selected because it is appropriate for prediction-oriented research, mediation analysis, moderate sample sizes, and data that do not require strict normality assumptions (Joseph F.Hair et al., 2021).

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated by assessing convergent validity (outer loadings ≥ 0.70 and AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and reliability through Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (≥ 0.70). Second, the structural model was assessed to test the hypothesized relationships by examining path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Hypothesis testing and mediation effects were evaluated using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples (Joseph F.Hair et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Results

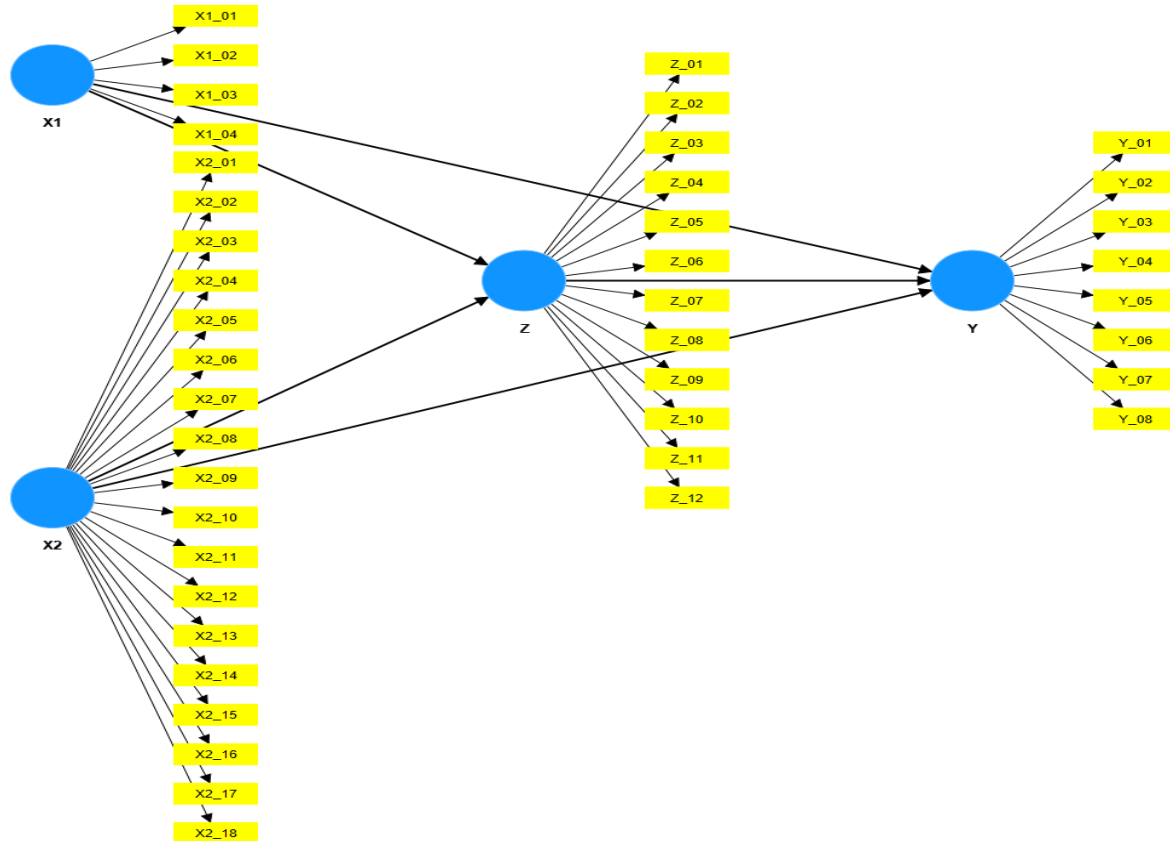


Figure 2.
Smart PLS Model

All measurement model criteria were satisfactorily met. Convergent validity was established, with outer loading values ranging from 0.704 to 0.912, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all indicators. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.564 to 0.727, indicating that each construct adequately explained more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. Reliability was confirmed, as composite reliability values ranged from 0.914 to 0.975, while Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.875 to 0.973, demonstrating strong internal consistency across all constructs. Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates adequate validity and reliability and is suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.



Table 2.
Convergent Validity

	Distributive Justice	Structural Empowerment	Affective Commitment	Psychological Empowerment
DJ 1	0,876			
DJ 2	0,867			
DJ 3	0,819			
DJ 4	0,848			
SE 1		0,866		
SE 2		0,900		
SE 3		0,912		
SE 4		0,800		
SE 5		0,871		
SE 6		0,802		
SE 7		0,801		
SE 8		0,781		
SE 9		0,816		
SE 10		0,793		
SE 11		0,835		
SE 12		0,834		
SE 13		0,788		
SE 14		0,792		
SE 15		0,838		
SE 16		0,834		
SE 17		0,841		
SE 18		0,801		
Y 1			0,717	
Y 2			0,910	
Y 3			0,851	
Y 4			0,910	
Y 5			0,839	
Y 6			0,889	
Y 7			0,804	
Y 8			0,854	
Z 1				0,750
Z 2				0,731



Z 3				0,759
Z 4				0,740
Z 5				0,781
Z 6				0,825
Z 7				0,781
Z 8				0,715
Z 9				0,768
Z 10				0,730
Z 11				0,704
Z 12				0,717

Source: Outer loading pls algorithm smart pls 4

The results of the convergent validity assessment indicate that all indicators used in this study meet the required validity criteria. The outer loading values for all constructs range from 0.704 to 0.912, exceeding the minimum recommended threshold of 0.70. The highest loading value was observed for indicator X2_03 of the Structural Empowerment construct (0.912), while the lowest loading value was found for indicator Z_11 of the Psychological Empowerment construct (0.704). These results demonstrate that all measurement items adequately represent their respective constructs. Therefore, no indicators were removed from the measurement model, confirming that the research instrument satisfies the criteria for convergent validity and is appropriate for further analysis.

Table 3.
Discriminant Validity

	Affective Commitment	Distributive Justice	Psychological Empowerment	Structural Empowerment
Affective Commitment	0,849			
Distributive Justice	0,719	0,853		
Psychological Empowerment	0,648	0,693	0,751	
Structural Empowerment	0,732	0,771	0,670	0,829

Source: Smart pls 4 discriminant validity

Based on the table above, it can be observed that the square root of the AVE for Affective Commitment (Y) is 0.849, Distributive Justice (X1) is 0.853, Psychological



Empowerment (Z) is 0.751, and Structural Empowerment (X2) is 0.829. These results indicate that the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs and exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Fornell–Larcker criterion for discriminant validity is satisfactorily met, and all constructs demonstrate adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4.

Construct Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Reliability
Affective Commitment (Y)	0,944	0,954	Reliable
Distributive Justice (X1)	0,875	0,914	Reliable
Psychological Empowerment (Z)	0,930	0,939	Reliable
Structural Empowerment (X2)	0,973	0,975	Reliable

It is observed that the Cronbach's alpha (α) value for Affective Commitment (Y) is 0.944, for Distributive Justice (X1) is 0.875, for Psychological Empowerment (Z) is 0.914, and for Structural Empowerment (X2) is 0.973, indicating that all constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency and are considered reliable. Furthermore, the composite reliability values for Affective Commitment (Y), Distributive Justice (X1), Psychological Empowerment (Z), and Structural Empowerment (X2) are 0.954, 0.902, 0.939, and 0.975, respectively. These results confirm that all constructs exhibit satisfactory reliability and are suitable for further analysis. Brevity: Articulate your findings with linguistic economy. Eliminate redundancies and superfluous language while maintaining comprehensive scientific reporting. Each sentence should convey distinct, meaningful information that advances your scholarly argument.

Structural Model Result

The evaluation of the structural model was conducted by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the explanatory power of the model, the effect size (f^2) to determine the magnitude of each exogenous variable's contribution, and the significance of path coefficients using a bootstrapping procedure to test the proposed hypotheses.

Table 5.

Value Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Affective Commitment (Y)	0,612	0,604
Psychological Empowerment (Z)	0,525	0,519

Source: Smart PLS



As shown in the table above, the Affective Commitment variable has an R-square value of 0.612 (61.2%). This result indicates that affective commitment is moderately explained by Distributive Justice and Structural Empowerment, while the remaining variance is influenced by other factors not included in the research model.

Table 6.
Effect Size F-Square

	Affective Commitment	Distributive Justice	Psychological Empowerment	Structural Empowerment
Affective Commitment (Y)				
Distributive Justice (X1)	0,080		0,161	
Psychological Empowerment (Z)	0,045			
Structural Empowerment (X2)	0,133		0,096	

Source: Effect size F-Square Smart PLS

The f-square (f^2) value is used to measure the magnitude of the influence of latent variables at the structural level. Based on the table above, the f-square value for the relationship between Distributive Justice and Affective Commitment is 0.080, and for the relationship between Distributive Justice and Psychological Empowerment is 0.161, which are categorized as having a substantial effect. The f-square value for the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Affective Commitment is 0.045, which is also categorized as a substantial effect. Meanwhile, the f-square values for the relationships between Structural Empowerment and Affective Commitment (0.133) and between Structural Empowerment and Psychological Empowerment (0.096) are likewise categorized as substantial effects.

Table 7.
Path Coefficient

Hypothesis Path	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistic (O/STDEV)	P-Values	Result
H1 : DJ → AC	0,298	3,078	0,001	Significant
H2 : SE → AC	0,373	2,710	0,003	Significant
H3 : DJ→PE	0,435	3,671	0,000	Significant
H4 : SE→PE	0,335	2,585	0,005	Significant
H5 : PE→AC	0,192	2,268	0,012	Significant
H6 : DJ→PE→ AC	0,083	2,129	0,017	Significant



H7 : SE→PE→ AC	0,083	1,487	0,069	Not Significant
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Source: path coefficient smart pls 4

All proposed hypotheses were supported at the 5% significance level. The results of the indirect effects analysis indicate that psychological empowerment plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between distributive justice and affective commitment, while its mediating role in the relationship between structural empowerment and affective commitment was not supported.

Discussion

The findings indicate that distributive justice and structural empowerment significantly enhance employees' affective commitment. Psychological empowerment plays a mediating role in the relationship between distributive justice and affective commitment, suggesting that perceptions of fairness are internalized through employees' psychological states before strengthening emotional attachment. However, the mediating effect of psychological empowerment on the relationship between structural empowerment and affective commitment is not supported, indicating that structural empowerment primarily exerts a direct influence. These results are consistent with prior evidence highlighting the importance of empowerment mechanisms in shaping affective outcomes within organizational contexts (Monje-Amor et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study provides evidence that distributive justice and structural empowerment are fundamental organizational mechanisms for strengthening affective commitment, particularly in public-sector service organizations. Beyond the immediate context, the findings suggest that fairness in reward allocation and empowering organizational structures function as universal signals of organizational support that can foster emotional attachment across different sectors and institutional settings. The mediating role of psychological empowerment in the distributive justice–affective commitment relationship highlights the importance of internal psychological processes in translating organizational practices into sustained employee commitment. At a broader level, these results contribute to organizational behavior and human resource management literature by reinforcing the relevance of empowerment-based and exchange-oriented perspectives in explaining employee commitment in complex and high-demand work environments.



Implication and Future Research

The findings of this study imply that organizations, particularly in the public sector, should prioritize fair reward distribution and empowering organizational structures as strategic mechanisms to strengthen employees' affective commitment. By fostering psychological empowerment, organizations can enhance employees' emotional attachment and long-term engagement, which is critical for organizational sustainability in high-demand work environments. From a broader perspective, these implications are relevant not only to emergency service institutions but also to other organizational domains where commitment and retention are essential. Future research is encouraged to test the applicability of this model across different sectors and cultural contexts, employ longitudinal designs to examine causal dynamics over time, and explore additional mediating or moderating variables that may further explain the relationship between justice, empowerment, and affective commitment.

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