

# TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: A CASE OF GREEN ADVERTISING FOR CONSUMER'S RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR

*Patrick I. Akpoghiran*

## **Abstract**

There are many approaches towards environmental management. Green advertising is one of such approaches. Green advertising is a specific type of advertising that is centred on the promotion of factors having to do with the environment. As one of the ways of promoting and advocating for sustainable development and consumer's responsible environmental behaviour, green advertising is not a familiar concept with many consumers in Nigeria. Poor knowledge of this concept has affected environmental consciousness and right attitude towards environmental behaviour. This study among other things, seeks to determine the influence of green advertising for consumer's responsible environmental behaviour. Using the instrument of questionnaire to elicit responses from respondents based on the research questions and the hypothesis, the study showed that environmental knowledge, attitude and practice on green advertising towards consumer's responsible environmental behaviour were poor. The study also showed that attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising on the basis of aggressive green advertising campaigns.

Environmental issues have become an increasingly public concern during the last decades. Issues of global warming and climate change have come to the forefront, thus, raising interest even in corporate advertising. Global companies like Coca-Cola, Toyota, IBM and others now focus on green advertising and sustainability of the environment. Organisations are now taking interest in green advertising and environmental management through their products and services. For example, a growing number of people now understand the impact that their behaviour, as well as corporation's accountability, has on the environment (Mostafa, 2007; Bao, 2009). A study has suggested that personal attachment to the environment can motivate pro-environmental behaviours, ranging from environmental activism, such as ecological relevant petition for pro-environmental laws and regulations, membership in anti-pollution organisations, to energy conservation and responsible use of resources. Evidence also suggests the emergence of a new generation of eco-centric consumers who are motivated by their environmental concern at the point of purchase (Bao, 2009). Bao believes that the commitment to preserve nature's resources and maintain ecological sustainability propels many consumers to make environmental sound purchases. For every purchase decision to be made by the consumer there is the potential for that consumer to contribute to a more or less sustainable pattern of consumption. Existing research indicates that consumers' environmental concern seems to be an important indicator of their eco-friendly behaviour, to the extent that they are willing to pay a high price for environmentally safe products (Moon, Florkowski, Bruckner & Schonhof, 2002; Bao, 2009). In a study on environmentally-responsible consumerism, Ebreo et al. (1999, as cited in Post, 2007) found that general concern for the environment, in addition to social factors and more specific concerns about the effect of the product on human and animal life might be related to purchase decisions and other waste reduction behaviours. Ebreo et al. claimed that environmental concern and attitudes towards the environment are still significant in relation to source reduction, specifically in relation to environmentally-responsible consumerism. Post (2007) investigated whether general environmental attitudes and concern are strong predictors of behaviour when the amount of effort required for the behaviour is high. The research showed that environmental concern predicted recycling behaviour only when the amount of effort required for action was high. Instead, behaviours

have proven to be more significantly influenced by specific attitudes about recycling, like knowledge of waste reduction methods, access to programmes, time, effort, and convenience.

Greening advertising or marketing, as Nwabueze (2007) sees it, explores how advertising principles and practices are employed by organisation on the environment with the aim of ensuring an environmentally sustainable achievement of marketing objectives. Greening advertising in this context, is a specific type of advertising that is centred on the promotion of factors having to do with the environment. Oftentimes, the companies that use green advertising also use very environmentally friendly operations and products packaging as well. As a result, a growing corporate social responsibility practice together with increasing concern by consumers has made a number of organisations demonstrate their environmental sensitivity with different strategies. One of the marketing strategies used by organisation is in packaging and labeling features like 'environmentally safe', 'recyclable', 'degradable', 'ozone friendly', 'non toxic', 'dispose properly', 'keep the environment clean' and so on. This is where advertising or marketing communications in products and services are imperative to consumers' environmental responsible behaviour.

Further research into consumer's attitudes towards green advertising has been examined. Bao (2009) examines the factors for consumer's attitudes towards green advertising. These factors include: consumer responses in terms of loyalty, willing to pay higher price for eco-friendly products, and perceptions of product safety and consumer's preference of product with eco-labeled packages. Relatively, a study on green advertising and consumer behaviour by Haytko and Matulich (2009) revealed that at a mean point set at 2.50, a mean point result at 2.98 was obtained of respondents who tend to be more loyal to products from companies that practice green advertising. A mean point at 2.76 was also obtained from the result of those (respondents) who say they plan to switch to products and services that are green advertised. Also, a mean point of 3.01 was obtained of those who prefer products with eco-labeled packages. These findings however, imply that there are growing concerns towards green advertising which is valuable to consumer and the society at large.

Nevertheless, as the global concern over environmental management increased, the questions that come to mind are: how can advertising be used to promote environmental consciousness and management in Nigeria? Is green advertising effective in Nigeria? Can green advertising influence consumer's attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour? This study is contingent upon these research questions.

### **Theoretical Backing**

This study is contingent upon two theories. They are corporate social environmental theory and theory of planned behaviour.

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which postulated that a company should be socially responsible to the host community in terms of the provision of social supports is seen in this context, as Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER). CER focused a greater view on the company's environmental impact. By corporate environmental responsibility, companies are expected to use marketing and advertising strategies to contribute to sustainable development. Sustainable development is the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need. Green environmental and eco-marketing is under the umbrella of corporate environmental responsibility. Terms like phosphate free, recyclable, refillable, ozone friendly, and environmentally friendly, dispose properly, keep the environment clean and its similarities are some of the things consumers most often associate with green marketing. Thus, green environmental and eco-marketing are part of the new marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but seek to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective. In other words, green environmental and eco-marketing belong to the group of approaches which seek to address the lack of fit between marketing as it is currently practiced and the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Theory of attitude has been applied to environmental studies. Studies have used the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a framework not only good for understanding, explaining and predicting behaviours, but also to provide a useful guide for designing intervention strategies to change or maintain behaviour (Ifegbesan 2009). This theory as propounded by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) is based on the assumption that individual behavioural intentions are directly related to their

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attitudes. For example, a person who believes that performing a given behaviour will lead to most positive outcomes will hold a favourable attitude towards performing the behaviour. The theory also states that what an individual does is determined by personal motivation which is determined by attitude, beliefs, social support and perceived behavioural control. The theory of planned behaviour has been widely used in environmental behaviour research to predict a person's intent to participate in a specified behaviour. Attitude towards the environment can be influenced by environmental news or green advertising campaigns. Positive attitudes towards the environment are also as a result of planned behaviour or consciousness of the environment. Both theories point to responsible environmental behaviour, which means actions taken by individual or a group of individuals to do what is right in order to protect the environment.

**Research Methodology**

The study surveys consumer's opinion on green advertising. Through the instrument of questionnaire, consumer's awareness, knowledge and attitude on green advertising was determined.

**Product Categories**

In order to make the respondents have a clear picture of the green advertising, the scope of the concept was limited to these categories of products.

- (i) Fruit drinks like 5 Alive, Exotic, Chivita, Hollandia, Happy Hour, Cappy, etc
- (ii) Energy drinks like Red Bull, Bullet, Power Horse, Lucozade boost etc.
- (iii) Can drinks –all alcoholic and non-alcoholic
- (iv) Packed snack food like Gala, Biscuits, and Cake etc.
- (v) Table and sachet water.
- (vi) Recharge cards of all GSM networks

Respondents were asked to identify whether these categories of products contain information like 'recyclable', 'reuse', 'keep the environment clean', 'dispose properly' etc. The reason why these categories of food products were chosen was because they are easily bought and consumed by consumers in the streets, roads, cars and buses and other places. Their packs are easily thrown on the ground in our streets and major roads across Nigeria.

The study was confined to consumers in Warri metropolis in Delta State, Nigeria. Warri metropolis is made up of two cities namely, Warri South (with a population of 311,970) and Effurun (with a population of 188,728, [www.population.gov.ng](http://www.population.gov.ng) and [www.nigerianstat.gov.ng](http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng) ). This makes a population of 500,698. The Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size formula was adopted to arrive at a representative size for the population.

$$\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = sample size

N = Elements of population; 500,698

e = Error of sampling in this study was 0.05 proportion.

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{500,698}{1 + 500,698 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{500,698}{1,251.745}$$

n = 400

The sample size (n=400) represents 0.07% of the population.

### Measure Scale

Respondents Knowledge, Awareness and Practice (KAP) on environmental behaviour were measured. Ifegbesan (2009), Haytko and Matulich (2009) have used this scale to measure environmental behaviour. Table 1 adopted 3 point options. All Items in tables 2 & 3 use a 5-point Likert scale. The items in these two tables focus on respondent's knowledge and views on green advertising while table 4 adopted a 2-1 point scale of 'yes' and 'no' options.

### Reliability of the Instrument

A test and re-test involving 40 copies of the questionnaire was administered twice to students of the Delta State University, Abraka, at interval of four weeks. A total of 4 errors were observed. The Guttman scale of coefficient of reproducibility was adopted to measure the reliability of the instrument where:

$$1 - \frac{\text{Total error}}{\text{Total responses}} = 1 - \frac{4}{40} = 0.9 \text{ or } 90\%$$

The instrument yielded reliability coefficient value of 90%, an indication of internal consistency and validity.

### Method of Data Analysis

The technique employed to analyse the obtained data was descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, standard deviation, mean and chi-square to test the hypothesis. Responses to the questionnaire were pooled, edited and scored. Nominal values were assigned to the items according to scales. For example, on table 1, questions on general knowledge on green advertising had an assigned score of 3-1 for 'Sure', 'Not sure' and 'Not at all'. Percentage was used to analyse the data in this table. Tables 2 and 3 adopted the Likert scale of 5-1 point. Percentage and mean were used to analyse the data. To determine the mean point for table 2 & 3, the working was total number of the ranking of 5-1 scale (5+4+3+2+1 =15) divided by (no. of scale or options=3). For example, we have 15÷3=3.0. In this way, 3.0 becomes the midpoint or benchmark/mean value for all items in the tables. Therefore, any item whose response is greater than 3.00 is accepted but lesser than 3.00 is rejected or ( $p \geq 3.00$  &  $p \leq 3.00$ ). This forms the basis for the benchmark. This method had been used by Ifegbesan (2009) to analyse waste awareness and management in secondary schools. Table 4 determines respondent's specific behaviour to green advertisements. The 'Yes' or 'No' options were provided. Percentage was also used to analyse the data obtained in all the items in the tables. The hypothesis was tested using data from item 8.

### Results

The sample (n=400) consisted of 209 (52.2%) males and 191 (47.8%) females. The ages between 18-24 consisted of 122 (30.5%) respondents, those between 25-34 ages were 82 (20.5%) and those between 45-above were 94 (25.5%) respondents respectively. On marital status, there were 323 (80.7%) singles, 70 (17.5%) were married and 7 (1.7%) were widows. There were 102 (25.5%) respondents who had secondary education and 298 (74.5%) with higher education. Also, there were 103 (25.7%) students, 80 (20%) traders, 97 (24.2%) public servants, 86 (21.5%) were businessmen and women while 34 (8.5%) lecturers.

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**Table 1: General Knowledge on Green Advertising**

S/N	Items	Options			Total
1	Are you familiar with the concept/term- Green Advertising?	Sure 132 (33%)	Not sure 216 (54%)	Not at all 100	400 100%
2	Are you aware of eco-friendly (environmental) product?	Sure 132 (33%)	Not sure 192 (48%)	Not at all 76 (19%)	400 100%
3	Have you come across products with message or label package like 'recyclable', 'reusable', 'keep Nigeria clean', 'dispose properly'?	Sure 222 (55.5%)	Not sure 108 (27%)	Not at all 70 (17.5%)	400 100%
4	If sure, does it influence your choice of product or purchase in any way?	Sure 93(23.2%)	Not sure 139 (34.7%)	Not at all 168 (42%)	400 100%

The essence of this table was to determine respondents' knowledge on green advertising. 132 (33%) of the respondents were familiar with the concept-green advertising, 216 (54%) were not sure while 100 (25%) have never heard of green advertising. This implies that 75% of the respondents have not heard of green advertising or products with environmental message. Also, (67%) of the respondents were not aware of eco-friendly products. In the same vein, 132 (33%) of the respondents were aware of eco-friendly products, 192 (48%) were not too sure and 76 (19%) were not aware at all. Asked if they have come across products with eco-label, 222 (55.5%) of the respondents were sure, 108 (27%) were not sure and 70 (17.5%) were not sure at all. Knowledge about green advertising was relatively poor. Those who said that they were aware of eco-label products were asked to indicate if their choice of products purchase has been influenced by green advertising. 53 (13.2%) said yes, 179 (44.7%) and 168 (42%) said no.

**Table 2: Views on Green Advertising**

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	A	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
6.	Green advertising shows the consumer that the firm is addressing consumer's environmental concerns?	165	180	5	40	10	4.12	Accepted
7.	Green advertising is not effective in Nigeria?	110	100	60	72	58	3.33	Accepted
8.	Attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising campaigns?	39	115	40	124	82	2.76	Rejected
9.	Green advertising is a good source of information about product?	73	16	6	166	139	2.29	Rejected
10.	Green advertising claims are sincere and not deceptive?	52	54	99	137	58	2.76	Rejected

Views on green advertising were determined using mean point of 3.00. From item 6, at a mean point of 4.12, respondents agreed that by green advertising, a firm is addressing consumer's environmental concerns. The mean point obtained in item 7 indicated that green advertising is not effective in Nigeria ( $p=3.33 \geq 3.00$ ). Individual's responses to attitude towards green advertising indicated that 148 of the 400 respondents agreed that attitude toward responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising. 60 of the respondents were unable to decide while 168 disagreed. A mean point at 2.90 was obtained implying rejection to the question asked. At a mean point of 2.29, result shown in item 9 implied that green advertising has not been a genuine source of information about product. Also, result shown in item 10 indicated that green advertising claims are not sincere and are deceptive (where  $p=2.76 \leq 3.00$ ).

**Table 3: Responses to Company's Roles on Green Advertising**

S/N	Items	SA	A	UD	A	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
11.	Companies use green advertising to protect their reputation?	82	140	38	100	40	3.31	Accepted
12.	Companies are only interested in the product sell not green advertising?	166	32	48	63	91	3.29	Accepted
13.	The Nigerian Consumer Protection Council is not serious with green advertising?	176	71	49	57	47	3.56	Accepted
14.	There are hardly green advertisements in the Nigerian mass media?	104	155	16	65	60	3.44	Accepted
15.	Companies' roles on green advertising have been adequate?	63	85	35	120	97	2.74	Rejected

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Item 11 indicated that companies use green advertising to protect their reputation (where,  $p=3.31 \geq 3.00$ ). However, responses in item 12 affirmed that companies were only interested in the product sell not green advertising. A mean point at 3.29 was obtained. In the same vein, at a mean point at 3.56, result showed that the Nigerian Consumer Protection Council has not been serious with green advertising. Also, responses in item 14 indicated that green advertisements hardly appeared on the mass media in Nigeria. The point obtained was 3.44 affirming to the question asked. At a mean point where  $2.74 \leq 3.00$ , responses indicated that companies' roles on green advertising have been inadequate.

**Table 4: Specific Behaviour to Green Advertising  
Identify the things you have done out of concern for the environment and about green advertising. BE HONEST**

S/N	Items	Options	
		Yes	No
16.	Do you read product you bought like can drinks, gala, 5 alive, recharge cards, sachet/table water etc whether they contain message or label written: 'environmental friendly' or 'dispose properly', 'keep Nigeria clean' etc.?	51 (12.7%)	349 (87.3%)
17.	When driving or in a car do you throw your waste outside?	305 (76.2%)	95(23.7%)
18.	Have you told others about responsible environmental management practice?	145 (36.2%)	255(63.7%)
19.	Are you conscious of green message on products?	111 (27.7%)	289(72.2%)
20.	Do you recycle used products?	182(45.5%)	218(54.5%)
21.	Have you attended any training, seminars, or workshop on environmental education/management?	120 (30%)	280 (70%)
22.	Do you support green advertising?	276 (69%)	124 (31%)
23.	Do you dispose consumed products on street waste containers provided by the local authorities?	132 (33%)	268 (67%)

As shown in this table, 51 (12.7%) of the respondents claimed that they read product they bought like can drinks, galla, 5 alive, recharge cards, sachet/table water etc whether they contain message or label written: 'environmental friendly' or 'dispose properly', 'keep Nigeria clean' etc while 349 (87.3%) do not. When asked if they throw away waste outside a moving vehicle 305 (76.2%) said yes while 95(23.7%) said they do not. 145 (36.2%) of the 400 respondents have talked to others or been talking to others about green advertising and responsible environmental management practice while 255(63.7%) said that they have not. Item 19 showed that 111 (27.7%) were conscious of green message on products, however, 289 (72.2%) were not. 182 (45.5%) of the respondents recycle used products while 218 (54.5%) do not. Also, 120 (30%) claimed that they have attended training, seminars, or workshop on environmental education/management while 280 (70%) said that that they have not. On whether they support green advertising, 276 (69%) indicated the affirmative while 124 (31%) indicated the contrary. When asked if they dispose consumed products on street waste containers provided by the local authorities, 132 (33%) said yes while 268 (67%) said no. Lastly, respondents were asked to state some benefits of green advertising. Responses gathered indicated that green advertising has made respondents to be conscious of environmental management like proper way to dispose waste and general interest in environmental issues.

**Gender Differences**

Frequency count and percentage were used to determine the difference between male and female respondents in terms of awareness of green advertising. From the 209 male respondents recorded, one hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were randomly selected. The same was applied to the copies of the questionnaire recorded on female respondents. One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were randomly selected from the 191 female respondents. From the responses obtained, 68 (67.3%) male respondents were aware and familiar with the concept-green advertising and eco-friendly products. Responses from the female respondents showed that only 33 (32.6%) of the 100 respondents were aware and familiar with the concept green advertising.

**Hypothesis Tested**

Using one sample chi-square test

H<sub>0</sub>: Attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can not be influenced by green advertising campaigns.

Expected frequency in bracket

Item tested (from item 8 above)	SA	A	UD	D	SD	TOTAL
Attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising campaigns?	39 (80)	115 (80)	40 (80)	124 (80)	82 (80)	400 (400)

Calculated values

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> / Fe
39	80	-41	1,681	43.1
115	80	35	1,225	10.6
40	80	-40	1,600	40
124	80	44	1,936	15.6
82	80	2	4	0.04
Total= 400	400			$\chi^2$ 109.34

Df = (R -1) (C-1)

Df = (5-1) (1)

Df = (4) (1)

Df = 4

Significant level = 0.05

Critical value  $\chi^2_{4 \text{ at } 0.05} = 13.28$

Decision Rule: Reject H<sub>0</sub> if  $\chi^2$  cal is  $\geq \chi^2$  tab value and accept H<sub>1</sub> if otherwise

Conclusion: Given the values where;  $\chi^2$  cal ( $\chi^2$  109.34) is  $\geq \chi^2$  tabs/critical value (13.28), we therefore, reject H<sub>0</sub> and accept H<sub>1</sub>, and conclude that attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising campaigns.

**Discussion of Findings**

Green advertising is a specific type of advertising that is centred on the promotion of factors having to do with the environment. As one of the ways of promoting and advocating for responsible environmental behavior, green advertising is not a familiar concept with many people. As obtained in the study, 75% of the respondents do not know or have not heard of green advertising. The percentage shown above implies that many of the respondents are not conscious of product label package with environmental messages. General knowledge on green advertising was poor. Reasons for the poor knowledge of green advertising awareness were dearth of green advertisements in the mass media and poor attention to green advertising by all stakeholders. Knowledge on green advertising may be different in some other parts of the world. Haytko and Matuliich (2009) found in their study that there



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were growing concerns towards green advertising which is valuable to consumer and the society at large, this study found the contrary.

Although, as shown in the study, attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour can be influenced by green advertising campaigns, however, green advertising has not made significant influence on consumer's attitude towards responsible environmental behaviour. This is because green advertising has not been effective in Nigeria as many consumers do not know of the concept. Environmental messages on radio jingles, television commercials and adverts placed on newspapers can be used to promote environmental consciousness and management. There is need therefore, for green advertising campaigns. Writing on this, Haytko and Matuliich (2009) revealed that green advertising leads people to be more socially responsible; it shows the consumer that the firm is addressing consumers' environmental concern; it strengthens company image; it is good at addressing environmental problems and it is a good source of information about products and services.

From the various consumer's products collected for study like energy (Red Bull, Bullet, Power Horse,), fruits drinks (5 Alive, Chivita, Hollandia, Happy Hour, Cappy etc), packed snack food (gala, biscuits, cake,) and table/sachet water, can drinks and recharge cards, none of them had green messages like 'dispose properly', 'recyclable', 'reuse', 'keep Nigeria clean' and so on but an image of an individual disposing waste in trash can was found in fruit drinks in packs and can drinks. These images were not obsequiously displayed. Many Nigerians (87.3%) do not read these environmental messages in the categories of products listed above. Also, 67% of the respondents still dispose these categories of products on the ground. A considerable number (76.2%) of respondents still throw their wastes out from moving vehicles. 54.5% of the respondents do not recycle waste. Recycling is part of waste management. Post (2007) argued that inadequate knowledge on waste recycling can be a barrier to waste reduction behaviour. Waste recycling still remains a huge challenge to the government of Nigeria. Many states in Nigeria have not established recycling industry.

Poor knowledge of green advertising affects consumer's perception and attitude. Many consumers do not see green advertising as their immediate concern. In a like manner, Atsegbua, Akpotaire and Dimowo (2003) had argued that the average Nigerian perceives environmental issues as something outside his immediate challenges. They believe that the average Nigerian is concerned with his immediate well-being or survival. Environmental issues outside the cleanliness and condition of his immediate environment border on the shoulders of the government. Atsegbua (2003) further advocated for public enlightenment programmes towards the protection and management of the environment.

In all, Environmental Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (EKAP) towards environmental management through green advertising are relatively poor. Green advertising is not effective in Nigeria because companies are only interested in the product sell not in environmental management for sustainable development through green advertising. Company's interest in green advertising is only to protect their reputation and to fulfil 'all righteousness' (corporate social responsibility).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Green advertising has not been effectively adopted and applied in Nigeria as one of the approaches for promoting and sustaining environmental management. Environmental knowledge, attitude and practice towards environmental management through green advertising are relatively poor. Reasons for the poor knowledge on green advertising and thus, poor attitude towards environmental management are dearth of green advertising campaigns by companies and all stakeholders. Aggressive green advertising campaigns are necessary for consumer's right responsible environmental behaviour and promoting as well as sustaining environmental management.

Arising from this therefore, products should be boldly labelled 'dispose properly' as part of organisation's environmental social responsibility. Advertising concepts like green marketing should be employed to discourage lifestyles and attitudes that could endanger or be harmful to the environment. Such lifestyles and attitudes include indiscriminate dumping of refuse, improper disposal of refuse into waste bins in the street and recycling attitude could be corrected and right environmental attitude to wastes can be encouraged through green marketing. All stakeholders in the advertising industry should use advertising to advocate for the right attitude towards environmental management.

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